

An Analysis of the Cultural Implications, Inheritance Dilemmas and Innovative Promotion Paths of SHE Ethnic Traditional Costumes and Silver Jewelry Crafts from the Perspective of Cultural Inheritance

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Keywords: SHE costumes; SHE silver jewelry; Cultural inheritance

Abstract: From the perspective of cultural inheritance, this paper focuses on the traditional costumes and silver jewelry crafts of the SHE ethnic group, exploring their cultural connotations, inheritance dilemmas and diversified promotion paths. The traditional SHE costumes represented by the Phoenix Costume are unique in shape and exquisite in patterns, while the SHE silver jewelry crafts characterized by manual forging are exquisite in craftsmanship and rich in implied meanings. Both carry the historical memory, totem beliefs and national aesthetics of the SHE people, serving as important traditional cultural symbols of the SHE ethnic group. At present, the inheritance of SHE costumes and silver jewelry is confronted with dilemmas such as a fault in skill inheritance, weak willingness of young people to inherit, insufficient practicality of traditional styles, neglect of national characteristics in product replicas, single promotion channels and low market recognition. Based on the above dilemmas, this paper takes Muchuan SHE Ethnic Township in Longyou County, Quzhou City as an example to deeply analyze the current inheritance status and practical difficulties of SHE traditional costumes and silver jewelry crafts in this area, and puts forward targeted innovative design paths and diversified promotion paths from the perspective of cultural inheritance. These paths include consolidating localized basic protection, promoting life-oriented design improvement, carrying out low-cost diversified innovation, building characteristic IPs combined with folk activities, conducting multi-channel publicity via the Internet, and developing characteristic research and study courses. These countermeasures aim to balance traditional protection and popular innovation, help the SHE costumes and silver jewelry achieve renewal and activated inheritance, and safeguard the cultural roots of ethnic minorities.

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

In recent years, the state has attached great importance to the protection of intangible cultural heritage and cultural inheritance. The Several Opinions of the State Council on Further Prosperity

and Development of Ethnic Minority Cultural Undertakings clearly proposes to further prosper and develop the cultural undertakings of ethnic minorities, promote the great development and prosperity of socialist culture, and focus on solving prominent problems such as damage, loss and loss of cultural heritage. As an important part of Chinese culture, the protection and inheritance of ethnic minority culture are of great significance for consolidating ethnic unity and safeguarding cultural roots.

As a distinctive ethnic minority in China, the SHE people have created splendid traditional culture, among which traditional costumes and silver jewelry crafts are important components. In 2008, the SHE "Phoenix Costume" and in 2011, the SHE silverware making technique were successively included in the Representative List of National Intangible Cultural Heritage. However, affected by practical factors such as the fault in skill inheritance, the current situation of SHE cultural inheritance is worrying. Moreover, the SHE people have their own spoken language but no standardized written language, and they have lived in scattered areas and mixed with the Han people for a long time, leading to the gradual weakening of cultural inheritance.

In terms of costumes and silver jewelry, traditional styles have gradually disappeared. Except for modern replicas used in festivals, the daily wear of SHE people is no different from that of the Han people, and the production skills are at risk of being lost. Affected by the modern economy, young people are unwilling to learn costume making and silver forging skills that require high manual work, resulting in a prominent problem of skill fault among old artists. Although Zhejiang Province has issued policies such as the Regulations on the Protection of Ethnic Folklore in Jingning SHE Autonomous County to provide protection, the declining trend of SHE costumes and silver jewelry has not been fundamentally reversed. Therefore, it is an urgent need to protect ethnic minority culture and maintain cultural diversity by deeply exploring the inheritance of SHE traditional costumes and silver jewelry crafts and taking effective measures to promote their activated development.

1.2 Research Significance

SHE traditional costumes are unique in shape and exquisite in patterns, and silver jewelry is characterized by manual forging. Both vividly reflect the aesthetic and cognitive value in the SHE people's artistic creation, the scientific research value in craftsmanship, the development value of tourism products and characteristic handicrafts, and the cultural exchange value.[1] This research has important practical significance for their protection and inheritance, which is reflected in three aspects:

(1) Safeguarding National Roots and Preserving SHE Characteristics

Without an independent written language, the SHE people take silver jewelry and costumes as important carriers recording national beliefs and history. The patterns of both are distinctive national aesthetic symbols. This research helps to promote the systematic inheritance of traditional SHE costume and silver jewelry skills, alleviate the dilemmas of skill fault, alienation of cultural symbols and extinction of traditional crafts, and assist in safeguarding the cultural genes of SHE culture.

