

A Study on the Transmission of Traditional Wall Paintings on the Western Sichuan Plateau: A Case Study of Sichuan Minzu College

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Abstract: As an integral part of China's intangible cultural heritage, the traditional murals of the western Sichuan Plateau embody profound historical and cultural value and unique artistic charm. This paper aims to explore pathways for the living transmission of these traditional murals and to examine how this precious heritage can be effectively protected and passed down in modern society. Through an in-depth analysis of the work conducted by Sichuan Minzu University in four key areas—training and protection of practitioners, cultural dissemination and promotion, industrialization and commercialization, social participation, and aesthetic education and integration—this paper proposes a comprehensive set of strategies for living heritage transmission. First, it emphasizes ensuring the complete transmission of these skills by establishing a sound mechanism for skill transmission. Second, it recommends utilizing various formats, such as exhibitions and multimedia, to expand the influence of traditional mural art on the western Sichuan Plateau and increase public awareness and interest. At the same time, it advocates integrating this art form with tourism and the cultural and creative industries to promote its market-oriented development and enhance economic benefits. Finally, this study emphasizes the importance of public education and the instillation of aesthetic values, and calls for mobilizing all sectors of society to participate in conservation efforts through multiple channels.

Keywords: Mural; Living Heritage; Industrialisation; Non-heritage Protection

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

As an important expression of Western Sichuan

Plateau Region art, Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau have important cultural, historical and artistic value. [1] With the advancement of modernisation, traditional culture is facing serious challenges such as inheritance faults and loss of skills. Himalayan mural is not only the treasure of Chinese culture and art, but also an important symbol of Western Sichuan Plateau Region culture. [2] Its protection and inheritance work, not only about the continuation of art, but also the embodiment of cultural confidence and national spirit. Therefore, to explore the living inheritance path of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau has become an important topic for the protection of intangible cultural heritage.

1.2 Research Significance

By analysing the specific practices of Sichuan Institute of Nationalities in the living heritage of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau, this paper provides reference for other regions and schools to promote the protection and inheritance of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau in modern society. This not only helps to maintain cultural diversity, but also enhances local cultural identity and economic development. At the same time, the study of the path of living inheritance of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau helps to enrich the theory of intangible cultural heritage protection.

1.3 Research Methods

This paper mainly adopts the literature analysis method, case study method and field research method to carry out a systematic study on the inheritance path of mural painting in Sichuan Institute of Nationalities. Through reviewing relevant literature and combining practical cases, the specific practices of Sichuan Institute of Nationalities are analysed.

2. The Historical Background and Artistic

Characteristics of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau

2.1 The Origin and Development of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau

Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau originated in the Western Sichuan Plateau Region Plateau region and can be traced back as far as the 7th century during the Tubo period. In the early cultural dissemination, Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau, as an important carrier of dissemination, were widely used for the decoration of temples and homes. [3] With the development of national art, Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau gradually evolved into a unique art form with strong national characteristics and cultural connotations.

In the process of its development, Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau absorbed the artistic elements of Hanland, India, Nepal and other places, forming a unique artistic style. The development of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau can be divided into several important stages: the early Tubo period, the later Hiroshima period in which the western winds grew to the east, the heyday of the Xialu Jiangzhi Gugu period, the late New Vengtang School of Painting, and the modern Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau several stages.[4] At each stage, Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau reflect different artistic characteristics and cultural connotations, reflecting the social and cultural background of different periods.

2.2 Artistic Characteristics of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau

Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau have distinctive artistic characteristics, which make them unique in many art forms:

2.2.1 Rigorous composition

The composition of Himalayan frescoes pay attention to symmetry and balance, often using multi-level, a centre (see Figure 1), multi-centre layout, reflecting the solemn and sacred atmosphere. In addition to this, there is a relatively strict statue measurement scripture (see Figure 2) to regulate the composition of the painting content and image processing. The formation of a modelling pattern with reproducibility, repeatability and inheritance is also an important factor for the inheritance of

thousands of years.



Figure 1. The Donga Grotto



Figure 2. The Measurement of Images
Scripture engraved by Jinling Scripture
Carving Office in the 13th year of the Tongzhi
reign (1874) of the Qing Dynasty

2.2.2 Gorgeous colour

Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau on the use of colour emphasizes the bright and contrast, often using red, blue, green, gold and other colours, bright colours and high saturation, giving a strong visual impact.

