

# The Inheritance Value and Re-creation Prospect of Folk Arts and Crafts

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## ABSTRACT

Folk arts and crafts are an important component and living context of excellent traditional Chinese culture, a "primitive" culture that reflects the unique humanistic spirit and value orientation of the Chinese nation, and an important cultural resource to promote cultural inheritance, enhance cultural identity, promote Chinese design, and improve the quality of life. However, with the progress of society and the development of the times, the inheritance and development of folk arts and crafts are facing significant crises. This article analyzes the inheritance value of folk arts and crafts from its connotation and characteristics. On the basis of respecting excellent traditional culture, respecting regional cultural characteristics, respecting the differences between various ethnic groups, and protecting cultural diversity, it also explores and condenses several viewpoints on how to recreate folk arts and crafts, hoping that others may come up with valuable opinions. It is expected to provide new ideas and paths for the development of folk arts and crafts, so that folk arts and crafts can serve the people to achieve a better life, making traditional skills play a stronger role in the new era.

**Keywords:** Folk, Inheritance, Re-creation, Development.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Chinese culture has a long history, affecting the lives of people throughout the ages. Traditional folk arts and crafts are unique cultural treasures in China, which combine the connotations of culture and life, and have been inherited and protected by the people in all ages. Folk arts and crafts originated in ancient times, but still have a great impact on modern society. After China's reform and opening up, after nearly 40 years of continuous development, great changes have taken place in politics, economy, culture, and other aspects. Such a drastic change has had a great impact on traditional folk arts and crafts, and even accelerated the disappearance of some traditional folk arts and crafts. How to recreate and develop folk arts and crafts has become a difficult problem that needs to be solved urgently.

## 2. THE CONNOTATION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF FOLK ARTS AND CRAFTS

The Chinese nation is a multi-ethnic country, and all ethnic groups have their own customs and habits. In the long-term social practice of all ethnic groups, they have jointly created rich and colorful folk arts and crafts. After generations of inheritance and innovation, folk arts and crafts have developed many types, and various ethnic groups have formed their own characteristics due to geographical reasons, living habits, and aesthetic concepts. Folk arts and crafts come from the masses and reflect people's material and spiritual needs. When people create and manufacture daily necessities, they often contain their own thoughts and emotions. Therefore, traditional arts and crafts not only have a certain degree of practicality, but also have rich humanistic factors, deeply bearing regional and ethnic cultural connotations.

One of the characteristics of folk arts and crafts is the symbolism of culture. It can be seen that many folk arts and crafts works in China are closely

related to people's living environment and cultural spirit. For example, Chinese ceramic, with its advanced ceramic technology, exquisite decorative patterns, and carving techniques, not only demonstrates the rich inner world of ceramic artists and their pursuit of life and nature, but also to a certain extent demonstrates the profound culture and traditional spirit of the Chinese nation for 5,000 years, serving as an important symbol of traditional Chinese culture, and therefore playing an important role in the global cultural exchange process. The second is the diversity of aesthetics. China has a vast territory composed of 56 ethnic groups. Different ethnic groups live in different places, gradually forming their own characteristics in terms of living customs, usage needs, and other aspects. These differences have led to the formation of various ethnic groups' unique aesthetic concepts. Folk artists are the main body of folk arts and crafts creation, and their aesthetic creation concepts are mostly closely related to the creation purpose of their works. For example, many architectural wood, stone, and brick carvings in the south and north have slight similarities in many patterns and images, but their carving styles differ greatly. Generally speaking, the carving style in the south is more elegant and exquisite, while the carving style in the north is more rough and unconventional. Therefore, from folk arts and crafts works, people can also appreciate the charm of different ethnic groups in different regions. The third is the environmental conservation of the craft. In the process of creating folk arts and crafts, the vast majority of materials are derived from nature, so the handicraft creation of folk arts and crafts rarely involves the issue of industrial pollution, so it is relatively environmentally friendly. Moreover, folk artists mainly focus on the daily needs of the local people and folk activities when creating, which is highly practical and reduces waste to a certain extent. For example, in the folk dough modelling craft, folk artists use traditional materials of food made of flour, and after special folk uses, most of them are still edible, and people give them beautiful meanings. The fourth is the value of the work. From ancient times to the present, many exquisite traditional folk arts and crafts have been handed down, demonstrating the creative wisdom and exquisite craftsmanship of ancient Chinese. Today, these works are also deeply loved by people. For example, Suzhou embroidery and bamboo weaving are typical representatives of traditional Chinese folk arts and crafts. In the long-term development process, Chinese folk arts and crafts have brought economic value to their regions. For example,