(2) Empowering Cultural-Tourism Integration and Assisting Industrial Development

SHE costumes and silver jewelry are important carriers of cultural-tourism integration and key industries for common prosperity in SHE townships. By creating and creatively designing costumes and silver jewelry, integrating distinctive business forms such as travel photography, parades and cultural creativity, the added value of both can be enhanced, providing economic impetus for cultural inheritance. This research aims to optimize the in-depth integration of culture and tourism, and assist the transformation and upgrading of county economy and rural revitalization.

(3) Enriching the Cultural System and Highlighting Diverse Charm

SHE costumes and silver jewelry are not only important carriers of SHE culture, but also an integral part of Chinese culture. Promoting the activated inheritance of both, exploring and promoting their cultural connotations, and enriching the expression forms of ethnic minority culture in China are the significance of this research to promote the great development and prosperity of socialist culture.

1.3 Research Methods

1.3.1 Literature Research Method

This research extensively reviews domestic and foreign literature on the history, culture, costumes and silver jewelry crafts of the SHE ethnic group, sorts out the development context of SHE traditional costumes and silver jewelry crafts, and then summarizes previous research results and current situations, laying a solid theoretical foundation and reference for the research and ensuring the scientificity and rationality of the research direction.

1.3.2 Case Analysis Method

Representative costume and silver jewelry cases in Muchuan SHE Ethnic Township, Longyou, Quzhou are selected for in-depth analysis from the perspectives of artistic characteristics, cultural connotations and craft inheritance, summarizing their common and individual characteristics, and then revealing the overall features of SHE traditional costumes and silver jewelry crafts, enhancing the pertinence and practicality of the research and making the research conclusions more convincing.

1.3.3 Comparative Research Method

SHE traditional costumes and silver jewelry are compared with those of other ethnic groups to analyze the similarities and differences in shape, pattern and craftsmanship, and explore the influence of regional culture and ethnic communication on their development, so as to more clearly identify the uniqueness and cultural value of SHE costumes and silver jewelry and enrich the depth and breadth of the research.

2. Basic Cultural Connotations of SHE Costumes and Silver Jewelry

2.1 Characteristics of SHE Traditional Costumes

SHE traditional costumes are unique in shape and exquisite in craftsmanship, with the "Phoenix Costume" as the core representative. They are diverse in styles and delicate in craftsmanship, showing distinctive national characteristics in style design, color matching, fabric, embroidery technology and accessories, carrying the aesthetic pursuit and cultural implications of the SHE people, and presenting rich diversity in different regions and occasions (see Figure 1).

In terms of style, SHE costumes are divided into men's and women's styles with significant differences. Women's costumes take the "Phoenix Costume" as the essence, and the complete style is mainly composed of seven components: crown, hairstyle, coat, waistband, lower garment, shoes and leggings, among which the crown, coat and waistband are the most distinctive.[2] The red rope on the head symbolizes the phoenix head, the lace on the coat resembles phoenix feathers, and the flower belt behind the waist is like a phoenix tail, matched with the jingle of silver jewelry implying the phoenix's cry. The styles are strictly distinguished by age and occasion: unmarried women wear

"small phoenix" costumes, married women wear "big phoenix" costumes; red long skirts are worn for weddings to show joy, and black long skirts for funerals to show solemnity, with various regional styles such as Fuding style and Xiapu style. In contrast, men's costumes are single in style and simple in workmanship, mainly plain-faced, mostly blue-black or indigo in color. The representative style is a short cardigan with round neck made of blue or black cotton fabric.[3]



Figure 1: SHE traditional costumes

In terms of color matching and craftsmanship, SHE costumes prefer green and blue tones, and the fabrics are mostly self-woven ramie cloth, cotton cloth or silk cloth, with colorful laces inlaid on the right front and cuffs, harmoniously matching cold and warm colors, combining simple aesthetics and national customs. Embroidery is the core craft of costumes: the patterns on the chest and cuffs need to be designed according to the figure, and precisely stitched within 10 cm, which will not fit if slightly deviated.

