If the Skills are there, there will be Memories to Carry—Research and Modern View on the Current Wuzhou Kiln Inheritance in the Context of Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection

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Abstract: Intangible cultural heritage is the crystallization of wisdom and civilization formed by the Chinese nation in the process of long-term practice, and is the basis for connecting national emotion ties and maintaining national unity. As one of the important items of national intangible cultural heritage, the inheritance and protection of Wuzhou kiln is of great significance to the development of local cultural values and the spread of Chinese bloodline. Nowadays, the mode of “living inheritance” of traditional culture can better align the expression of culture with the spirit of the times and realize organic innovation and combination in the interaction with the spirit of the times. Based on this, this paper elaborates on the current situation of Wuzhou kiln inheritance from multiple dimensions, analyzes the shortage in its inheritance development path, and proposes solutions for its future development, so as to stimulate new vitality of Wuzhou kiln by means of living inheritance.

Keywords: Intangible Cultural Heritage, Wuzhou Kiln, Revitalization Heritage.

1. Introduction

In the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in 2022, Chinese president Xi Jinping emphasized that we should build stronger cultural self-confidence and promote cultural self-improvement to forge a new glory of socialist culture. Specifically, we should protect and preserve cultural relics and heritage, especially in urban and rural regions. Culture plays an indispensable role in the prosperity of the country and the development of the nation. Intangible cultural heritage, as an important part of the fine traditional Chinese culture, is a vivid witness to the continuous transmission of Chinese civilization and an important basis for linking national emotions and maintaining national unity. In August, 2021, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council detailed the measures on further strengthening the protection of intangible cultural heritage, giving an unprecedented high priority to the protection of intangible cultural heritage. The in-depth implementation of the project of inheritance and development of intangible cultural heritage and the vigorous enhancement of the level of dissemination and popularization of intangible cultural heritage are of great significance to the continuation of historical cultural lineage, firm cultural confidence and the building of a strong socialist cultural state.

As one of the famous celadon production areas in Tang Dynasty, Wuzhou kiln is located in the area of Jinhua and Wuyi in present-day Zhejiang Province. As Jinhua was Wuzhou (a county in ancient China), the kiln here is called "Wuzhou kiln" or "Wuzhou kiln". In Tang and Song dynasties, wuzhou was under the jurisdiction of yuezhou, from this sense, "wu state kiln" is an important part of "yue kiln". Therefore, "Yue kiln" and "Wuzhou kiln" are called sister kilns, which should occupy a very important position in the history of Chinese ceramics. It was founded in Han Dynasty, and flourished in Tang and Song Dynasties, but declined in late Yuan and early Ming Dynasties. It once became the earliest main kiln system and shared the popularity and status with Yue kiln, Ou kiln and Deqing kiln, which together is called "China's South Jun". As an important component of Zhejiang celadon kiln system, Wuzhou kiln carries rich history and culture of Chinese nation, and is a monument in the history of Chinese ceramic art, and is also the representative of national intangible cultural heritage in Jinhua (located in central Zhejiang). In 2007, Wuzhou kiln traditional ceramic firing technique was included in the protection list of intangible cultural heritage of Zhejiang Province; in 2014, approved by the State Council, Wuzhou kiln traditional ceramic firing technique was included in the The Fourth Batch of National Intangible Cultural Heritage List; In 2017, China Wu State Kiln Museum was built; In 2018, Jinhua city wrote into this year's work report to promote Wu Culture and revitalize Wuzhou kiln. However, Wuzhou kiln is limited by traditional skills and industrial mode which are unsuitable for today’s development, and it is always difficult to break through the dilemma of large production cost, small and scattered industrial scale and low popularity, and its inheritance and development are restricted to a certain extent. Based on this, the action of helping Wuzhou kiln to live up to its inheritance is inevitable. This not only helps to enhance the visibility of Wuzhou kiln, but also promotes its industry development and reflorescent the splendid culture of Wuzhou kiln.