Suzhou embroidery is one of the handicrafts that tourists are bound to take away when traveling in Suzhou. Moreover, as a traditional folk craft, Suzhou embroidery requires manual production, which requires many practitioners, which also brings certain employment value to the local area. The fifth is the condensation of spirit. The Chinese people have formed their own unique cultural connotation and spirit in the process of survival and development, while the group of folk artists, through their diligent hands and wisdom, present these excellent cultural and spiritual connotations in arts and crafts works, and inherit them from generation to generation. After historical turmoil and the change of dynasties, folk arts and crafts are the embodiment of historical continuity and inheritance, which enriches the connotation of traditional folk arts and crafts and has higher spiritual value. This continuous artistic spirit has extensive influence and supreme influence, and is therefore highly respected by the world's ethnic groups.

### **3. THE RE-CREATION OF FOLK ARTS AND CRAFTS**

Folk arts and crafts play an important role in the inheritance of excellent traditional Chinese culture. However, with the progress of society and the development of the times, the innovative development of folk arts and crafts is facing many crises. In this situation, feasible innovative development paths are constantly being explored from top to bottom. Through investigation and research, the authors have tentatively refined several viewpoints on the innovative development of folk arts and crafts re-creation, hoping that others may come up with valuable opinions.

#### ***3.1 Respecting Regional Characteristics and Innovating on the Basis of Absorbing National Essence***

In the era of industrial informatization, globalization is constantly advancing, and in this process, culture is increasingly tending to be unified. Such problems inevitably arise in the development of folk arts and crafts. Under the influence of the over-all environment, the creative themes, forms, and connotations of folk arts and crafts gradually converge, losing regional and national characteristics. The cultural essence and value contained in the original traditional folk crafts are gradually losing. In the process of recreating folk arts and crafts, the creative subject should

always bear in mind that folk arts and crafts originate from the people, ethnic groups, and regions. It is necessary to always respect excellent traditional culture, regional cultural characteristics, and differences between ethnic groups, protect cultural diversity, and create innovations based on inheritance. The Chinese culture is profound and has a long history. The Chinese dream of national rejuvenation has profound meaning and rich content, which is the pursuit and aspiration of the Chinese nation. The development of culture is an indispensable part of the Chinese dream. The development of folk arts and crafts helps to better inherit China's excellent traditional culture and enhance cultural self-confidence.

### ***3.2 The Re-creation of Folk Arts and Crafts Works Needs to Conform to Contemporary Aesthetic Needs***

History is always evolving in cycles, and folk arts and crafts are also evolving in tandem with the times. Therefore, folk arts and crafts based on folk activities or old aesthetic concepts can't meet the needs of people in today's era in terms of function and concept. In traditional folk arts and crafts, their aesthetic ideas have been influenced by traditional Chinese Confucianism and Taoism. From ancient folk arts and crafts works, it can be seen that they both pursue refinement and elegance in terms of modeling and decoration, and also pay great attention to a sense of order. In the current aesthetic needs, people tend to prefer works that highlight individuality and originality. Therefore, the current folk arts and crafts works tend to have practical aesthetic characteristics. As a result, the creation of folk arts and crafts should be original, personalized, and practical. The creators should not be rigidly bound by tradition, but should grasp the creation in accordance with the characteristics and laws of arts and crafts and contemporary aesthetic characteristics.

### ***3.3 Craftsmanship Should Be Integrated with Modern Technology, and Creation Models Should Be Diversified***

With the advent of the post-industrial era in the 21st century, advanced scientific and technological production and manufacturing models are quietly emerging. The rapid development of science and technology has also led to the prosperity of cultural development. Looking back on the development process of Chinese arts and crafts, it is found that the arts and crafts works of each era are closely

following the development of science and technology. Therefore, the creation of contemporary folk arts and crafts must also closely follow contemporary science and technology. Traditional folk arts and crafts are mostly produced by hand and simple tools, and many folk artists still adhere to this concept for creation, but this is out of line with the times. They have ignored the trend of integrating craftsmanship with modern science and technology, as well as the requirement of high production efficiency and low cost in modern society.

