

A Brief Analysis of the Inheritance and Development of Axi Earthen Pottery

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Abstract: Axi earthen pottery is a traditional Chinese pottery produced in Asi Village which turns black after firing. Its history can even be traced back to the original black pottery dates back to the Hemudu culture in Yuyao 7,000 years ago. On June 14, 2008, Asi pottery was included in the second batch of national intangible cultural heritage list. It is not only a national "intangible cultural heritage" but also a unique traditional folk handicraft product. It is also known as one of the "Four Wonders" of Daocheng Yading. As the times change, it also encounters many difficulties and contradictions in the process of protection and development, and its living conditions, production, production, form, function, etc. will all change. In the context of today's Internet+ era, as well as the comprehensive development of the modern cultural tourism industry, this article actively explores effective countermeasures from multiple angles through field research, and proposes to introduce the intangible cultural heritage project Asi pottery into college classrooms and break the outdated family tradition of Asi pottery. It is hoped that it will play a certain positive role in the inheritance and development of Asi pottery, an intangible cultural heritage with unique national characteristics.

Keywords: Intangible Cultural Heritage; Assi Clay; Inheritance and Development

1. Introduction

Intangible cultural heritage is the cultural crystallization formed by a society or nation in the process of long-term life and production activities, the cultural carrier and historical epitome of the development of regional social civilization, and the concentrated embodiment

of people's living habits, values, social culture, and the link for continuing cultural inheritance. As a kind of Xizang folk intangible culture, after thousands of years of development and inheritance, Axi soil pottery has extremely profound historical and cultural heritage, and is a rare practical traditional handicraft in Xizang areas. With the rapid development of society, an Asi clay pottery known for its tradition is also facing the dilemma of hopeless inheritance and development. Therefore, finding new ideas and directions for inheriting these outstanding intangible cultural heritages to adapt to the development of the times is worthy of thinking and exploration by every responsible young person.

2. Overview of Asitado

In October 2018, according to the task arrangement of the characteristic scientific research incubation project of Sichuan Minzu College "Investigation and Investigation of the Living Status of Folk Handicrafts in Kardze Prefecture", I went to various counties in Kardze Prefecture with the project team members to conduct a nine-day investigation and investigation of representative folk handicrafts, including Axi soil pottery in Daocheng Aden. Located in Asi Village, Chitu Township, Daocheng County ("Axi" means "good place" in Xizang), Axi Tutao is a unique traditional Xizang folk handicraft product in Daocheng County, Kardze Prefecture, and is a national "intangible Khamba cultural heritage". This kind of earthen pottery adopts the traditional Xizang soil method, also known as "Xizang black pottery", which originated in Axi Village and is called Daocheng Aden "Four Uniques" along with three snow-capped mountains, a thousand lakes and stone seas and red grass wetlands^[1]. The historical origins of Chinese black pottery can be traced back to the Neolithic period. Until today, in the 21st

century, it is still stuck in the traditional workshop of the family, almost completely in the stage of pure hand, primitive open-air kiln firing^[2].

The most special feature of Assi pottery (Figure 1) is the unique decoration of white porcelain pieces, and the strong contrast between black and white makes the original earthiness, heavy and dull teapot become active and elegant, and have more visual impact^[3]. The white stone flower pattern inlaid on the Assi pottery is a unique decorative style of Assi pottery. This white pattern is carefully embedded in the bottle with broken small white porcelain pieces, including abstract patterns of various flowers, or straight or curved abstract lines. The most amazing thing is that using Assi clay to hold butter tea or milk can not only keep warm, but also won't spoil for several days. Especially the use of clay POTS to make matsutake chicken stew, taste very fresh^[4].



Figure 1. Assi Tu Tao, Taken by the Author in Assi Village, October 2018.

