

Status Analysis for Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture Baiyu County Hepo Tibetan Nationality Metal Forging Technology

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Abstract

Along with the fast growing of social economy and the continuous improvement of people's living conditions, more and more people begin to focus on traditional culture and traditional handicrafts, which are the historic products. And also people focus on intangible cultural heritage, because it is provided with a certain value and research sense. The paper is studying Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture Baiyu County Hepo Tibetan Nationality Metal Forging Technology, which also boasts its historic and cultural value and aesthetic and collection value and so on. Because of geographical conditions and the uniqueness of ethnic characteristics, the exquisite technology has been reserved until now. While this kind of technology relying on unique inheritance way also faces a situation that the technology may be disappeared and the inheritors may be lost at any time. Hence, it is necessary to study and investigate Hepo Tibetan Nationality metal forging technology; this may do a little help to the inheriting of the Hepo Tibetan Nationality. Meanwhile, as an intangible cultural heritage, the studying on forging technology can provide supplement for the protection and development of intangible cultural heritages in documents, so as to focus more attentions from scholars. Through field visit and seeing the elegant and exquisite Hepo metal forged art crafts, we will be so impressive, and this is not only the aesthetic enjoying in art crafts, more value is derived from its contains in cultural and handicraftsmen's spirit.

Key words: Hepo Tibetan nationality; Metal forging technology; Status analysis

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INTRODUCTION

Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture Baiyu County is located at the zone of transition from Qinghai-Tibet Plateau to the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau. There is a county at the riverside of Jinsha River, which is facing each other separated by the river with Tibet, where there is a long history and traditional living style that is the holy and pure Hepo village. Hepo village is famous for its handicraft, these art crafts are fabricated by the handicraftsman manually, and in history, it was a weapons tribe of Ling-King Gesar, so that it was named after “the weapons tribe of King Gesar”. After hundreds of years, Hepo village was still inheriting the manual skills and the insistence of these handicraftsman, which can't be separated from their religious faith for reasons, All of Tibetan nationality are religiose, Hepo village has a very famous temple for Tibetan Buddhism Nyingma (Mongolian Lamaism)- Kathok Monastery, the handicraftsman lived in Hepo village are very devoted to their religious faith, and the Hepo metal forging technology also blend in the insistence to religious faith. Through the inherit of a number of handicrafts and the continuous upgrading of categories of technology, the exquisite Buddhism devices, unparalleled sharp Tibetan broadsword, finely composed accessories, manually spiritual harness were famous in Kang and Tibet as early as Qing Dynasty. Tibetan nationality metal forging technology was been listed in

“Summary of The Second Batch of National Intangible Cultural Heritage” on June 7th 2008, being listed as national intangible cultural heritage, the kind of forging technology is not only the

display of art crafts, but also the exquisite skill, original way of thinking and sufficient spirit implications and other intangible formal contents being contained in it. (Wang, 2013)

Indeed, Hepo Tibetan nationality metal forging technology has contained the exquisite technology and unique spiritual value. This paper is based on the field visit to Hepo village in October 2014, and tries to analyze the living conditions of Tibetan nationality metal forging handcrafters, the features of metal forging technology and the existing issues and so on.

1. SURVEY ON HEPO VILLAGE TIBETAN NATIONALITY METAL FORGING TECHNOLOGY

In October 2014, it has conducted field survey to Hepo village, through visiting several handcrafts households who are very skilled in Hepo, we can understand the living conditions of Tibetan nationality metal forging handcrafts, the used materials in metal forging technology, the decoration patterns, cultural connotation and so on. As the national intangible cultural heritage, the forging technology is a kind of precious skill in national traditional culture, which has unique value to the survival and development of human being.

1.1 Living Conditions of Handicraftsman

During our visit the 8 households of handicraftsmen in Tibetan nationality metal forging technology; we conducted field survey to them by interview. During our investigation, we found out that the handicraft production in Hepo village was taking household as a unit; it means that, the fabrication and production of these handiworks are finished by the relatives and families through interworking. Most of the family structure is in polyandry, with Fraternal polyandry, so that they can form a “non-separate” marriage system, this kind of marriage system can also reduce the external flow out of family assets, and make the assets can be gathered with prosperous family. While this kind of marriage system can have special meaning to the handicraftsman who takes the family as the unit. During our visit to the family of handicraftsman in Hepo village, their workshop are located at their home, and the house structure was set up to floors with different height, they are used for domestic animals, storage, workshop and scripture hall from the lowest to the highest. The workshop is not very large, and the internal setup is very simple, all the process is finished in this workshop.

During our field survey, we also found out that the inheriting method of Tibetan nationality metal forging technology was changed too, originally it was inherited to boys, not girls, only families, no others, now they have accepted more open inheriting ways. The children in the family can be allowed to go to school, but some of them shall learn to inherit this technology.