Mural due to its heritage of hundreds or even thousands of years, the use of colour can still maintain the original style, thanks to the use of colour is almost all mineral colour, the stability of this mineral colour is very strong, not easy to change colour and bright colours (see Figure 3). Such as the Baiju Temple murals, murals completed in the middle of the fifteenth century, nearly six hundred years ago, but the colour of the murals can still be seen clearly at that time, there is no trace of oxidation. Dunhuang mural paintings of the Wei and Jin dynasties (see Figure 4), due to the serious oxidation of their colours, their colours are mostly black and brown.



Figure 3. Frescoes at Baekju Temple, 15th Century



Figure 4. The Sayings Cave 249

2.2.3 Complex process

The production process of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau is complex, from the ground staff, drawing, painting, each link requires great skill and patience. Its production process includes drafting, filling in colours, outlining, gold and other steps, each step requires excellence, and its production process is similar to Dunhuang murals, which will not be repeated here.

3. Sichuan Institute for Nationalities Mural Painting Inheritance Current Situation

3.1 Cultivation and Protection of Inheritors

3.1.1 Improvement of the mechanism of skills transmission

In order to ensure the complete transmission of skills, the Sichuan Institute for Nationalities has established a systematic mechanism for the

transmission of skills. It passes on and develops the mural painting skills by offering special courses, setting up special workshops, organising social practices, organising training courses in the skills, and carrying out master-disciple teaching. The college has also invited a number of national and provincial intangible cultural heritage inheritors to serve as teaching consultants to guide the teaching of skills. The curriculum includes basic theory, practical training and hands-on practice to ensure that students are able to fully master the production techniques of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau. Among them, a workshop on non-heritage mural painting was opened, which has trained nearly 100 non-heritage mural painting painters, and was awarded the second prize of the Sichuan Provincial Characteristic Workshop Cases. Secondly, for the first time, the precedent of Western Sichuan Plateau Region and Chinese nationalities taking the same course and painting the same picture has also been carried out, giving full play to the strengths of each nationality in their specialities, and giving full play to their respective strengths and making up for their respective deficiencies through collaborative painting. This kind of mixed teaching is not only conducive to the exchange and communication between nationalities, but also to the teaching of the course. It is also conducive to the inheritance of national art to other nationalities, and then the integration of diversified culture and art, and the development of non-heritage art in the new era.

For the perspective of inheritance and protection of non-heritage culture, the effective inheritance of such skills has a very important role, for the inheritance of a culture, not only the protection and inheritance of its existing cultural works, but more importantly, the inheritance of skills.[5]

3.1.2 Cultivation and management of inheritors

Sichuan Institute of Nationalities adopts various measures in the cultivation of inheritors, including providing financial support and carrying out academic exchanges, etc. The Institute also pays attention to the management of inheritors. The college also pays attention to the management of the inheritors, and has set up an inheritor file to record the skill level, teaching and development of the inheritors, so as to ensure that the inheritors can be effectively managed and supported. The college also organises regular skill competitions and

demonstrations to stimulate the inheritors' sense of innovation and skill enhancement, forming an atmosphere of healthy competition and common progress.

3.1.3 Establishment of characteristic studio

Non-heritage mural painting studio, is the establishment of Sichuan College of Nationalities with national and regional characteristics of the studio, on the basis of Himalayan studios everywhere, the establishment of a studio with unique characteristics, is conducive to the comprehensive development and protection of Himalayan painting.

The establishment of this studio carries out teaching through the form of second classroom. It also provides a rich resource and practical platform for teaching and research in universities. Through the studio, students can experience the techniques of Himalayan painting first-hand. For example, the Mural Painting Studio opened by the Sichuan Institute for Nationalities not only enables students to master the traditional techniques in practice, but also to understand the historical and religious background of Himalayan through copying and creation, thus enhancing their artistic cultivation and skill level.

In addition, the studio can train professionals and promote multidisciplinary cross-research and academic exchanges. For example, through the studio platform, the Himalayan research programme of Peking University has gathered experts and students from many fields, such as fine arts, history and religion, to carry out comprehensive research on the art of Himalayan, which has contributed to the enrichment and enhancement of academic achievements.

