

ARTISTIC CHARACTERISTICS AND CREATIVE REGENERATION OF RURAL FOLK ARTISTS IN ZHONGLU, DANBA

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Abstract: Traditional village cultures are undergoing profound transformations driven not only by the gradual evolution of historical time but also by the interplay and reconstruction of multiple cultural influences under the impact of modern technology and informatization. In this cultural crossroads, rural folk artists, as primary creators of local aesthetics, face significant challenges in preserving and continuing their artistic traditions. The inheritance of traditional craftsmanship must align with the aesthetic standards of modern society while meeting the demands of a market economy. Zhonglu Township in Danba County, located in Ganzi Prefecture, Sichuan Province, serves as a typical case study of this cultural reconstruction process, given its distinct status as a traditional village profoundly affected by modern multicultural influences. Drawing on fieldwork in this Jiarong Tibetan settlement, this study delves into the artistic characteristics of rural folk artists and the processes of their creative regeneration. It explores how traditional arts can sustain their vitality and economic value in the face of modern societal challenges.

Keywords: Zhonglu; Danba; Rural folk artists; Artistic characteristics; Creative regeneration

INTRODUCTION

Traditional villages, as an integral part of China's cultural heritage, embody profound historical memory and rich cultural value. The traditional villages of Zhonglu Township in Danba County, Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, stand out with their distinctive geographic setting and cultural resources. The intertwining of Tibetan village layouts, natural landscapes, and historical culture has given rise to a unique cultural ecosystem. These exceptional resources not only highlight local ethnic characteristics but also provide an ideal case for investigating the artistic characteristics and creative regeneration of rural folk artists.

In these villages, many residents are not only agricultural laborers but also creators of folk art. Beyond their farming duties, they integrate observations and emotions from daily life into their songs, dances, crafts, and architectural works, presenting their understanding of beauty and their interpretations of ethnic culture through unique artistic forms. These works not only encapsulate distinct ethnic aesthetics but also document the historical and cultural transformations of the villages. However, with the accelerating pace of modernization, traditional villages face a dual challenge of preservation and development: how to achieve sustainable development while safeguarding traditional culture remains an urgent issue.

Although scholars such as Hu Dan, Li Jiayi, and Wei Jiajia have explored the aesthetic characteristics of traditional settlements from perspectives like architectural forms, proportional relationships, and craftsmanship, research on the unique artistic traits of rural folk artists and the mechanisms of creative regeneration amidst contemporary rapid transitions remains relatively underdeveloped. Li Xianglin [1] emphasized that folk art constitutes the core of traditional village culture, embodying a "spirit of craftsmanship" that not only serves social life but also showcases exquisite creative skills. With the advance of urbanization, the social structures and cultural ecosystems of traditional villages have undergone profound changes, giving rise to new dynamics in the reproduction of folk art. The artistic traits of rural folk artists and the mechanisms of their creative regeneration provide a crucial lens for understanding the cultural renewal of traditional villages.

Against this backdrop, this study focuses on the multifaceted impact of modernization on traditional villages. On the one hand, the influence of modern lifestyles challenges the transmission of traditional crafts. On the other hand, the commercialization driven by tourism development risks diluting the authenticity of village culture. Therefore, this research centers on how to preserve and perpetuate the artistic characteristics of rural folk artists in a modern context while fostering the regeneration of their works—a core issue addressed in this paper.

1 ZHONGLU IN DANBA AND ITS RURAL FOLK ARTIST COMMUNITY

1.1 Geographical and Historical-Cultural Context of Zhonglu in Danba

Zhonglu Township, located in a high-altitude mountainous gorge with an average elevation of 2,300 meters, features a landscape dominated by alternating ridges and valleys. The subtropical, low-latitude, high-altitude monsoon climate has nurtured abundant natural resources, including farmland, mountains, forests, meadows, streams, and canyons. Zhonglu Township in Danba County is renowned for its dense concentration of ancient watchtowers, which are among the

best-preserved in terms of number and condition. Characterized by Jiarong Tibetan-style residences, the architecture employs traditional dry-stone walling techniques. These dwellings, combined with ancient watchtowers, religious structures, and village layouts, form a unique cultural landscape of high aesthetic value, earning Zhonglu the title "Paradise for Explorers."