The family we visited have scripture hall, and the Buddhism devices were all fabricated by their own family members, and the drawing of the patterns in the house are their own works too, this represents the religious faith of the handicraftsman in Hepo village, most of the people are believing in Mongolian Lamaism, which was significantly related to the first Buddhism temples-Kathok Monastery. Kathok Monastery can not only promote the development of this technology, but has a certain influence to inherit of handicraft patters. From this we know that, Buddhism is certainly related to the production of handiworks, which are mutually promoted.

1.2 Category of Metal Forging Technology

When we visiting the several handicraftsmen’s houses, we have categorized metal forging technology, which can be divided into 8 categories in details, they are: cutters: mainly including man’s long knife, middle-long broadsword, hanging cutter, ladies’ hang cutter, bayonet, Gesar cutter and so on; the second one is harness: mainly including saddle, stirrup and so on; the third one is Buddhism tools: they are mainly butter lamp, pure water bowl, Mang horn, suona horn, bugle and so on; the fourth one is figure of Buddha, they mainly constitute of 13 buddha figures; the fifth one is daily articles, they are silver bowl, tea set and so on; the sixth is dwellings and decorates: they are cornice, closet, wall copper tower, copper sculpture and so on; the seventh one is store decorations, including Tibetan lock, knocker, façade ornamental work of iron and other decorations. The eighth one is accessories, including flintstone, earrings, headdress flower, lady’s companion, waistband, ring, necklace, and bracelet and so on.

1.3 Using Materials

During visiting, we understand that Hepo village metal forging technology was the product of this nationality through thousands of years of changes in life, production and society, is the reflection of diligences and wisdom. The used materials in Tibetan nationality metal forging technology are mainly gold, silver, copper, iron, secondly they will match with hide, animal bone, gemstone to decorate, all the materials are from the Nature, which has reflected the living situation of Tibetan nationality relying on the products of the nature. And some of the decorations have used nonmetallic raw materials, they can use grass and the fur of the animals as the raw materials to grass knit and land knit to form hand knitting artworks, including the famous white jade cashmere covering, fine soft cashmere, and Zhang Zones.

1.4 Decorative Patterns

When check many kinds of cutters, household utensils, kitchen ware in these handicraftsman, we find that these artworks boast a certain decorative, ornamental and collection value. In selection of patterns, the decorative patterns for Hepo village handicraftsman are similar

roughly, with few creative patterns. During their drawings, they always inherit from their fathers, and inherited the patterns with memory. This is because there was a traditional principle in forging technology, King Gesar has stipulated different patterns to be used in different artworks nearly one thousand years ago, and they also stipulated that these patterns can't been changed, so the decorative patterns are basically the same without any innovations. During the learning and drawings of decorative patterns, the handicraftsman shall draw and sketch on the sand when he was very young repeatedly, then drawing on the paper when they are skilled, and finally drawing on the vessels.

As Italian famous scholar Mr. Giuseppe Duzy said, "Buddhism introduction in Tibet is not only a doctrine system, but also companion with a highly developed art, and the task of this art is to make use of visual image to communicate the same content with doctrine." (Duzy, 1967). As his saying, the development of Buddhism was along with the development of arts, and the art of Tibetan Buddhism can be transferred by the image, and the image can form the materials to display the theme conveyed by religion, I.e. to form a material to reveal its deep content. And the connotation of decorative patterns generally mean propitious, most of them are Buddhism symbols and patters, and the commonly appeared patters are: eight auspicious articles to bring auspicious omen (white umbrella, a pair of golden fish, Aquarius, wonderful lotus, right-handed rotated white spiral shell, propitious knot, victory pennant, cakra), mythical creatures patterns, discord war, gentle and four auspicious omen, clouding floral scrolls and flowers and plants pattern and so on, and most of the patterns have their own stories and originals and inherent meaning.

1.5 Cultural Connotation

Because of the Tibetan Om mani padme hum, auspicious pattern, mythical creatures patterns on the handicrafts, we can see the Tibetan nationality's religiosity to Tibetan Buddhism, and their yearn for the wonderful life, their spiritual pursuit of safeness and good luck (Jiaquo & Wu, 2011). The handicrafts are mostly derived from the daily necessities, it has witnessed and revealed the historical changes and the daily situations in a certain historical period. "Objectively, we can see that cultural form itself is a colorful, and ever-changing picture, matching with the changing spiritual background of every nationality, many of the dispersive phenomena can be integrated and change their own face. More better the combination of all kinds of cultural factors, more valuable this kind of cultural forms." We also can see that, Hepo metal forging technology is a product generated from multiple cultural factors, its technology can represent unique value. Meanwhile, along with the time and the development of the technology, it will both make them exist by intangible or tangible forms, and form a kind of technological culture. By its unique

inheriting methods, Hepo metal forging technology needs oral teaching that inspires true understanding, so that it can be existing by an intangible form, also it can be shown to the people by a tangible form. So that Hepo Tibetan Nationality Metal forging technology is a combination of tangible culture and intangible culture (Wang, 2002).

