

Research on Active State of Human in Productive Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage

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Abstract—Human is the carrier of intangible cultural heritage and the most important factor in the whole intangible cultural heritage system. As to research on concept of active state in productive protection of intangible cultural heritage, we can start with the crowd that is closely linked with the ecological environment of intangible cultural heritage. This part of people's response towards general social environment has key influence on rise and decline of intangible cultural heritage.

Keywords—intangible cultural heritage; productive protection; human; active state

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of active state in intangible cultural heritage (referred to as ICH hereinafter) productive protection can be understood in comparison with tangible cultural heritage protection. Material cultural heritage protection emphasizes true restoration of "tangible" state to concretion in order to display style and features of tangible cultural heritage in a certain historic period and provide static tangible evidence for people to understand and research culture, politics, economy and art of this period. Compared with "concretion" and "static state", ICH's productive protection emphasizes "living" and "dynamic". It is in accordance with concept of ICH. In 2003, *Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Convention* defines ICH as: Intangible cultural heritage passes on from generation to generation and is constantly recreated in various communities' and groups' adaption to surrounding environment and their interaction with nature and history. ICH provides these communities and groups with recognition and lasting feeling, thus strengthening respect for cultural diversity and human's creation[1]. Among it, "passing on from generation to generation" and "constant recreation" fully explain that ICH protection needs to constantly absorb nutrition in inheriting to activate its content and keep a good interaction with times.

Human ancestors plant seedlings of ICH in labor and life. Through oral teaching that inspires true understanding from one generation to another, ICH finds fertile soil to prosper with luxuriant foliage on the vast land. Legend, formulation, performer and operator of traditional crafting skills in intangible cultural heritage are the subject of "active state" cultural creation in intangible cultural heritage. They have the most initiative and they are at the core of "active state"

culture[2]. Therefore, research on human's active state is especially important in ICH productive protection. The crowd closely linked with ICH ecological environment falls into two types: ICH inheritor and ICH cultural interior group.

II. ACTIVE STATE OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE INHERITOR

Inheritor is a key role in ICH inheriting and spreading. Since previous and later inheritors live in different eras, there must be differences in overall social environment of their times. In the process of ICH productive protection practice, only by keeping a certain active degree, can offspring inheritors make ICH adapt to environment of active state to maintain vitality. As to active state of ICH inheritor, several changes deserve our attention.

First, it is aesthetic psychology change. It comes from the game between different aesthetic experience outside and inside ICH ecological environment. Among plenty of practice cases, we can take two cases to compare: The Cantonese opera *Ship Saying* which is performed in mandarin in 2016 New Year Counting Backwards Happy Carnival Party on Guangzhou TV arouses great arguments. Some audiences worry that it ruins Cantonese opera tradition. Cantonese is one gene of the ICH project of Cantonese opera and it is an important part of Cantonese opera's features. As to the forced grafting of external gene in consideration of market, both audience and professionals display psychological resistance[3]. Cantonese opera audiences outside Cantonese section mostly want to experience authentic Cantonese culture. Thus, the incline towards consumers' aesthetic experience here is just the opposite to what they wish, weakening consumers' passion about ICH. Similarly, considering consumers' aesthetic experience, on the 10th anniversary of Kunqu opera youth edition *Peony Pavilion*, in an interview with China Youth News, producer Bai Xianyong says: "Kunqu opera has a set of mature aesthetics and a set of strict performance presenting mode. These basic things like four skills and five methods, singing, speaking, acting and acrobatic fighting, way of singing and figure can't be changed. If these things are changed, it is not Kunqu opera any more. We have a very important principle, which is respecting classical without abiding by it. We use modern times without abuse. All modern elements serve the performance. We should follow beauty appreciation of the times, but we can't completely rely on