According to local legends, the ancestors of the early inhabitants migrated here from Tibet with sheep, settling and thriving through a combination of pastoralism and farming. Zhonglu is also a focal area for the relics of the ancient Dongnu Kingdom and prehistoric sites, including ancient human cultural sites and stone coffin tomb clusters, which are listed as provincial-level protected heritage. This region retains numerous vestiges of the Dongnu Kingdom, emphasizing the cultural theme of "female supremacy." Danba County represents a confluence of Jiarong Tibetan culture and Dongnu culture, uniquely preserving the "Coming-of-Age Ceremony for Women," known locally as *Gisa*. This ritual symbolizes a girl's transition to adulthood and her capability to independently manage household affairs, reflecting the region's distinctive matriarchal culture and rich Jiarong Tibetan rites.

1.2 Historical Development of Rural Folk Artists

Rural folk artists in Zhonglu, Danba, have historically been an integral part of the traditional culture of Jiarong Tibetan villages. They are both primary laborers in agricultural production and vital contributors to artistic creation, crafting numerous awe-inspiring works of art through their skilled hands.

1.2.1 Social status and identity

In Zhonglu, rural folk artists hold a special social status. They are not only highly skilled artisans but also custodians and transmitters of village culture. Owing to their outstanding artistic contributions, they enjoy significant prestige and respect within the community. Their works, such as intricately crafted Tibetan dwellings and vibrantly colored ethnic costumes, are treasured as cultural gems of the village. Folk artists also take great pride in their identity, viewing themselves as guardians of village culture who perpetuate and celebrate Tibetan traditions through their artistic endeavors.

1.2.2 Traditional pathways and methods of artistic transmission

The artistic traditions of Zhonglu's rural folk artists are transmitted through diverse means, primarily familial inheritance and mentorship. Familial inheritance involves the intergenerational passing of artistic skills within families, leading to the development of distinct artistic schools and styles. Mentorship entails skilled artisans training apprentices, imparting their expertise and experience to younger generations. Additionally, Zhonglu retains a wealth of oral literature and folklore, which serve as important vehicles for artistic transmission. These stories and songs provide a rich narrative context, enabling the continuous growth and prosperity of local folk art.

1.3 Roles of Folk Artists in the Community

Rural folk artists play an indispensable role in Zhonglu, contributing significantly to community life and development. They act as both cultural inheritors and drivers of economic and cultural progress.

Firstly, through their artistic creations and sales, they generate economic income for the village. Secondly, folk artists are pivotal in preserving and promoting village culture. By organizing cultural events and teaching their craft, they pass on the traditions of the community to younger generations, ensuring cultural continuity and growth. Moreover, they actively participate in cultural initiatives such as constructing dwellings, temples, and ritual items, thereby enhancing the vibrancy of village culture.

Finally, folk artists contribute to fostering social harmony and stability within the community. Their artistic creations and collaborative efforts strengthen bonds and a sense of belonging among villagers, promoting communal harmony and stability. Their works also serve as bridges for emotional exchange and communication, deepening friendships and solidarity within the community.

2 CHARACTERISTICS OF FOLK ARTISTS IN ZHONGLU, DANBA

Ernst Gombrich [2] famously remarked, "There is no such thing as art; there are only artists." When studying folk art in traditional villages, the focus must shift to its creators. In small-scale societies, artists are not only makers of artworks but also cultural practitioners fulfilling specific social roles. Understanding their artistic traits, the transmission of their skills, and their roles within social networks is crucial to uncovering the essence of traditional art. From an anthropological perspective, this analysis deepens our comprehension of their identities, social functions, and how their works regenerate and carry cultural significance in specific contexts.

2.1 Distinctive Features of Artistic Creation

1.1 Themes and Artistic Style

The themes of Zhonglu's folk artists often draw from the local natural landscape, folk customs, and religious beliefs. These themes reflect their deep affection for their living environment and a strong sense of local cultural identity. Their style embodies the unpretentious beauty of Jiarong Tibetan culture, with artworks characterized by vibrant colors and rustic forms. Through visual arts and decorative crafts, they convey a rich cultural ambiance.

1.2 Craftsmanship: Tradition and Innovation

The *dry-stone building technique* employed in constructing the ancient watchtowers exemplifies the artisans' ability to use natural materials to create structures that are both durable and aesthetically pleasing. This craftsmanship has been passed down through familial and apprentice-based traditions within the village.