2. The Value of Live Transmission of Wuzhou Kiln Culture

2.1 Cultural Values

“Live transmission”, as its name implies, is to preserve intangible cultural heritage through the dissemination way of “living state” and its existence must progress together with its cultural and social environment. The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in 2022 highlights the importance of cultural undertakings and cultural industries,
which means we need to stay committed to the reform of cultural system and enhance the protection of cultural heritage. As a kind of intangible cultural heritage, Wuzhou kiln ceramic firing technique contains the cultural forms of people's customs, religious beliefs, totem worship and social environment for generations, which is an important part of Chinese fine traditional culture and a vivid witness of Chinese civilization's continuous inheritance. Wuzhou kiln condenses the wisdom of the ancient ancestors of "Shangshan culture", fuses the ritual and music civilization of the Shang and Zhou periods, harbors the long-established and profound Chinese culture, and shows the magnificent style of the dragon and tiger of the Tang Dynasty, depicting the magnificent weather of Sino-foreign exchanges on the Silk Road with the tinkling of camel bells and the dancing of swallows. From clay making, billet making, engraving, glazing to final firing, the production process of Wuzhou kiln porcelain carries Jinhua's "harmony", "beauty", "faith" and "righteousness" humanistic quality, also epitomizes the gentle and upright, modest and elegant Chinese style.

2.2 Economic Value

The mutual integration of non-hereditary heritage and industrial innovation is an important way for non-hereditary heritage to realize the living heritage and self-renewal. Therefore, the way to realize the living inheritance of Wuzhou kiln by designing the cultural and creative products which not only meet people's consumption demand but also meet modern aesthetics, not only fills the vacancy in the market of cultural and creative industry of Wuzhou kiln, establish the ecological industry chain of Wuzhou kiln and culture innovation, but also helps to promote the transformation and upgrading of industrial structure of Wuzhou kiln and realize the cultural realization. Secondly, the process of living inheritance of Wuzhou kiln attracts a large number of Wuzhou kiln enthusiasts to protect and inherit Wuzhou kiln culture, at the same time, drive the employment of local creative industry and promote the development and growth of Wuzhou kiln industry, also combines the unique Wuzhou kiln culture with Wuzhou kiln origin village and Wuzhou kiln related cultural base, effectively connect the cultural resources with the modern consumption demand, at the same time of realizing the inheritance and development of Wuzhou kiln culture, promote Tourism and related industry economic growth.

3. The Current Situation of the Living Inheritance of Wuzhou Kiln

3.1 The Production Model is more Traditional, the Production Cost Ratio is Significant

First of all, as far as the production method is concerned, Wuzhou kiln ceramics still concentrate on the stage of hand shaping, compared with the counterparts who have introduced mechanical equipment such as high pressure do mill and mobile orbital kiln, Wuzhou kiln production mode can be described as traditional. And this traditional manual production mode also affects the finished rate of this porcelain to a certain extent. Wuzhou kiln art porcelain firing yield is about 30% to 50%, business gift porcelain firing yield is 70% to 80%, while Jingdezhen ceramics firing yield can be as high as 80% to 85%. In addition, the Jinhua porcelain clay required in Wuzhou kiln ceramic firing is nearly 2000 yuan per ton on average, while the Longquan porcelain clay of making Longquan celadon only needs 1500 yuan per ton on average, plus the complex process of Wuzhou kiln ceramic firing and the firing time of about one week more than other porcelain, the production cost of Wuzhou kiln is very large in the total cost of the industry.

3.2 The Existing Scale of the Industry is Limited, the Qualified Personnel Development Remains Weak

Wuzhou kiln always upholds the concept of handmade, with the main output of "small workshop" production by craftsmen, but the number of its works is limited. In addition, today's Wuzhou kiln industry is still constrained by ceramic firing and selling, the number of service experience industry is minimal, and the share of related cultural and creative industry in its industry remains blank. The influence of the traditional production mode and the lack of related after-sale makes the industry scale of wuzhou kiln in the ceramic market obviously weaker than other products.