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market to deal with cultural heritage. If Kunqu opera goes towards the popular direction more and more in order to cater to audience, it may lose its traditional cultural peculiarities [4]." Therefore, when we are appreciating youth edition *Peony Pavilion*, although youth performers are a little immature, we can still feel unique lingering charm of Kunqu opera brought by graceful and mild water mill tune and spoken parts in soft Suzhou dialect. When facing the game between different aesthetic experiences inside and outside ICH ecological environment, ICH inheritors should have more aesthetic confidence. Because one function of ICH is providing cultural diversity in the overall social environment of international integration, aesthetic tendency displayed by ICH, no matter it is roughness and plainness based on village community culture or sublimated abstract elegance of elite culture, provides nutrition supply for standardized aesthetics concept in different levels. Compared with diet habit of abundant fish and meat, ICH with whole grains, light porridge and pickled vegetables instead can defuse unhealthy burden brought by greasy food. Therefore, the realistic problem is not discord between ICH beauty appreciation and modern beauty appreciation, but how to break through aging of ICH image and make more people willing to walk up to ICH. Before seeing youth edition *Peony Pavilion*, the author uses a period of time before opening of the show to interview surrounding young audience. Most of them come here not out of passion for Kunqu opera or familiarity with story of *Peony Pavilion*. Under the influence of mainstream media propaganda or surrounding friends, they think that the action of seeing youth edition *Peony Pavilion* itself is manifestation of literature and art. No matter what the reason is, as long as young audiences actively buy tickets, come to the theater and accept baptism of ICH, it is already a success. It is better to turn ICH into fashion to guide consumers than adding fashion elements in ICH to cater to consumers. Aesthetic confidence is the basis for inheritors to maintain vivacious vitality of ICH.

Second, it is change of identity. In the process of ICH productive protection, some inheritors assume the identity of manufacturer, market pioneer, operator and so on. Identity change makes inheritors not only supervise layout of production, but also look for investors and participate in product research and development, market control, and team management and coordination. However, most inheritors aren't suitable for the role of cultural industry's CEO. The author has a deep feeling about it after deep investigation and survey on Qiang ethnic minority's embroidery project. In practice of productive protection, inheritors create their own brand and try to connect embroidery of Zang and Qiang with modern life pattern through the carrier of articles for daily use. From distribution of embroidery task to stockaded village to selection of leather product manufacturers, and from product design and sample development to retail market expansion, inheritors participate in every link and make strategic decisions. In the process, inheritors spend most time in their unfamiliar links, as a result, they have no time to consider innovation in traditional craft. Besides, work efficiency and work time are inversely proportional, severely hindering brand development.

Facing identity change in ICH productive protection, inheritors should consider their own advantages and ICH's

need and complete organizational structure of productive protection in the form of inheritor plus operation team. Building of operation team can take family members as its core, thus solving trust and cultural barrier problems. Many inheritors' younger generation has received higher education of literature, art, design, management and so on. These younger generations are the most natural fresh blood of ICH productive protection. But they should overcome family firm's traditional malpractice. Besides, operation team can also be a professional brand operation platform. Its understanding of ICH project and communication and cooperation with inheritors are the key. With an effective operation team, inheritors can focus on the following two identities: image spokesperson of ICH and quality guard of ICH. First, ICH's productive protection practice needs consumers' recognition of ICH's cultural atmosphere. Inheritors constantly unearth ICH's cultural gene and expand its extension. Their identity of image spokesperson is integrated with ICH, thus definitely increasing consumers' recognition of and consumption passion about ICH culture. Besides, ICH's productive protection practice needs consumers' recognition of "material" carrying ICH culture. Quality is the key to existence of "material". Too many fudged, casual and simplified ICH products on market consume consumers' favorable impression of ICH. Take embroidery as an example, raw material and human factor in production process have influence on embroidery quality. For example, some embroidery projects (especially minority's embroidery craft) which haven't formed a centralized production pattern require inheritors to organize local women to do manual production. Embroidery slices completed by these women during farm work leisure time are often stained with blots and sweat stains and even animal excrement. Even if embroidery slices are tidy, there might be some technical problems, like littery needlework, patterning malposition, wrong color blending and so on. Take another example, in Shui nationality's horsetail embroidery art, in order to avoid deformation of bottom cloth due to pull in embroidery, a layer of hard lining needs to be glued on bottom cloth. But this kind of adhesive is easy to mildew and become black in humid air, severely influencing horsetail embroidery's quality. The most basic problems of ICH productive protection are how to make local employers cherish their manual skill, how to build a craft grading system to create benign development of ICH artistry and how to improve raw material's defects. Inheritors should assume the identity of ICH quality guard and stick to this kind of traditional dignity. Activating the above two identities is the guarantee for inheritors to maintain ICH's fresh vitality.