In recent years, the rise of cultural tourism has spurred innovation. For example, some artisans collaborate with experiential learning programs to re-enact traditional techniques like stone-stacking for watchtower construction, engaging architecture students and enthusiasts. This has fostered new art forms rooted in traditional techniques, ensuring the regeneration of traditional crafts in contemporary contexts.

2.2 Role of Local Knowledge in Artistic Creation

2.1 Core values of traditional craftsmanship

The artisans' skills reflect not only their creativity but also their deep reservoir of local knowledge. Their choices of materials, methods, and final presentations embody an understanding and respect for the surrounding natural resources. This ecological ethos underpins their handcraft traditions, creating a symbiotic relationship between the environment and culture.

2.2 Interaction with the natural environment

Local rituals vividly illustrate the interplay between humans and nature. The annual festival on the 29th day of the third lunar month is a notable example. Based on the traditions of the Mount Moerdo deity, villagers perform unique *circumambulation* rituals to pray for health and happiness, expressing their profound connection to nature. These rituals transform natural landscapes into cultural landmarks imbued with spiritual meaning, strengthening the emotional ties between the community and its environment.

2.3 Social and Cultural Significance of Artistic Traits

In Zhonglu, art transcends aesthetics, serving as a symbol of identity and cultural belonging. Folk art plays a pivotal role in local rituals and festivals, reinforcing collective identity through cultural activities.

For instance, the "Mu-shan Song Ritual" (*Ding Zanshan Ge*) is a traditional ceremony where boys, around 12 or 13 years old, don *Mu-shan* (decorative Tibetan robes) in an initiation rite. Guided by esteemed elders, the boys sing love songs in front of young girls, vying for their admiration. This ritual is not only a declaration of affection but also a symbolic integration of youth into the community.

Similarly, the local *coming-of-age ceremony* for girls is rich with cultural and artistic symbolism. Guided by elder artisans, unmarried girls wear ornaments depicting deities and perform dances at the foot of Mount Moerdo. Accompanied by traditional performances, these rites vividly convey Jiarong Tibetan history and cultural memory, reinforcing villagers' sense of identity and heritage.

3 THE REGENERATION OF FARMER ARTISTS' WORKS IN DANBA ZHONGLU IN THE MODERN CONTEXT

3.1 Harmonizing Inheritance and Innovation

3.1.1 The regeneration and innovation of traditional works

The continuous transmission and regeneration of cultural elements:

In the residential architecture of the Danba Zhonglu area, a substantial amount of the original features of Jiarong Tibetan culture has been preserved, with efforts made to protect and revive the unique characteristics of ethnic architecture. While modern materials are used in new constructions, the traditional style of the residential houses is strictly adhered to, organically integrating ancient watchtowers with living spaces. These homes have become family museums that showcase traditional lifestyles, deeply connecting life with art and ensuring the "living" inheritance of Jiarong culture.

The modern regeneration of farmer artists' works:

While inheriting ancient craftsmanship, local artists actively transform artistic content into new creations that align with modern aesthetics. For example, traditional *shan songs* have undergone innovations in content and form. This artistic form not only conveys the life perceptions of Zhonglu villagers but also incorporates contemporary elements into its expression, continuing to attract the attention of young audiences.

3.1.2 Challenges and opportunities in regeneration

Balancing inheritance and innovation:

Although a large number of ancient watchtowers and traditional art forms have been preserved, farmer artists face challenges in exploring the balance between inheritance and innovation. On the one hand, many young people leave the villages for education, leaving mostly older artists behind. While the older generation has an advantage in maintaining cultural stability, their creative vitality is relatively limited. This generational change has made it challenging to pass on art forms such as *shan songs*.

Opportunities through education and cultural return:

Although the outflow of young people reduces local creative capacity, higher education levels may enable the younger generation to revive traditional culture through innovative means. The broadened perspectives and introduction of

modern technologies (such as digital tools) brought by education create new opportunities for local cultural industrialization, enhancing the competitiveness of Danba's traditional arts in modern markets.

3.2 Influencing Factors

3.2.1 External influences: the role of market, technology, policy, and tourism

The promotion of cultural tourism

With the rapid development of the cultural tourism industry, market demand for traditional art works continues to grow. This change drives farmer artists to reproduce and innovate their works, combining traditional art forms with modern markets to create more appealing works that meet tourist demand. For example, in Danba Zhonglu, educational travel has enhanced opportunities for local artists to showcase their artistic characteristics and works, while also increasing the local community's appreciation of its cultural heritage.

