

“Intangible Cultural Heritage”: the Cultural Connotation and Protection of Xinlong Medicine Mud Mask

bKra-shis dBang-rgyal

*Southwest Minzu Research Institute, Southwest Minzu University, Chengdu, China
Email: 2472712688@qq.com*

ABSTRACT. *The Xinlong medicine mud mask was born in a unique cultural environment. It has rich regional characteristics and traditional folk culture. Its unique originality combines painting, sculpture and medicine to create a material carrier with profound cultural connotations. This paper focuses on the humanistic ecology, technological process, cultural connotation, inheritance and protection measures of the Xinlong medicine mud mask in the perspective of intangible cultural heritage protection..*

KEYWORDS: *Intangible cultural heritage, Medicine mud mask, Characteristics, Inheritance and protection*

1. Introduction

Tibetan masks have a long history and cultural connotation, social function, and artistic value. In Tibetan, it is called “Ba”. According to the archaeological findings of the Qugong site in Lhasa in the late 1980s, the original shape of the Tibetan mask can be traced back to the Neolithic Age. The pottery sculptures with animal patterns excavated at that time were of great significance, symbolizing the totem worship in the early Tibetan primitive beliefs. From this level, totem worship is the source of Tibetan masks. On this basis, with the prevalence of the teaching and Buddhism, Tibetan masks have gradually formed a unique mask culture and a relatively complete mask culture system. It is usually made of animal skin, soil, metal and other materials. These masks are mostly used in the “Qiangmu” ceremony [1]. Similarly, it is also widely used in Tibetan opera performances and folk rituals.

Due to its unique natural environment, customs and folk beliefs, Xinlong County has made this ancient traditional craftsmanship show distinctive regional characteristics and national personality. Therefore, the ancient folk culture has been relatively intact. This special regional cultural heritage has spawned a special folk art, the Xinlong Medicine Mud Mask. As the country pays more and more attention to excellent traditional culture, many precious folk traditional cultures in Xinlong County have been effectively protected under such circumstances.

2. The Cultural Connotation and Characteristics of Xinlong Medicine Mud Mask

2.1 The Cultural Connotation of the Mud Mask

The creation of Xinlong medicine mud mask and its protection to a specific cultural atmosphere are inseparable. It is also the unique geographical and cultural style of Xinlong, which has created the practical value and artistic value of the mud mask. In terms of its own shape and materials, it is also enough to give a unique artistic and aesthetic experience. Xinlong medicine mud mask is rich in variety, using some typical, exaggerated, fictional techniques and some mysterious traditional symbols to shape a variety of characters. Coupled with a national color system to create a gorgeous and unconventional color, giving the whole mud mask a fresh vitality, and has gained endless artistic beauty. The mask culture represented by the mud mask expresses the original totem worship consciousness, religious consciousness and folk custom consciousness. As a carrier of the god Buddha in Tibetan Buddhism, the mud mask reflects the integration of religion and culture. After thousands of years of development, it has been integrated with the humanities and customs of the localities, thus laying a foundation for the masses and nurturing a profound cultural heritage. The wisdom and sweat of the craftsmen are also the best reflected here.

2.1 The Religious Connotation of Xinlong Medicine Mud Mask

Because Xinlong County has long been in a closed geographical and social environment, it has been less affected by foreign cultures. Therefore, the quaint and original style features are formed with obvious regional characteristics. From an aesthetic point of view, these masks have a unique vitality and appeal. There are also strict specifications in the selection and production. Xinlong's medicinal mud mask contains profound and profound Tibetan Buddhist culture. In Tibetan Buddhism, the Buddha's statues are divided into "silent phase" and "angry". According to the Buddha's thirty-two phase, eighty-shape, "silence and phase" are mostly kind and kind, and face-to-face. The "angry" is mostly the face of indignation and indignation. The most used in the mud mask is the mask of the esoteric guardian, which is the god Buddha who presents the "angry". In Buddhism, not only the unexpected things are their own enemies, but also the troubles of the people themselves are also enemies. In order to enable the practitioner's mind to quickly capture the evil demon that caused the trouble, then depict these troubled demons as a horrible image [2]. The mask shape is mostly used to protect the image of the god of the gods. It is also because of the Tibetan traditional belief that he can surrender the enemy, the town ghosts and exorcism, and bring peace.

2.3 The Folk Connotations of Xinlong Medicine Mud Mask

In the private sector, these masks have other functions and are an important means used by local people to pray for disaster relief. It is a custom that is circulated among the people. In the spiritual sense, they are the mediums for ordinary secular people to communicate with God. In the social sense, they are performance props

closely linked with people's folk activities and daily consciousness. For example, the relevant rituals in people's lives, or Tibetan opera performances, all give the mask folk meaning. In the Tibetan area, there is a popular temple god dance – "Qiangmu". Xinlong is no exception, and the temples in Xinlong have always had the tradition of wearing masks and dancing. The Gesar Dance, which was developed from Zhuqing Temple, is also popular in some of the Ningma temples in Xinlong, forming some unique masks. These masks have gradually given entertainment and other functions in the long-term evolution. Folk people often have various masks in their homes, some for decoration, some for prayer, and some for children's toys.