2.2 Characteristics of SHE Traditional Silver Jewelry

SHE traditional silver jewelry is an important carrier of SHE culture, known as a "living fossil" of national history and culture. It is inseparable from the SHE people's production, life and life rituals, characterized by manual forging, combining practicality and ornamentation, carrying the SHE people's good expectations, and showing distinctive national characteristics in craftsmanship, categories and implications (see Figure 2).

In terms of craftsmanship, SHE silver jewelry making is exquisite and complex, requiring more than 30 manual processes such as silver melting, blank forging, annealing, carving, polishing, welding, fine repair and anti-corrosion,[4] condensing the five craft essences of "manipulation, chiseling, lifting, unravelling and spreading". Some also integrate techniques such as inlay and kingfisher feather decoration. Each piece of silver jewelry requires meticulous carving by

craftsmen, showing the profound heritage of manual craftsmanship, confirming the inheritance course of "a small hammer has struck for thousands of years, passing down without words for several autumns".

In terms of categories and scenarios, silver jewelry is widely used, mainly for women's decoration, and can be divided into head ornaments, chest and neck ornaments, ear ornaments, hand and foot ornaments, and clothing ornaments in the category of costumes.[5] The patterns mostly integrate elements such as phoenix, fish and pomegranate, symbolizing good luck, peace and prosperity. Among them, silver phoenix crown and silver flower are the most distinctive: the former means "the phoenix brings children and grandchildren", and the latter symbolizes beauty and good luck. Therefore, silver jewelry is an indispensable part of important life nodes and daily life of the SHE people, and the silver phoenix crown is a necessary head ornament for SHE girls when they get married.



Figure 2: Traditional Silver Jewelry of SHE Ethnic Group

2.3 Common Value

Although SHE traditional costumes and silver jewelry differ in form and craftsmanship, they share the same origin and symbiosis, jointly carrying the historical memory, totem beliefs and national identity of the SHE ethnic group, and condensing the spiritual pursuit and cultural heritage of the SHE people.

From the design and use of patterns on costumes and silver jewelry, both are endowed with beautiful connotations such as "happiness, blessing, longevity and perfection", entrusting the SHE people's love for life and spiritual pursuit of happiness. The most prominent is that the phoenix, as the core symbol of the SHE ethnic group, is integrated into both costume patterns and silver jewelry shapes, confirming the cultural memory of the phoenix guarding the ancestors of the SHE people, and jointly conveying the SHE people's respect for ancestors and earnest expectation for a better life. At the same time, the diverse shapes of silver jewelry and the color implications of costumes complement each other, jointly carrying the unique spiritual core of SHE culture and providing solid support for the continuation and development of SHE traditional culture.

3. Current Inheritance Status and Existing Dilemmas of SHE Costume and Silver Jewelry Crafts

Muchuan SHE Ethnic Township in Longyou County is the core area of SHE ethnic settlement in western Zhejiang. As cultural representatives, its traditional costumes and silver jewelry crafts carry the historical memory, totem beliefs and national aesthetics of the local SHE people, and are important carriers of regional culture. However, under the rapid development of modern society, the living condition of ethnic minority culture is declining. The inheritance of unique skills, activation of practicality, expression of culture and dissemination of markets in Muchuan SHE Ethnic Township are blocked everywhere, restricting the continuation and activation of local SHE characteristic culture.

3.1 Fault in Skill Inheritance and Weak Willingness of Young People to Inherit

The embroidery and tailoring skills of SHE costumes and the manual forging skills of silver jewelry are passed down from master to apprentice and by word of mouth, which have high requirements for practitioners' patience, craftsmanship and cultural understanding. At present, the old artists in Muchuan Township who master SHE costume and silver jewelry skills are all over 70 years old, and some are gradually losing their ability to work due to old age. Young people think that traditional crafts are difficult to learn, time-consuming and have low economic returns. Therefore, a fault has emerged where "the elderly can do it but the young do not learn it". At present, few inheritors in Muchuan Township can fully master the complete production skills of traditional costumes and silver jewelry, and many distinctive crafts are at risk of being lost.