Compared with Longquan celadon (the local ceramic brand in Zhejiang province), the number of Wuzhou kiln manufacturers is sparse. In 2022, the number of Wuzhou kiln manufacturers is only 27, while the number of Longquan celadon shopping malls reaches 12,400; in addition, the growth rate of Wuzhou kiln manufacturers is very slow, only 9 from 2019 to 2022. The relevant practitioners of; wu kiln industry are less than 500, compared with more than 10,000 people of Longquan celadon, the influence of wu kiln is not high, the scale is small, and the current provincial market share is only 8%. The Wu kiln special scientific research team is weak, at present Jinhua only has two or three units in the research production wu state kiln porcelain, professional and technical personnel only more than ten, lack of new strength, the industry can't develop for a long time, lack of innovation vitality and successor becomes the biggest obstacle in the process of wu state kiln inheritance development.
3.3 Conservative Artisan Aesthetic Leads to Limited Consumer Coverage

At present, there are great age gap between Wuzhou kiln inheritors, mainly in the middle and old age, the average age is high, the generation borned in 00s has not appear. Long-term discontinuity plus Wuzhou kiln "take the apprentice by the teacher" inheritance mode limitation, makes the current industry emerging in high level talent few and far between. At the same time, the conservative artisan thinking also to a certain extent restricts the innovation and development of wu Zhou kiln porcelain.

Among the 300 porcelain appearance preference questionnaires issued, the sample covers 20-60 years old age group. 291 valid questionnaires are recovered, among which only 26% of the group likes Wuzhou kiln, so it can be seen that its product appearance audience is still relatively small. The reason mainly has the following two points: one, wuzhou kiln porcelain glaze color is single. Since the creation of firing in the Eastern Han Dynasty, its basic glaze color is single lime calcium glaze, although in order to break through this single plain green glaze style, brown spot color began to appear since the late Western Jin Dynasty, brown spot decoration and milky glaze flower porcelain appeared in the Tang Dynasty, underglaze brown pattern and other processes appeared in the song Dynasty, but did not become influential first product in line with the public aesthetics; Secondly, wuzhou kiln industrial structure meditation ware occupies a high production share. And the change of socio-historical and cultural environment causes the product market to shrink. Wuzhou kiln porcelain clings to the traditional aesthetics, and it is difficult to realize the convergence with the mainstream aesthetics of the times.

3.4 Passive Marketing Strategy and Unnoticeable Brand Recognition

Through the field investigation and one-on-one interview results found that Wuzhou kiln products selling way is passive and relatively single. Its most main sales way is customer order, craftsman according to customer order demand burns finished product to sell, while normally burns extra finished product is piled up in warehouse, passively waits for next batch of customer booking, if no customer order for a long time, product will be stranded in warehouse, this is very unfavorable to wu kiln industry economic development. In addition, wu state kiln related offline sales store covers the city width small, only circles in Jinhua and its surrounding area, total less than 30, and on line store only 2.

In addition, we also learned that wuzhou kiln brand operation is mainly taken over by Jinhua wu kiln town culture development limited company at present, but the brand operation content is less, the audience is limited, the popularity is low. Moreover, Wuzhou kiln has not used live e-commerce platform to carry goods sales, the mainstream media publicity is weak, only 2 official micro letter public numbers exist, namely "Wuzhou kiln culture" and "Wuzhou kiln ceramics"; Wuzhou kiln microblog super talk hot degree is 0, on the platform Wucheng tourism It can be seen that wuzhou kiln is currently confined to traditional and passive marketing mode, the lack of supporting innovative propaganda method and professional operation talents, brand awareness needs further promotion.