In terms of social impact, the creation and operation of the studio can promote the development of related cultural industries and generate economic benefits.[6] For example, the Himalayan Art Museum cooperates with local colleges and universities to set up studios, which not only provide students with internship and employment opportunities, but also bring revenue to the local economy and enhance the overall art level by selling the Himalayan works of the students and artists, thus realising the dual benefits of culture and economy.[7] The mural painting studio of Sichuan Institute for Nationalities is also drawing on the experience of its predecessors to carry out the industry-teaching fusion teaching mode, and the

studio is both the best platform for industry-teaching fusion teaching. Through the teaching of the studio, the traditional wall murals are gradually reduced and portable, gradually turning the murals into decorations that can be carried around. At present, the non-heritage Western Sichuan Plateau Region mural cultural and creative products developed include bracelets, necklaces, key chains, table ornaments and so on.

3.2 Cultural Dissemination and Promotion

3.2.1 Implementation of exhibition activities

The Sichuan Institute for Nationalities expands the influence of mural painting by organising exhibitions to showcase the works of inheritors and students. The exhibition is not only held on campus, but also cooperates with major museums, art galleries and cultural organisations to carry out travelling exhibitions, so that more people can understand and appreciate the art of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau. The exhibition activities not only show the artistic charm of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau, but also popularise the history, techniques and cultural values of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau to the audience through explanations and interactive sessions, so as to enhance the public's sense of cultural identity and conservation awareness.

In addition to external publicity, the school also attaches importance to the internal cultural and artistic cultivation, regularly carry out the activities of non-heritage culture into the campus, has been carried out for four periods, each year to select a representative intangible cultural heritage to bring into the campus, so that teachers and students in the school can feel the charm of non-heritage culture up close and personal, and for the non-heritage culture development and dissemination of help.

3.2.2 Multimedia and internet dissemination

The Sichuan Institute for Nationalities uses multimedia technology to disseminate non-heritage culture such as the art of mural painting by filming documentaries, producing e-books and developing interactive courses. Through the use of multimedia and Internet platforms, the College is able to disseminate the culture of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau more widely and increase public awareness and interest. At the same time, the Academy also cooperates with major media

to conduct special reports and publicity to expand the influence of mural painting.

3.2.3 Participation in art exhibition activities

Sichuan Institute for Nationalities actively participates in all kinds of cultural festivals and events as well as art exhibitions, such as the Culture and Art Festival and the Non-Heritage Cultural Festival, etc., to display the art of mural paintings and attract public attention. By displaying and interacting in all kinds of cultural festivals and activities, the College not only enhances the popularity of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau, but also strengthens the public's interest in and recognition of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau. The Academy also organises cultural exchange activities on Himalayan frescoes and cooperates with cultural institutions of other schools and enterprises to promote the dissemination and exchange of Himalayan frescoes.

3.3 Productisation and Marketisation

Now the tourism market cultural and creative products in a variety of categories and forms, in the major scenic spots and shopping malls are distributed, so many cultural and creative products, you can see that this market share is very large. 2023, the national above-scale cultural and related industries enterprises to achieve operating income of 1,295,150,000,000 yuan, an increase of 8.2% over the previous year. Sub-fields, cultural core areas to achieve operating income of 8,397.8 billion yuan, an increase of 12.2% over the previous year, the contribution rate to the growth of operating income of all cultural enterprises above designated size is 93.3%. Culture-related fields achieved operating income of 4553.7 billion yuan, an increase of 1.5% over the previous year. The broad prospects of the cultural industry can be seen through the data.

The Sichuan Institute for Nationalities increases the market value of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau by developing Himalayan mural tourism and cultural products, such as Himalayan mural postcards, souvenirs, cultural and creative products and handicrafts. The college also cooperates with local tourist attractions and cultural industry organisations to carry out mural painting experience activities to attract tourists' participation. Through the combination of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau and tourism, the

college can enhance the economic benefits of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau, promote the development of the local tourism industry, and also provide students with opportunities for social participation and integration of industry and education. For example, it has cooperated with a group in Chongqing to carry out the development and promotion and sale of mural painting cultural and creative products.

The college also focuses on brand building and has formulated marketing strategies, including market research and marketing promotion, to enhance the market influence and economic added value of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau. At the same time, it has also trained a group of students with innovation and entrepreneurial ability to carry out entrepreneurial projects based on the non-heritage art of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau. For example, the project of 'Art Painting and Creation' has achieved considerable results and entered the competition of national innovation projects.