The impact of digital platforms

The rise of social media and digital platforms provides farmer artists with new channels for dissemination. Through these platforms, artists can widely showcase their works, communicate directly with consumers, gain market feedback, and promote their art on a larger scale. In Danba Zhonglu, these digital platforms have drawn the attention of modern youth to admire and appreciate folk arts such as ancient watchtowers, Guozhuang dance, and *Jisa*. As a result, these traditional artistic forms have been able to survive and develop in modern society.

The role of policy support

Policies and funding support from the official and non-official organizations are crucial to the creative reproduction of farmer artists. Through cultural project funding, training, and promotional activities in cultural tourism, artists can acquire the necessary resources and support to sustain and develop their traditional art. This not only helps artists improve their skills but also provides economic security for the regeneration of their works.

3.2.2 Internal influences: community culture and family inheritance

Changes and persistence in intergenerational transmission

In the creation of farmer artists, family and community cultural backgrounds play a vital role. With modern societal changes, the younger generation's understanding and recognition of traditional art face challenges. On the one hand, the transmission of traditional techniques may weaken due to external influences. On the other hand, many artists remain committed to preserving these cultural roots to ensure the vitality of traditional arts in modern society.

The influence of family on artistic characteristics

Family largely influences artists' artistic characteristics. Artists who grow up in families rich in artistic traditions are more likely to absorb traditional techniques and develop unique artistic styles. Our research involved two rounds of fieldwork over two weeks in the core areas of Danba, focusing on Gikai Village, Kegyi Village, Garenyi Village, and Bose Long Village. We selected 17 representative *shan song* singers and Guozhuang dance performers, along with 6 outstanding intangible cultural heritage inheritors, to participate in a seminar discussing the original features, preservation progress, and current state of intangible cultural heritage in the traditional villages of Jiarong Tibetans in Danba.

Among these artists, most came from the same family or were relatives, forming complex kinship networks. These close relationships not only facilitated artistic exchange and transmission but also influenced artists' understanding and creative styles of traditional art. The family's mechanism of artistic inheritance allows the younger generation to combine their traditional education with their own life experiences, thereby creating art with local characteristics and a sense of the times.

3.2.3 Artists' personal factors: creativity and adaptability

Understanding tradition and re-creation

Artists' creativity and adaptability play a central role in the reproduction of their works. How they understand tradition and combine it with contemporary elements is key to the survival and development of their works. Artists who effectively integrate tradition and modernity often succeed in preserving cultural roots while creating art that aligns with contemporary aesthetics.

Creative motivation and personal characteristics

Artists' personal characteristics and creative motivations directly influence the quality of their works and their market acceptance. Many artists, driven by love for their ethnic traditions and a sense of responsibility, strive to express cultural identity and personal stories in their creations. This internal drive often leads to profound and expansive artistic works. According to field research, many *shan song* and Guozhuang dance works in Danba Zhonglu are improvisational creations inspired by the artists' emotions at the time, reflecting their unique personalities and emotions. For instance, singers with different temperaments display diverse emotional layers and themes in their lyrics, while the physical expressions in Guozhuang dance demonstrate a combination of intensity and grace. These personalized expressions not only enrich the content of artistic works but also enhance their market appeal.

4 MAHE KANGGAU AND THE ART OF DIMBU FOLK SONGS

4.1 Mahe Kanggau and Dimbu Folk Songs

As a significant cultural expression of Zhonglu in Danba, Dimbu folk songs underscore the intimate connection between traditional villages and folk arts. Professor Li Xianglin [1] noted that traditional villages serve as the "cultural

matrix" of China's rural culture, while folk arts represent their fundamental and most iconic cultural essence. Against this backdrop, studying Mahe Kanggau, a farmer-artist from Zhonglu, and her art of Dimbu folk songs, not only deepens the understanding of the inheritance and reproduction of folk art in traditional villages but also provides a vivid case for intangible cultural heritage preservation and innovation.

Mahe Kanggau is the provincial-level intangible cultural heritage representative of Dimbu folk songs in Moerduo Township, Danba County, Ganzi Prefecture, Sichuan Province. With profound artistic accomplishment and creative practice, she integrates this ancient art form with the aesthetic aspects of everyday life in her environment, showcasing unique artistic characteristics. Her Dimbu folk songs weave together the natural landscapes, folk customs, and religious beliefs of Danba, embodying rich cultural connotations, vitality, and artistic appeal.