2.4 Practical Significance of the Mud Mask

Due to its cumbersome production process and materials, it also gives the unique cultural connotation and value of Xinlong medicine mud mask. The exclusive formula of Xinlong medicine mud mask can not be transmitted. It has strong artistic appeal and its size, so it has more selectivity and is also easy to carry. More importantly, a series of blessings were carried out during the process of making the mud mask. Therefore, people also believe that the masks that are created can be used to eliminate disasters, towns, evil spirits, protect them, and prosper. The biggest feature of Xinlong medicine mud mask is that it also contains Tibetan medicine and Chinese herbal medicine ingredients, which have certain effects on preventing influenza, high altitude hypoxia and eliminating fatigue. It can also be placed as an ornament at home for viewing. Therefore, it has many functions and is highly respected.

2.2 Characteristics of the Mud Mask

2.2.1 Ingenuity and Preciousness of Raw Materials

Xinlong's medicinal mud masks are unique in their ability to apply precious herbs and natural minerals to the earth to make masks, which is groundbreaking. In the process of making the Tibetan medicine formula, the mask will emit a strange aroma, which is said to have a miraculous effect on preventing incurable diseases. The mud used to make the mask is a special mysterious nectar pill in the Tibetan area. It is made up of more than one hundred kinds of plateau precious herbs, plus a variety of gem powder mixed with holy mountain water. The entire production process is mysterious and original, with distinct geographical and religious colors. For many years, Xinlong medicine mud mask has been hailed as the treasure of "blessing peace, longevity and good fortune". And the products have the characteristics of "three different" (not rot, no fading, no pollution, easy to carry), with high collection value and strong artistic appeal.

2.2.2 Nationality of Color and Shape

Xinlong's medicinal mud mask contains profound cultural heritage, which is subtly integrated into the unique colors of Tibetan people in the process of painting coloring. The keynotes are mainly warm colors, the colors are bright and bright, the

contrast is strong and the harmony is sought, resulting in a huge visual impact. Different environments and cultures have created different aesthetics. The Tibetans are bold and innovative in their conception and expression of beauty. They have their own requirements in terms of hue, saturation and brightness. However, no matter how colorful the color is, the overall feeling of harmony and serenity will be given.

Xinlong medicine mud mask also absorbs the exaggerated and realistic features of Tibetan masks. In Tibetan Buddhism, the gods have various shapes and rich expressions. It happens that this feature makes the artists perform their best when making masks. In the Tibetan mask shape, we can feel that exaggeration and realism can coexist without contradiction, and give people a sense of beauty that has never been seen before. Xinlong's mud-mud masks have always maintained the artistic style of ancient India and Tibet. Each piece has been hand-crafted and carefully shaped to resemble or resemble, and the shape of the mask is similar to that of the ancient Thangka.

3. The Inheritance and Protection of Xinlong Medicine Mud Mask

Xinlong medicine mud mask obtained the international intellectual property patent certificate in 2004, and later successfully declared the national intangible cultural heritage. In 2018, Silong Jiangze was not only the inheritor of the national intangible cultural heritage, but also the only Tibetan medicinal mask inheritor of his family. At the age of 62, he is the fifth generation of the Tibetan mud mask [3]. At present, three kinds of Tibetan mud mask works have obtained national intellectual property patents, and nearly 200 kinds of Tibetan mask series have been developed as commemorative gifts.

3.1 Inheritance

There are two main ways to inherit the Xinlong medicine mud mask recorded in the historical data. One is the inheritance of the ancestors and the other is the inheritance of the masters and the disciples. For example, Silong Jiangze began to learn Tibetan mud masks at the age of 14 and has been in existence for more than 40 years. The production of the mud mask is not only experienced but also highly skilled. He also always adheres to the production principle of "passing a man without passing a woman, not passing it inside", plus a fairly strict proportion of the configuration required to make a mud mask. The old man of Silong Jiangze repeatedly stressed that if the formula is appropriate, the mask will be fragrant and pleasant, but the mask will be unbearable and even harmful to the human body. Therefore, even if this skill is lost, it is not easy to entrust the formula to others [4]. In order to inherit the craftsmanship and meet the needs of market innovation, in 2004, Silong Jiangze began to study the development of molds. After many efforts, he finally produced the first mold for Tibetan mud masks, thus making Tibetan mud masks. This traditional craft has embarked on the road of combining modern craftsmanship. In Xinlong, the Snowland National Handicraft Factory was opened to

produce and display mud masks, which made this traditional endangered handicraft product attract the attention and understanding of many people.