3. The Existing Problem with Asitado

Located in the southwestern hinterland of Sichuan Province, Daocheng County in Kardze Prefecture is still relatively backward in economic development, relying more on traditional agriculture and animal husbandry and natural resources, while Axi Tutao has always occupied a certain economic position in local social production. However, with the development of society, the continuous

progress of science and technology, the iterative development of new materials and items, people's living habits and consumption patterns are undergoing unprecedented changes. This has also led to the gradual fading of the use value of traditional handicrafts such as Asi earthen pottery, which is facing the fate of abandonment at any time.

With thousands of years of inheritance, Axi Tu Pottery has witnessed the glorious history of the Xizang people's development all the way to the present, which can be called a living historical inheritance. Today, however, it has to become an "intangible cultural heritage" and faces a situation that needs to be preserved and passed on. The difficulties faced by Axi soil pottery in the inheritance and development, the author believes that the following three points are roughly summarized.

3.1 Traditional and Narrow Model of Inheritance

IASitu pottery still maintains the traditional inheritance model, which is passed on within the family or family members, and the production is a traditional family workshop model, relying on the words and deeds of the master to pass it on from generation to generation. At the same time, Asi clay pottery also maintains the original pottery making skills, and the production efficiency is low^[5]. This is inseparable from the peculiarities of the geographical location of Asi Village. The land is vast and sparsely populated, resulting in Axitu Taoduo being produced in the form of small family workshops, with a small scale and no centralized planning for production; Secondly, the key procedure for making Asi clay pottery is only carried out by members of the family, and is never shown, which greatly limits the spread and development of Asi clay pottery making skills.

3.2 Single Product Variety, Shape and Color

There is a single shape and a single color in Asi clay pottery.^[6] The varieties of Asi earthen pottery are mainly carried out according to the living customs and habits of residents in Xizang-related areas, mainly using various tableware, cooking utensils, tea sets, wine utensils, incense burners, butter lamps and other daily necessities commonly used by local Xizangan residents. The shape of each variety is relatively single, and there are not

many choices. At the same time, Asi clay pottery is made of local terracotta as raw material, and the fired products are only single black, and a small part is decorated with white porcelain chips, forming a strong contrast between black and white. Some of the vessels are also decorated with abstract patterns unique to the Xizangan people, such as parallel lines, checkered patterns, diamond patterns, and auspicious eight treasure patterns. However, with the development of society and the increase of crowd flow, people's cognition and aesthetics of objects have undergone great changes, and Asi earthen pottery, which is like the traditional production and decoration style, naturally can no longer adapt to people's needs for new life concepts and aesthetic habits.

3.3 No Brand Awareness, Not Conducive to Promotion and Communication

The Axi earthenware handicrafts in Yading, Daocheng County, have little brand concept and are still stuck in the traditional production and sales model. They rely more on random sales based on the preferences of passing tourists and do not reflect the traditional cultural value and brand communication effect. And this naturally limits the dissemination and sales of products. Secondly, due to the lack of brand image, there is naturally a lack of product packaging. "Packaging is a silent salesman." Effective product packaging can greatly enhance product recognition and is the most direct reflection of product value, allowing consumers to more intuitively understand and recognize the value of the product. This is also one of the main reasons why Asi Tutao is currently facing sales difficulties.

4. Inheritance and Conservation Strategies of Asi Clay Pottery

Under the global Internet + general trend and the comprehensive development pattern of modern cultural tourism industry, this traditional craft that is still produced and inherited by family workshops, whether from its single conservative inheritance model, its traditional and conservative production style, or its backward sales model, all restrict its development and inheritance, and may even lead to its demise. As an outstanding intangible cultural heritage of our Xizang-related areas, we have the responsibility and should find a direction and way out for the inheritance and

development of Asi clay pottery craftsmanship to meet the development needs of the times. The author analyzes from a self-professional perspective and puts forward the following five reference suggestions.