4.2 Artistic Journey and Transformation

Mahe Kanggau grew up in the agrarian culture of Danba, and her artistic creations are deeply rooted in everyday life and village culture. Our first encounter with her was facilitated by another folk artist, Jiaza Wengchong. She wore traditional Tibetan attire and a distinctive headdress, singing Dimbu folk songs in a duet with Jiaza Wengchong while working in the fields. Her natural artistic charisma was evident. Though her Mandarin was limited, her Dimbu songs became her primary medium for expressing emotions and thoughts. Through her singing and storytelling, her profound love and dedication to her homeland and ethnic culture were palpable.

Her artistic journey has been both a process of preserving tradition and a practice of innovation and adaptation. Mahe Kanggau skillfully combines traditional elements with contemporary aesthetics, creating Dimbu folk songs that retain their rich ethnic characteristics while appealing to modern tastes. This artistic transformation revitalizes Dimbu folk songs in contemporary contexts and exemplifies the adaptive development of folk arts in modern society.

Additionally, she actively embraces modern technologies and aesthetic paradigms, blending traditional culture with contemporary settings to explore the dissemination and expression of Dimbu folk songs in the digital age. This effort not only sustains the traditional vitality of the art but also broadens its application and communication pathways in contemporary cultural contexts.

4.3 Community Feedback and Social Impact

Mahe Kanggau's artistic practice has generated positive impacts both within her community and beyond. Her Dimbu folk songs are cherished by local villagers and regarded as an essential expression of Danba's village culture. The community supports her artistic endeavors and actively participates in her cultural activities, making Dimbu folk songs a crucial cultural link that fosters community cohesion.

On a broader societal scale, Mahe Kanggau has ensured that Dimbu folk songs gain recognition in the fields of intangible heritage exhibitions and cultural exchange. She has frequently participated in traditional cultural exhibitions to promote this art form and has advanced the integration of intangible heritage preservation with education through her personal efforts. Her work not only facilitates the modern transformation of traditional culture but also injects vitality into the local economy and cultural industries.

Through her artistic creations and cultural advocacy, Mahe Kanggau has made significant contributions to the inheritance and innovation of Dimbu folk songs. Her case demonstrates that traditional art can achieve sustainable development only when its authenticity and core values are respected while being harmonized with contemporary life and aesthetic demands. Her practice provides valuable insights and experiences for the reproduction of folk arts in traditional villages.

5 CULTURAL VALUE ASSESSMENT OF FARMERS' ARTWORKS

5.1 Cultural Heritage Evaluation

The works of farmer-artists hold an irreplaceable role and significance in the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage. These works not only authentically document and reflect local history, customs, and culture, but also carry rich intangible cultural heritage connotations. Through generational transmission, they have become an essential part of local culture, showcasing deep historical accumulation and cultural memory.

Between 2021 and 2022, I participated in a census on the historical elements of traditional villages in the Zhonglu area of Danba County, Ganzi Prefecture. The scope of the survey covered the historical changes of Tibetan houses, traditional Tibetan craftsmanship, the construction techniques of watchtowers, historical environmental factors, ancient trees, and the distribution of intangible cultural heritage. The results of the survey showed that most of the cultural heritage in the Zhonglu area has been passed down through generations by local farmer-artists. Among them, the "stone stacking technique" used in the construction of ancient watchtowers, Dimbu folk songs, and the Peacock Guozhuang dance, as important intangible cultural heritage elements, are all created and maintained by farmer-artists. These cultural transmitters are not only guardians of these skills but also vital driving forces for cultural reproduction, with immeasurable value. Many of these inheritors have been recognized as representative inheritors of intangible cultural heritage in Sichuan Province.

5.2 Accumulation of Cultural and Social Capital

The works of farmer-artists in the Zhonglu area also demonstrate significant value in promoting the integration of local culture and economic development. Through the exhibition and sale of their works, these traditional art forms have gradually transformed into economic capital. This transformation has not only brought considerable material benefits to the artists themselves but also further enhanced their cultural confidence and creative enthusiasm. The accumulation and transformation of this cultural capital align closely with Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, where cultural resources function across various domains, such as the economic and social spheres, laying a solid foundation for the sustainable development of local culture.

Furthermore, these works have gradually accumulated social capital through exhibitions and promotion. On one hand, by showcasing their works through multiple channels, farmer-artists have expanded their recognition and acceptance within a wider social group. On the other hand, the living transmission and dissemination of cultural heritage have enhanced community cohesion, giving local culture new social significance and vitality.