3.2 Disconnection of Traditional Forms and Insufficient Practicality

The Phoenix Costume for SHE women is thick in fabric and complex in patterns, and silver jewelry includes large crowns, necklaces, bracelets and other complete sets of accessories, which are closely bound to the traditional production, life and folk festivals of the local SHE people, mainly used in special folk scenarios such as the "March 3" SHE Song Festival, weddings and sacrifices. Such traditional forms are inconvenient to wear, and the fabrics and functions are not suitable for the modern fast-paced lifestyle. Therefore, even in Muchuan Township itself, local SHE people rarely wear traditional costumes and silver jewelry in daily life. At present, SHE costumes and silver jewelry in Muchuan Township are only "props" in folk exhibitions, losing the soil for daily use among the people and the value of spreading national culture in daily life.[6]

3.3 Superficial Replication and Lack of Cultural Implications and Regional Characteristics

In recent years, in the process of vigorously developing ethnic minority cultural tourism industry, some replica products of SHE costumes and silver jewelry have appeared inside and outside Muchuan Township. However, practitioners pursue production efficiency and short-term benefits, only simply imitating the external appearance of traditional forms or copying the craft styles of SHE people in other areas, abandoning the cultural connotations and regional characteristics behind the special traditional forms of the local nation. The phoenix patterns, ribbon patterns of SHE costumes in Muchuan Township, and bamboo patterns, bird patterns of silver jewelry originate from the local SHE people's production, life and totem beliefs, containing specific national implications and special regional cultural memories. However, some replica products under cultural tourism development do not follow the local traditional craft techniques, and arbitrarily modify the pattern shapes, making the products break away cultural souls and become "formal replicas".

3.4 Weak Publicity and Promotion and Low Market Visibility

The publicity and promotion of SHE costume and silver jewelry crafts in Muchuan Township are almost non-existent, relying only on word of mouth. It is very scattered and regional, without systematic and market-oriented communication and promotion, and its influence is limited to Longyou and surrounding areas with extremely low visibility.[7] Local publicity mostly relies on the Muchuan Township SHE Cultural Festival and offline folk exhibition halls with limited audiences; in addition, most SHE costumes and silver jewelry in the local area are handmade by old artists, without a standardized product system and brand awareness, and sales channels are only local cultural tourism shops and folk activity sites. The cost of manual production is also relatively high, and product pricing is not suitable for mass consumption. SHE costumes and silver jewelry in Muchuan Township are trapped in the market dilemma of "no one knows and difficult to sell", and the poor market cannot help the better inheritance and development of skills.

4. Innovative Design Paths of SHE Costume and Silver Jewelry Crafts under the Guidance of Cultural Inheritance

To break through the inheritance dilemma of SHE costume and silver jewelry crafts in Muchuan Township, Longyou County, it is necessary to adhere to the regional cultural characteristics of SHE people in Muchuan Township, protect the authenticity of traditional crafts, innovate adaptively to modern development, activate the inheritance of local SHE costume and silver jewelry crafts, and make regional national culture integrate into public life.

4.1 Consolidate Localized Basic Protection and Lay a Solid Foundation for Skill Inheritance

The systematic protection and inheritance of SHE costume and silver jewelry crafts can be realized through a combination of live art teaching and campus popularization. Policy support and financial subsidies shall be given to core old artists of SHE costumes and silver jewelry in Muchuan Township to encourage them to take apprentices and teach skills. Localized digital rescue archiving is underway, and these resources should be utilized to strengthen regional national culture campus popularization, and offer manual experience courses and SHE culture lectures in primary and secondary schools. The project build craft research and study experience bases, carry out research activities, and cultivate teenagers' awareness of identity and inheritance of Muchuan SHE culture.