4. Suggestions for Wuzhou Kiln Living Inheritance

4.1 Create a New Design of National Trend IP, Empowering New Performance of Wuyao Culture

At present, although Wuzhou kiln products are more innovative than before in appearance aesthetics and practical function, the product development is basically concentrated on ceramic artworks, various traditional tea sets and tea sets gift sets, and the product form is relatively single, lacking modern sense and innovation. The dissemination of Wuzhou kiln wants to break through the original carrier, and needs to enrich the expression form of Wuzhou kiln with many kinds of new media to realize a good living heritage. Based on this concept, our team designs the IP image of "Wuzhou Xiaoyao" by combining the classic image of five vases of Eastern Han Dynasty; and launches "Wow! Originally like porcelain" bilingual science popularization series of picture books; adapting the classic song "Wuyao Remains" and re-singing it in Guzi City, Yafan Village, Hanzao Village and Jinhua Museum; designing Wuyao artworks such as "Angel's Wings" and "Maiden's Jar"; launching "Wuyao" IP printed T-shirt; among them, our team's cultural and creative products have been purchased more than 1,000 times on Taobao and other mainstream network Shopping platform such as Taobao and other mainstream network purchase volume, self-employment ability prospect is good, wu kiln culture dissemination coverage continues to expand.

4.2 Develop New Mode of Wuzhou Kiln Dissemination and Promote New Integration of Education, Research, Culture and Tourism

The 20th Party Congress pointed out that the prosperous development of cultural undertakings and cultural industry should insist on shaping tourism with culture, highlighting culture with tourism, and promoting the deep integration development of culture and tourism. Therefore, Wuzhou kiln industry should respond positively to the relevant suggestions, combine Wuzhou kiln industry with tourism, service projects, education school-based development, make full use of the thinking of "combining" to integrate non-heritage culture, activate small but beautiful non-heritage resources, and improve the single dilemma of Wuzhou kiln industry structure.
Based on this, the flexible mobilization of available cultural resources and the deep exploration of available cultural connotations at home and abroad can effectively contribute to the dissemination and promotion of Wuzhou kiln. At home, the team has carried out 106 Wuzhou kiln-related themed practical exhibitions in Zhejiang Province, covering nearly 10,000 people; jointly with schools such as Hu Haitang Primary School, Luodian Town Primary School, Jinhua No.1 Middle School and Wuzhou Foreign Language, the team has developed local school-based curriculum with local characteristics, combined with eight chanting poems, Binhong painting, Danxi medicine and Juyan tea, and held "Wuzhou style and heritage For foreign countries, this team has created a new mode of living inheritance in which Wuzhou kiln culture is integrated into international education, and carried out salons and lectures and other activities for more than 100 times in cooperation with the Confucius Institute of the Second University of Yaounde, Cameroon and the Institute of China-Africa Studies of Zhejiang Normal University and other international exchange departments, including such activities as "Landscape Kiln Watch", "Autumn Colors of Wuzhou Kiln", "Thousand-Year Kiln Fire, Shining in Wucheng" and so on. Classic theme activities.

4.3 Close Combination of New Media, Focus on Wuzhou kiln New Promotion

With the popularity of mobile Internet, the improvement of public consumption and entertainment level and the development of digital Internet technology, new media has become an important medium for information dissemination and an important channel and carrier for members of society to obtain information.

The integration of new media platform to broaden the publicity channel of Wuzhou kiln can be improved mainly from three parts. One, the celebrity effect can be leveraged in the propaganda strategy. The brand image propaganda of Wuzhou kiln can promote the artistic charm of Wuzhou kiln culture to more young public through the endorsement of inherited masters as well as celebrities. Lead the audience to understand Wuzhou kiln deeply with the star's perspective, realize the audience group "immersion" experience the whole process of Wuzhou kiln's material selection, production and marketing on cloud. Secondly, pay attention to social platform in the way of publicity. Actively grasp the change of market users' demand, according to the service status of different platforms, formulate appropriate service provision mode, carry out publicity and interaction with potential users in a targeted manner, and make corresponding changes in conjunction with the actuality of its own products, so as to adapt to the personalized consumption demand of the majority of market users. Third, in the publicity content needs to optimize the performance of communication. The rapid development of the Internet brings new business opportunities, but precisely because of its "fast" and "easy", makes the public ignore more contents, therefore in the content of Wuzhou kiln propaganda must push out the new. Innovative propaganda content, to be different, so that consumers can find in many network fragments of information, in order to make their own brand characteristics bigger and stronger, to help rekindle wuzhou kiln fire.

References