3.4 Public Education and Aesthetic Immersion

The Sichuan Institute for Nationalities has significantly increased the public's awareness of and interest in Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau through diverse educational activities such as Himalayan mural lectures, workshops, aesthetic immersion exhibitions and experiential classes. [8-10] Through these activities, the public can not only come into close contact with Himalayan art, but also gain a deep understanding of the cultural and historical background behind it. For example, in the workshops, participants can draw Himalayans with their own hands and experience the complex process of its craftsmanship, deepening their understanding and love for this art form.

The Academy also actively cooperates with local primary and secondary schools to develop aesthetic education on Himalayan frescoes, systematically integrating the culture of Himalayan frescoes into the school curriculum. Through these programmes, students not only learn the techniques of Himalayan painting, but also develop their sense of identity and pride in their national culture. Apart from within the school, the College has also organised a variety of community and rural promotional activities to bring mural painting out of the school and into

the wider community. These activities not only enrich the cultural life of the community, but also improve the public's artistic literacy.

In order to further expand its influence, the Sichuan Institute for Nationalities has also carried out aesthetic immersion activities, bringing Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau as well as red fine sketches and other art works to Luding, Ganzi, Fuhuo, Yajiang and other places. In these places, the Academy gives more people access to high-level artworks through exhibitions, lectures and interactive experiences. Such activities not only spread the artistic charm of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau, but also promote cultural exchanges between different regions.

These diverse educational activities not only enhance the public's knowledge of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau, but also strengthen their awareness of the protection of this cultural heritage. Through systematic aesthetic education and extensive social promotion, Sichuan Institute for Nationalities has successfully planted the culture of Himalayan frescoes deep in the hearts of the public, cultivated a new generation of young people with a high sense of cultural identity and artistic qualities, and promoted the inheritance and development of Himalayan frescoes.

4. Conclusion

The exploration and practice of Sichuan Institute for Nationalities in the inheritance of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau provides useful experience and reference for the protection and inheritance of this cultural treasure. Through the establishment of a systematic mechanism for the transfer of skills, the promotion of productisation and marketisation, the enhancement of cultural dissemination and publicity, and the deepening of public education and aesthetic immersion, the Sichuan Institute for Nationalities has effectively promoted the living legacy of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau in modern society.

The institute has ensured the complete inheritance of mural painting techniques through curriculum, workshops and master-apprentice teaching, and established special workshops to promote students' mastery and innovation of mural painting techniques. Through various forms of exhibitions, multimedia, Internet

dissemination and art exhibition activities, the Academy has successfully expanded the influence of mural painting and raised public awareness and interest. The Academy has also developed tourism and cultural products of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau and cooperated with tourism and cultural industry organisations to promote the marketability of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau and enhance their economic benefits. Through diverse educational activities such as lectures, workshops, aesthetic immersion exhibitions and experiential classes, the Academy has significantly increased the public's awareness of and interest in Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau, and enhanced the public's sense of cultural identity and conservation awareness.

Nevertheless, there are still some shortcomings in the research of this paper, such as the limitations of the study area and sample, the lack of long-term effect evaluation, and the value of the promotion of the inheritance model to be verified. In the future, we can further strengthen the cooperation and communication with other regions and schools, share the inheritance experience and resources, and jointly promote the protection and inheritance of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau. Continuously improve and innovate the inheritance mechanism, explore more effective inheritance paths and strategies, and ensure the continuous inheritance and development of mural painting techniques in modern society.

In addition, public participation and support should be further enhanced, and through more diversified publicity and educational activities, the public's knowledge of and interest in Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau should be strengthened, so as to mobilise all walks of life to participate in the protection and inheritance of Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau. It is also necessary to carry out long-term evaluation of the inheritance effect, accumulate more data and experience, and provide scientific basis and decision-making support for future inheritance work.

In conclusion, through systematic and comprehensive inheritance strategies, Traditional Murals of the Western Sichuan Plateau are expected to take on new vigour and vitality in modern society. The practical experience of Sichuan Institute of Nationalities provides valuable theoretical support and

practical guidance for the protection of non-heritage, which is worthy of further promotion and application.

Acknowledgement

The research was supported by the General Project of Sichuan National Crafts Research Centre: Research on the Path of Inheritance and Innovation of Non-heritage Mural Painting, Project No. SMS23-16).

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