4.1 Asitutao Enters the College Classroom

On February 20, 2021, the Ministry of Education announced the filing and approval results of undergraduate majors in ordinary colleges and universities in 2020, and 37 new majors were included in the Catalogue of Undergraduate Majors of Ordinary Colleges and Universities, among which the new majors listed in the Catalogue of Undergraduate Majors of Ordinary Colleges and Universities (2021) included in the art category of the Catalogue of Undergraduate Majors of Ordinary Colleges and Universities (2021) added intangible cultural heritage protection majors. The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage requires that "schools shall carry out relevant education on intangible cultural heritage in accordance with the provisions of the competent department of education." (Article 34). From "intangible cultural heritage into campus" to "intangible cultural heritage into the classroom", this is one of the most effective ways for ethnic colleges and universities to inherit and develop excellent traditional culture, and it is innovative, necessary and urgent. As a college of higher learning in ethnic areas, it is more obliged to make use of its own advantages to contribute to the protection and inheritance of traditional folk skills Axi earthen pottery. Therefore, it has established a folk handicraft training base with local colleges and universities, improved the student training system, and established a quality assurance mechanism for practical training, so as to achieve win-win cooperation between the two sides. At the same time, through the field investigation of the folk handicraft base, college teachers provide teachers with new ideas and directions for scientific research and teaching reform projects, and can take traditional folk handicrafts in Xizang-related areas as scientific research topics for more in-depth study and excavation, which is also a means of publicizing folk handicrafts in Kardze Prefecture, prompting more people to understand and be familiar with their handicrafts.

For example, Jingdezhen Ceramics University is the only public undergraduate university in the country named after ceramics. It is an important base for ceramic culture and art exchanges, ceramic talent training and scientific and technological innovation across the country and even the world. If the "Axi Earthenware Research Center" and "Practice Training Base" are established at Jingdezhen Ceramics University, and relevant professional courses such as "Axi Earthenware" are offered; and the only public undergraduate college in the Xizang-related area of Garze Prefecture - Sichuan Minzu College, although it does not offer a major in ceramics, it has great advantages in geographical location. It can offer "Basics of Ceramics", "Ceramic Art", "Ceramic Culture" and "Axi Earthen Pottery" in its talent training program for art and design professionals. For special courses, the practical part of the course can be carried out in Asi Village, Yading, Daocheng for on-site teaching. This will not only bring real practical projects to the course, but also enable more students to have a more comprehensive understanding of Asi pottery. At the same time, if students can stay after graduation, compared with previous craftsmen with primary school, junior high school or high school education, the aesthetics, vision and structure of highly educated craftsmen will undoubtedly bring new blood and vitality to Asi Pottery.

4.2 Break the Old Family Inheritance of Asitado

Although the Axi earthen pottery in Daocheng Aden has been listed as a national intangible cultural heritage item, it is understood that only a few craftsmen have been recognized as the inheritors of the national "intangible cultural heritage". The small number of inheritors makes people feel terrified, but they have to reflect on it. The growth and development of intangible cultural heritage Axi clay pottery urgently needs to break the current outdated and narrow family inheritance methods and concepts of Axi clay pottery, and we should actively explore more open and reasonable inheritance methods, such as trying to combine modern inheritance learning methods such as "master-apprenticeship", "studio" and "handicraft training school". Pass on this traditional skill to people who truly

love Asi clay pottery, so that it can be substantially spread and expanded.

4.3 Create the Axi Clay Brand and Develop Sales Methods

With the publicity and support of the government, as a cultural resource, increase efforts to open training schools on Axi clay pottery, or establish a special talent training institution for intangible cultural heritage Axi pottery, which can set up a special department of Axi clay pottery, and under the professional planning and guidance of this department, establish a larger Axi clay handicraft non-heritage industrial park. Through "huddling for heating", Axi clay handicraft creates a larger Axi clay regional brand, forms a brand effect, registers regional brands and trademarks, and reduces the cost and energy of craftsmen independently registering companies; Combined with the relatively open tourism in Kardze Prefecture in recent years, the employment of a professional brand image design and promotion team will achieve twice the effect with half the effort.