At present, the emergence and application of 3D molding technology has increased the model in which folk arts and crafts can be created. Through modeling and other techniques, the finished products of arts and crafts can be more visually previewed, which is helpful for creative design and later modification. For example, for ceramic technology, the addition of 3D molding technology can save ceramic artists more time and energy for thinking and creating, rather than repeatedly experimenting. Therefore, the combination and application of advanced technology is an inevitable trend in the development of folk arts and crafts.

### ***3.4 Cultivating a Craftsman Culture and Establishing a Sense of Quality First***

Under the influence of market demand, the current production of Chinese folk arts and crafts works has also begun to be quantified. In order to improve efficiency and save costs, the problem of rough manufacturing also arises. Many arts and crafts works have lost their due delicacy. However, from the contemporary arts and crafts works in Japan, it can be fully felt that Japanese craftsmen have always adhered to the principle of craftsmanship. For example, Japanese artist Unryu Yamaguchi's bamboo flower implement "Vortex" (as shown in "Figure 1") uses bamboo weaving to simulate the shape of the vortex, which has an abstract aesthetic ideology and exquisite craftsmanship, which can be said to be a very beautiful work. Under the mode of quantitative production, the Japanese artist Unryu Yamaguchi always adheres to the principle of craftsmanship and pursues the high quality of his works. Chinese folk arts and crafts creators should also always adhere to the spirit of craftsmanship, focus on their own creation, focus on carving and polishing their own works, pursue excellence, and always establish a sense of quality first. It is necessary to improve

efficiency while maintaining the exquisite characteristics of folk arts and crafts works.



Figure 1 Unryu Yamaguchi, Japan: "Vortex".

### ***3.5 Paying Attention to Innovative Design and Improving Design Level***

Design thinking itself is an innovative and creative thinking, which plays an important role in the development of today's era. In the development of traditional folk arts and crafts, design is a force that can't be ignored. For example, as the third generation inheritor of Taiwan embroidery, Lin Xia, a master of Chinese arts and crafts, doesn't follow the rules to create some traditional Taiwan embroidery works, but pays great attention to the innovation of her works. Her representative works, the "Original · Derived" series (such as "Figure 2"), break through the traditional attributes of embroidery that rely on images, making the works more transparent and three-dimensional. Lin Xia combines traditional craftsmanship with innovative design, bringing forth new ideas through the old, meeting contemporary aesthetic needs, and bringing vitality to the ancient folk craftsmanship once again. This innovative example shows that when exquisite folk crafts encounter creative designs, the resulting works have an enduring and undeniable charm. In the baptism of historical accumulation, folk arts and crafts will once again shine brilliantly with rich design concepts. Therefore, the re-creation of folk arts and crafts must improve the level of design and focus on innovative thinking.



Figure 2 "Original · Derived", Lin Xia.

### ***3.6 Adhering to Sustainable Green Development and Protecting the Cultural Ecological Environment***

The materials used in the creation of traditional folk arts and crafts are mostly natural materials, such as bamboo, wood, stone, dentale, leather, etc. However, with the passage of time and constant consumption, these natural materials may only become less and less in the future. Nowadays, more and more new materials are emerging. In addition to the original commonly used raw materials, folk arts and crafts practitioners should try to use new environmentally friendly materials as substitutes for the original natural materials. For example, for ivory carving handicrafts, ivory undoubtedly comes from the rare animal elephants. Many lawbreakers kill elephants in order to cut ivory, which is both ecological damage and illegal. Therefore, for the inheritance and development of ivory carving techniques, the use of alternative materials is imperative. Only by adhering to sustainable and green development can folk crafts go further and develop better.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

By promoting the re-creation and innovative development of traditional folk arts and crafts, traditional cultural resources can be transformed into economic development advantages, helping rural revitalization, enhancing national cultural self-confidence, and better meeting the aspirations of the people of the new era for a better life. More

importantly, the masses should be involved in the inheritance and re-creation of folk arts and crafts, and continuous research, exploration, and innovation should be carried out on the inheritance and re-creation of traditional folk arts and crafts, hoping to find a more suitable path for the development of traditional folk arts and crafts in China. As Mr. Li Zehou pointed out in *The History of Beauty* that "The history of beauty points to the future", the majority of creators of folk arts and crafts should not only have the spirit of inheriting the excellent traditional Chinese culture and traditional crafts, but also have the innovative and reconstructive thinking of bringing forth the new through the old and renovating the old, so as to give new vitality to folk arts and crafts.

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