III. ACTIVE STATE OF INTANGIBLE CULTURE'S INTERNAL GROUP

The so-called internal group of intangible culture refers to people producing and living in intangible ecological environment and it is the core appropriator of ICH. Although this part of people don't have the sense of mission towards ICH protection like inheritors, their response to ICH ecological environment change is in direct relation with ICH's rise and decline. It seems to be very necessary to research active state of this group under the context of ICH ecological environment. We have always been emphasizing that ICH ecological environment can't be damaged. However, with the fact of

Chinese New Year taste missing, reduction in village opera audience and decline in folk custom paper-cut consumption, we might as well think who damages ICH ecological environment—It is not the person outside ICH ecological environment, but internal group of intangible culture in ICH ecological environment. When this group's life style is in imbalance with the outside, they change ICH ecological environment in the process of pursuing their own interest. This kind of change is sad, dreary and unavoidable. Why would they like to leave their hometown to go to other places to make a living by labor? Why don't they want to live a life of male farming and women weave in their familiar environment and share together with family? Why don't they want to sing folk songs and make paper-cut and embroidery around the stove? Upon their acknowledgment of the wonderful world outside their village, everything is doomed to change. During the process of research on horsetail embroidery project in Sandu County, Guizhou in January 2016, the author finds that after successful application of horsetail embroidery as national level intangible cultural heritage project, part of local villagers give up work in big cities and get back home to do horsetail handicraft work. After communication with villagers, the author strongly feels their dissatisfaction with low income of horsetail embroidery work. Some villagers plan to go to big cities again as workers on flow production line of garment factory. The change is avoidable, displaying ICH's active state. What we should do is not forcing them to protect ICH living environment, but making ICH's environmental change as natural and smooth as possible without faultage under the situation of outside changes.

First, local cultural and education department of ICH should guide local people to have a general idea of ICH and its ecological environment, increase their cultural confidence and make local people willing to get back and participate in construction of ICH ecological environment. Due to limitation of cultural level, many people lack comprehensive understanding of ICH as positive result of traditional production and life and they know very little about history and culture behind ICH. The author knows about the real situation of children and middle-aged women in the village during research on Miao embroidery project in Miao nationality villages in January 2016. The author finds that many Miao people don't know the story that maple in ancient folk song of Miao nationality breeds mother butterfly and mother butterfly breeds descendants. They are also unaware of meaning of butterfly dermatoglyphic pattern in Miao embroidery. If every Miao person is familiar with and cherishes these connotations, maybe their choice will have more sense of mission upon the need of cutting trees down, deforestation and removal of ancient village due to economic development and upon threat to existence of ethnic history carried by national costume due to popularization of modern fashion. Thus it can be seen that there is still a long way to go for cultural and educational department to provide ICH education for intangible culture's internal group. It should cover local school's classroom education and village community's social education. The content shouldn't be limited to passing on skills. It should include cultivation of ethnic group's sense of identity.

Second, construction of ICH ecotope ensures intangible cultural internal group's return to their ethnic group's active state of culture to a great extent. On this basis, we need to think about how intangible cultural internal group can activate ICH's ecological environment. Under productive protection coat of ICH, too many ICH ecotopes become show fields. Local people are organized to perform songs, dances, operas and handicraft in fixed time. People of ICH or people producing ICH are used as stage property of performance, showing and performing ICH which should occur naturally in production and life. Works in constant performances get farther and farther from original folk and traditional features, becoming a kind of decorative artistic commodity without cultural connotation. Seeing from surface, this kind of "cultural logistics" inheritance is prosperity. In fact, it neglects and weakens inheritance of local basic level culture. In the long run, fading of basic level cultural inheritance and alienation of performance art are inevitable results[5]. Inactivation of ICH's ecological environment will also occur. It can't be denied that ICH's productive protection means can be versatile. Among ICH's historic development traces, there are cases which originate from activities of production and life and get sublimated to entertainment performance or artistic creation. If people want to appreciate artistically sublimed folk ICH songs and dances, they can go to an art theater to see *Impression on Yunnan* created by Teacher Yang Liping and appreciate original ecological group's singing in Singing Contest for the Young on the network. ICH ecological preservation area should shoulder more responsibilities in demonstration of active state. With the international market background of modern consumption view becoming more and more mature, consumers have a great tendency to participate in local production and life in ICH ecotope, experiencing a different life style with different life background. As the most natural and active soil of ICH, ICH ecological preservation area shouldn't be so simple as just limiting to performance. Its function can have more feelings. Key problems of ICH ecotope's productive protection are how to stabilize ICH environment in ICH ecotope and make local people display ICH and obtain self-sufficiency in traditional production and life, and how to create an experiential consumption environment based on life style.

IV. CONCLUSION

Due to changes in social environment, some intangible cultural heritage projects no longer adapt to modern production and life style. This part of ICH can be transformed into tangible cultural heritage to record and display traditional manners and customs. But those intangible cultural heritages with vitality can only keep up with the times and maintain fresh blood by people's activation. On the precondition of overall grasp of intangible culture, we hope that inheritors keep an active mind instead of blindness and conservatism, maintain aesthetic confidence without over-exploitation and perform a new movement of ICH productive protection together with romantic intangible cultural internal group.

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