4.2 Promote Life-Oriented Design Improvement and Enhance Modern Practical Adaptability

Consider integrating modern life needs with the craft characteristics of Muchuan Township, and carry out lighter and daily improvement of SHE costumes and silver jewelry while retaining core cultural symbols and regional characteristics. In costume design, the project extract, simplify and reconstruct core patterns such as phoenix patterns and ribbon patterns of SHE costumes in Muchuan Township, select light and breathable modern fabrics such as cotton and linen, tencel and ice silk, redesign the version, and create single products suitable for daily wear such as SHE pattern shirts, skirts, scarves and canvas bags. In silver jewelry craftsmanship, the project develop small and portable daily-wear styles such as stud earrings, pendants, bracelets and keychains, retain the forging texture and unique patterns such as bamboo patterns and bird patterns of Muchuan Township silver jewelry, and appropriately integrate simple modern tools on the basis of adhering to core manual skills to optimize craft details and reduce production costs.

4.3 Carry out Low-Cost Diversified Innovation and Broaden Localized Promotion Channels

At present, cultural tourism in Muchuan Township is in the initial stage of development, and a low-cost and light-innovation route can be taken to develop cultural and creative products with local culture, promote and sell them online and offline simultaneously, and enhance market visibility. The design develop affordable localized cultural and creative souvenirs, use SHE costume patterns and silver jewelry modeling design elements in Muchuan Township to create low-cost and cost-effective cultural and creative products such as SHE pattern bookmarks, silver jewelry pendants, embroidered refrigerator stickers and simple silver jewelry accessories, meeting the consumption needs of tourists and allowing Muchuan SHE culture to go out of the local area through cultural and creative products. The project create simple light ethnic style simple wearing sets, design and develop versatile single products such as SHE pattern embroidered shawls, silver jewelry necklaces and SHE color belts, launch "light ethnic style" sets suitable for daily wear and cultural tourism check-in, adapting to various scenarios such as tourist check-in and daily wear of local people, and improving market acceptance of products. This initiative display and sell products and show skills on site at the Muchuan Township SHE Cultural Festival, cultural tourism scenic spots and intangible cultural heritage inheritance institutes offline to let tourists feel intuitively; online, use new media platforms such as Douyin, Xiaohongshu and Video Official Accounts to release short videos of craft production, cultural and creative product promotion and SHE culture popularization to attract traffic, open online micro-stores and live-streamed sales, and connect with cultural tourism e-commerce platforms in Longyou County and Quzhou to broaden sales channels. The plan integrate SHE costume and silver jewelry crafts in Muchuan Township with local rural cultural tourism and SHE homestays, incorporate craft display and manual experience into homestay cultural tourism experience projects, and realize two-way empowerment of cultural inheritance and cultural tourism development.

5. Research on Diversified Promotion Paths of SHE Traditional Costumes and Silver Jewelry from the Perspective of Cultural Inheritance and Innovation

5.1 Display and Sell at Cultural Tourism Scenic Spots and Build Characteristic IPs Combined with Folk Activities

At present, the tourism industry is developing rapidly, and ethnic characteristic tourism is booming. To further promote the spread of SHE culture, governments in many areas have developed many cultural tourism scenic spots full of SHE atmosphere to meet tourists' needs for SHE characteristic souvenirs, exquisite SHE costumes and photos with SHE scenery. Special workshops for the production of SHE costumes and silver jewelry crafts can be set up in these cultural tourism scenic spots, organize SHE people to carry out characteristic folk experience activities with tourists, and build characteristic IPs of SHE culture. In addition, traditional SHE costumes have problems such as few styles and insufficient practicality. Cultural tourism departments can open online channels to collect various design patterns, improve the version and material on the basis of retaining the original SHE characteristics of costumes, design daily styles to make them closer to people's daily life. It is also possible to design SHE square cloth and small silver jewelry souvenirs themed on banquets and daily activities, so that SHE culture can further enter people's lives and be closer to people's daily life.

5.2 Promote Online via Short Videos and Realize Multi-Channel Publicity Relying on the Internet

In the Internet era, people learn about cultures around the world more through electronic products such as mobile phones and computers, especially by watching short videos. To realize the diversified promotion of SHE traditional costume culture and silver jewelry craft products, it is necessary to rely on the Internet for multi-channel publicity. Zheng Lili and Jiang Yanyi pointed out in their research on the innovative marketing strategy of the live inheritance of the SHE silver jewelry brand "Zhenhuatang" that online and offline parallel marketing is an important link for the live inheritance of intangible cultural heritage.[8] The emerging sales model integrating online and offline has strong era adaptability and spatial adaptability, which can not only meet the needs of on-site experience but also realize online viewing and remote purchase and delivery. Since the places where SHE people live already have physical places for costume and silver jewelry production, this paper emphasizes the use of the characteristics of wide spread and large-scale push of short videos to introduce and promote online, relying on the vast Internet to realize not only provincial communication but also national and even global publicity.