3.2 The Dilemma and Countermeasures in the Inheritance of Xinlong Medicine Mud Mask

3.2.1 The Dilemma in the Inheritance of Craftsmanship

Due to the cumbersome process of making mud masks and the difficulty in finding medicines, and the need to learn the mud masks requires a long learning time, the inheritance of this traditional folk skill is in trouble. According to statistics, there are fewer than 30 people who make Tibetan masks in the entire Tibetan area. As a birthplace of the mud mask, the inheritors are even less. And with the development of the market economy, various modern products emerge in an endless stream. The market demand for clay masks is reduced and the price is not high. There is no objective economic benefit and the mask is made longer. Therefore, people who learn this skill are less and less likely to take this as a profession, and seriously lack professional learners.

Nowadays, the artists who master this skill are generally high, and others are disgusted by the “long time and low return”. The mud mask is facing the severe challenge of talent gap. According to census statistics, the most famous clay sculpturer in Xinlong County is now 76 years old, and his descendant, Silong Jiangze, is now 62 years old. Therefore, the inheritance of the technology of Xinlong medicine mud mask is grim, and it is extremely urgent to protect this skill.

3.2.2 Measures Taken

The continuous advancement of globalization and modernization has brought certain challenges to the development of many traditional cultures. Therefore, you can first learn from some good protection experience. On this basis, it is also necessary to combine the specific situation of Xinlong to carry out specific analysis of specific problems, so as to develop a protection mode suitable for Xinlong local conditions.

Strengthening personnel training and improving the living conditions of artists

Two important aspects were mentioned in the 2016 China Minority Intangible Cultural Heritage Development Report. First, it is necessary to preserve the traditional folk cultural heritage in the area and environment to which it belongs, so that it becomes a “living culture” and is an important way to protect the “intangible cultural heritage” as a whole. Second, we must attach great importance to the cultivation of the intangible cultural heirs, because the intangible cultural heirs are an important way to achieve the protection of intangible culture [5]. Because traditional crafts are challenged by modern industry, it affects the life and economic conditions of traditional artists. Therefore, it is extremely urgent to improve the living conditions of artists. Protecting and further cultivating the intangible cultural heritage is the most important factor in protecting the culture of intangible cultural

heritage, because the inheritor is an indispensable subject. Therefore, it is an important task today to intensify efforts to improve the welfare of the inheritors, sign employment contracts, establish formal training institutions, and train various folk artists to professionalize and standardize them. Focusing on the protection and support of endangered ethnic crafts, such as Silong Jiangze is the only person in the country who will make mud masks and statues of Buddha, so it should be cultivated and protected.

Create a good social atmosphere and provide more opportunities for display

The society does not have enough knowledge of Tibetan masks, and it is even more strange to Tibetan mud masks. In order to let more people understand the culture of Tibetan mud mask, it is necessary to support the people from all walks of life to provide a platform for display and a good social environment. Only in this way can Tibetan mud masks enter the public's field of vision and be known to more people. At the same time, in order to retain folk artists and valuable traditional skills, relevant departments should provide them with a good artistic creation environment. On the one hand, under the government's call, the folk hand-painting artists will be regularly sent to primary and secondary schools to carry out their words and deeds, so that the intangible cultural heritage can enter the classroom activities of students, and at the same time, the series of activities of cultural and rural areas can be actively carried out. On the other hand, it can provide a larger stage for the medicinal mud mask to go abroad and show the embarrassment of Chinese culture. Let the mud mask have a broader development space and the possibility of excellence.

Building an industrial platform related to the mud mask

Local government departments should give some support to let local art to the market. Under the conditions of market economy, build a certain industrial platform and produce art that is marketable. Make full use of local tourism resources, create local cultural brands, and develop related tourism products and souvenirs, such as small-sized mud masks, which are easy to carry and commemorative. This not only promoted the development of local tourism, but also promoted this ancient skill, and also made more people know Tibetan painting, sculpture and medicine.

4. Conclusion

Based on the Tibetan traditional masks, Xinlong medicine mud mask has continuously innovated and developed. It has creatively joined the precious Tibetan medicines and natural minerals to form an art with unique local and national characteristics. The cumbersome process and the rigorous proportion of the drug make this technique a special intangible cultural heritage. It is the crystallization of the long-term accumulation of wisdom and sweat of the common people, with profound cultural connotations and unique artistic aesthetic value. However, the inheritance of the technology of Xinlong medicine mud mask has encountered many challenges. Only by actively exploring a better path of inheritance can we retain these precious folk traditional cultures.

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