The best way to pass on is to buy. ^[7] Any cultural inheritance that lacks a consumer market will eventually be abandoned in the process of social development, so it is naturally extremely important to find a broader consumer market and development opportunities for Asitotao. With the comprehensive development of the modern cultural tourism industry and the now developed network economy, under the global Internet + megatrend, the "online + offline" sales method is adopted, such as Taobao stores, Tmall stores and other online sales platforms; Mobile phone terminal sales platforms such as micro-commerce and official accounts expand consumer contact, let more people understand it, and eventually become substantive consumers.

4.4 Government Policy, Financial Support

The local government of Daocheng County should take the lead in organizing activities related to Assi clay pottery, such as Assi Clay pottery Creative Contest and Assi Clay pottery exhibition, etc., and use media and means such as Internet celebrities' Douyinvideo, wechat circle of friends, TV advertisements, newspaper advertisements, QQ and Weibo to strengthen publicity, improve its popularity

and influence, and increase its turnover. For example, from May 15 to 19, 2015, the International Cultural Industry Fair (Shenzhen Cultural Fair) co-sponsored by the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China, the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television, the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, the Guangdong Provincial People's Government and the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government will be held in Shenzhen Convention and Exhibition Center. Seven national and provincial intangible cultural heritage representative projects in Ganzi Prefecture will be invited to participate in the event, including Daocheng County Yading Axi clay pottery. In 2020, Sichuan Daily Observation and Sichuan Intangible Culture Center launched a small documentary tour with the theme of "Dragon Boat Festival · Cloud Intangible cultural Heritage" to show the unique Assi clay pottery in a convenient and quick way. For such activities, more people can understand the intangible cultural heritage of Assi clay pottery, in order to inherit the Chinese context.

4.5 Develop Assi Pottery Cultural Creative Products

With the guidance of national policies and the adjustment of industrial structure, in recent years, the development of cultural and creative industries has received much attention from all walks of life, and many cultural and creative brands have sprung up, and the future development of the industry has great potential. Expand the consumer groups of Assi pottery, break the original narrow sales concept of serving local residents, and explore their own cultural and creative resources in ethnic areas. In addition to the development and application of local characteristics and habits of Assi clay pottery products, it is also possible to use the unique exotic customs and culture of Xizang-related areas to develop creative products of Assi clay pottery culture, which not only better promote themselves, but also have certain publicity value and significance for local tourism culture and regional culture. The cultural and creative product design of Ashitu pottery should draw valuable experience and nutrition from Xizangan folk traditional culture, and apply it to modern cultural and creative

product design, and organically combine the two to meet the needs of mass consumers.^[7]

Traditional crafts are collectively created, used and passed on by the people, so it is necessary to further stimulate the people's sense of main participation and collective existence, make the people become creators, users and inheritors of traditional crafts, and then fully stimulate the creative vitality of traditional crafts^[8]. The inheritance and development of Assi pottery can not be separated from the cooperation of the government, society, traditional craftsmen and other parties.

5. Conclusion

Intangible cultural heritage Assi pottery has a long history. After thousands of years of cultural precipitation, a special set of black pottery firing skills has been formed in the hands of pottery artisans inherited from generation to generation in Assi village, which is the essence and cultural treasure of diverse cultures in Xizang-related areas and China. However, with the changes of The Times, the traditional handicraft Assi pottery encountered difficulties and contradictions in the process of inheritance and development. In the context of today's Internet + era, as well as the comprehensive development of modern cultural tourism industry, this paper actively explores effective ways and countermeasures from multiple perspectives through field research: From the introduction of intangible cultural heritage project Assi Clay pottery into college classes, breaking the outdated family inheritance mode of Assi clay pottery, creating the brand of intangible cultural heritage project Assi clay pottery, developing the creative products of Assi clay pottery, to the support of government policies and funds, we hope to play a positive reference role in the inheritance and protection of traditional handicrafts in Ganzi Prefecture. As a kind of Xizangan folk intangible culture, protecting the inheritance of excellent culture is the responsibility and responsibility of our young people in the new era.

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