5.3 Develop Characteristic Research and Study Courses and Integrate National Cultural Resources for Inheritance

Liu Xiaowen and Liu Yuyang pointed out in their paper "Research on the 'Mass Innovation' of the Live Inheritance of SHE Costumes and the Integration of Cultural and Creative Industries from the Perspective of Intangible Cultural Heritage" that educational inheritance is the core link of live inheritance and an important scene for the collaboration of multiple subjects. They gave examples that SHE costume culture can be incorporated into local courses in the basic education stage to develop interactive teaching resources, while industry-university-research cooperation mechanisms can be established in higher education to cultivate compound talents and promote innovative development.[9] For SHE traditional costumes and silver jewelry crafts, we can also dig into their teaching resources, develop characteristic research and study courses, record the production process and exclusive skills of costumes and silver jewelry in a popular and easy-to-understand way, cooperate with primary and secondary schools and colleges and universities that want to understand and experience SHE costume and silver jewelry culture, inherit national culture in teaching experience, stimulate students' love and identity for SHE culture, cultivate emerging inheritors with innovative ability and skills, and integrate national culture and inherit characteristic resources in the collision between tradition and modernity.

6. Conclusion

SHE traditional costumes and silver jewelry making crafts are important carriers of SHE culture and an integral part of excellent traditional Chinese culture, enriching the connotation of Chinese culture. SHE costumes are exquisite in patterns and unique in shape, and silver jewelry is characterized by manual forging. The decorative symbols, bright colors and production skills all condense the historical beliefs and aesthetic values of SHE traditional culture. However, in the process of modernization, the inheritance of SHE culture is facing severe challenges. The production skills of SHE costumes and silver jewelry are relatively complex and difficult to inherit, young apprentices are hard to persist, and a fault has emerged in skill inheritance. At the same time, traditional costume forms are disconnected from modern times, difficult to connect with daily life needs, publicity and promotion efforts are almost non-existent, very few people know about them, and access channels are very narrow. The low-price impact of mechanized products has sharply

compressed the market space for manual skills.

Faced with the above dilemmas, inheriting and developing SHE traditional costumes and silver jewelry is not simply adhering to retro or comprehensive innovation. First, we should protect the core crafts and production system, adhere to the SHE regional culture of Muchuan Township, realize the systematic protection of traditional costumes and silver jewelry through live inheritance, protect the authenticity of production skills, and ensure that cultural genes are not diluted. Promoting life-oriented design improvement is a bridge for cultural inheritance. On the premise of ensuring cultural authenticity, integrating modern life needs with the craft characteristics of Muchuan SHE culture can make them integrate into people's daily life instead of being sealed up, realizing the activated inheritance of SHE costumes and silver jewelry.

In addition, multi-channel publicity is crucial. Only by gaining popularity can we broaden the diversified development paths of SHE traditional costumes and silver jewelry, such as displaying and selling at cultural tourism scenic spots, building characteristic IPs combined with folk activities, relying on the Internet for multi-channel publicity, and developing characteristic research and study courses. These can not only improve the popularity of SHE traditional costumes and silver jewelry, but also realize multi-mode cultural inheritance, activate young people's cultural identity, and improve consumers' consumption willingness. For traditional culture to regain vitality in the modern life of multi-cultural integration, it is necessary to realize a virtuous cycle from "being protected" to "conscious inheritance" and then to "active communication", so as to truly move towards a broader cultural stage and glow with dazzling contemporary brillianc.

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by the following projects: Quzhou University 2025 National College Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship Training Program Project “Between Mountains and Sea, the Rhythm of SHE Ethnicity—— Exploring a New Path to Common Prosperity in Zhejiang’s SHE Ethnic Township: A Dual Empowerment of Industry and Culture”, Project No.202511488059.

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