2. CURRENT EXISTING ISSUES

2.1 Technology Inheriting

Along with the fast growing of scientific and technological economy, we have stepped in information technological times. The traditional handicrafts are replaced by mechanization batch production gradually, at the time of improving economy and output; the traditional handicrafts intangibly are disappeared continuously. And the reduced market demands, the loss of inheritors are the main factors for the disappearance of traditional handicrafts, along with the improvement of living conditions, people's aesthetic and the demands to life have been changed too, reducing the utilization of handicrafts, ignoring its functionalities, which all bring the traditional handicrafts into a dilemma. At the same time, influenced by the times and the technology, the young are attracted by the large city and most of the your people have left their hometown-Hepo village and go the large city to look for opportunities, but they don't want to study this kind of traditional forging technology, so that the inheritors, especially the talented ones are reduced, Hepo metal forging technology has been conflict with the outside world (Bill, 2007).

Through our filed survey, we have found out that the technological inherits of Hepo handicraftsman are inherited from father to sons, most of them are inherited by their own memories, because of the unique features of Hepo metal forging technologies, they asked the people to learn it when they are very young, and through a very long time patient practice and practical experience being influenced by what one constantly sees and hears from their families, they can become skilled and experienced handicraftsman. While the young people who are going outside has lost the opportunities to learn this kind of technology, and this make this technology faces a crisis of inheriting.

So that we suggest these household units can gather and organize a unique and professional organization, or institution, which can be a unit of the old handicraftsman can use to teach the youth who is willing to learn this kind of technology. Also, they can be more open-minded and more outgoing, since it has become a national intangible cultural heritages, they must have somebody to inherit and transfer, and communicate with other people, even other countries, so that it can be known and recognized by all over the world. So that we can ask people to protect it, then transfer it, to make it more popular and prosperous.

2.2 Selling and Tourism of Metal Forging Handicrafts

From our field survey, we can know that it still adopts a household-based workshop or unit to produce these crafts, in terms of the selling channels, it is very simple and single, no systematic selling mode. And most of the handicraftsman in Hepo Village mainly rely on the orders from Kathok Monastery and other orders from Tibet to sell their products, and also because Hepo Village doesn't complete their independent brand, some of the businessman can order from these handicraftsman in batch, and then sell them to the market as a very higher price, so that the labor value of some of the handicraftsman can be revealed at all. On the other hand, the roads accessed to Hepo village are in bad conditions, and so that it is not possible to open some tourism scenic spots, no tourism industry can exist there, so it can be played to drive the development of economy.

In terms of this, we wish the local government can adopt some methods to promote the development of local tourism. Such as constructing and upgrading roads, opening more scenic spots, construct more attractions, and cultivate more talents who can communicate and promote their own brands. Through this, it can not only drive the growing of this kind of metal forging technology, but also can drive the development of local economy, and an economy with unique local features will be more popular, and the inherits of this kind of technology will be not an issue any more. Hence, infrastructure construction is a very important aspect for the development of the technology.

2.3 The Deficiency of Cultural Connotation

Sun Jiazhen, the primary Minister of Ministry of Culture said that: "created by the laboring people and accumulated by them through many years can reflect the practical conditions of the production and lives all the more, can further reflect the feature of our nationality. Intangible cultural heritages has fully embodied the excellent cultural view of value and aesthetic standards which is organized gradually during the historical process of Chinese ethnic peoples, which also accumulated the deep cultural gene of Chinese nation, reflected the abundant cultural creative power of Chinese nation. Hepo metal forging handicrafts has assumed the culture integrated with history, religion and nationality, and when we investigate, we find out that, in terms of the inherited Hepo metal forging technology, the local handicraftsman can only inherit this technology, and they only regard them as inherits from

their own ancestors, they can't do systematic summary and accumulation to this technology, so that it makes them be short of understanding to the internal connotation and cultural content to these technology and the decorative patterns, and it has formed a certain obstacle to the promotion of the forging technology, so that we must enhance the cultivation to the cultural connotation for the handicraftsman, especially we must protect and cultivate technology inheritors.

CONCLUSION

When we were conducting field survey to these Tibetan Nationality metal forging technology handicraftsman in Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture Hepo village, we can feel the local people's honest, natural, enthusiasm and goodness, under the social situation that the science and technology are very developed, there is still a batch of people who are very patient and got down to inherit this technology. We are so admired them. However, for the sake of the inconveniences in their lives and economic development resulting from local geographical conditions, as well as the increases of out-migration for work that has caused the inherit of this technology, as a kind of national intangible cultural heritage, we must pay attention to the technology and solve that issue step by step, so that we can help to inherit this kind of technology from one generation to another. In current process, the Government has paid more attention to Hepo village's metal forging technology, and they are making every effort to find out methods to protect these inheritors and this technology, we also wish our paper can get more scholars to focus on this issue, to conduct deeper research to this kind of endangered traditional manual skill, so that to play an active role in the protection, development and utilization of the Tibetan traditional handicraft.

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