5.3 Aesthetic and Aesthetic Value

The works of farmer-artists in the Zhonglu area not only possess profound cultural value but also exhibit exceptional aesthetic and aesthetic value. These works strictly adhere to traditional craft processes and ethnic aesthetic standards, incorporating unique cultural elements of the Jiarong Tibetan culture, presenting a strong local flavor and ethnic style. Whether it is the rigor and craftsmanship of the ancient watchtower stone stacking technique or the liveliness and beauty of Dimbu folk songs and the Peacock Guozhuang dance, these works highlight the artistic charm of traditional culture.

At the same time, these art forms provide valuable resources for aesthetic education for young people. Through the display and education of cultural heritage, the younger generation not only experiences the aesthetic beauty of traditional art but also strengthens their identification with and love for local culture. This, in turn, stimulates their interest in and sense of responsibility for cultural transmission. This intergenerational educational role further enriches the cultural significance of the farmer-artists' works.

6 INTERACTION BETWEEN FARMERS' ART CREATION AND THE MARKET

6.1 The Role of Market Demand

Contemporary market demand has a significant influence on the creative choices of farmer-artists. Within the framework of sustainable development for traditional villages, finding key ways to drive artistic regeneration is crucial, and the introduction of the cultural and creative industries is undoubtedly an effective lever. By integrating the concept of creative industries into the process of traditional artistic reproduction, it is possible to infuse folk skills with new vitality, making their products more attractive and economically valuable in the modern market. This model requires systematic training for artists to enhance their innovative capabilities, enabling them to meet the demands of contemporary cultural industries while maintaining their creative enthusiasm. In Danba Zhonglu, the introduction of experiential learning travel projects has brought new perspectives and inspiration to the farmer-artists, driven by the curiosity and enthusiasm of young students. Interaction with the younger generation from outside the community not only provides opportunities for the transmission of traditional skills but also stimulates the artists' creative impulses, making the artistic reproduction process more dynamic and vibrant.

6.2 Tension and Balance Between Commercialization, Authenticity, and Cultural Preservation

In the context of globalization and modernization, the tension and balance between commercialization, authenticity, and cultural preservation have become central issues in the protection of traditional arts and cultural heritage. Farmer-artists and local communities face a dilemma: on one hand, excessive commercialization may dilute the cultural purity and uniqueness of their works; on the other hand, a strict adherence to authenticity might limit the market acceptance and spread of the art forms. This contradiction forces artistic works to maintain their core cultural values while entering the market through branding and promotion strategies, achieving both cultural and economic value.

On a theoretical level, "authenticity" is a key issue in cultural preservation. Smith [4] argues that the authenticity of cultural heritage should align with the deep cultural connections of the community, while Merryman [5] emphasizes that the innovation of traditional culture should be carried out while retaining its core values in order to achieve cultural sustainability. This viewpoint suggests that cultural innovation is not a departure from tradition, but rather a continuation and adaptation of its vitality.

In practice, local department and communities create favorable conditions for cultural transmission and innovation through policy support and financial guidance. For instance, encouraging the implementation of experiential learning travel projects that integrate traditional arts with tourism and education not only promotes local economic development but also revitalizes traditional culture. In this process, intergenerational transmission and the integration of social culture inject new momentum into the creative practices of farmer-artists, allowing them to incorporate their arts into education and commercial sectors while preserving traditional craftsmanship. This drives the modern adaptability of culture.

Therefore, the commercialization and innovation of culture require careful balance. It is essential to avoid losing cultural roots due to over-marketization, while also activating cultural vitality through moderate innovation, allowing for the coexistence of authenticity and economic value.

7 PROTECTION POLICIES AND SUPPORT MECHANISMS

To promote the protection and inheritance of folk cultural arts, Danba County in Ganzi Prefecture, Sichuan Province has implemented a series of comprehensive protection policies and support mechanisms. These measures encompass various aspects, including legal and regulatory safeguards, financial investment, talent cultivation, cultural excavation, publicity and promotion, and the integration of culture and tourism, forming a relatively complete support system.

7.1 Legal and Regulatory Safeguards

Danba County has based its cultural protection work on laws and regulations to ensure that protection is carried out according to legal frameworks. The implementation of the *Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture Intangible Cultural Heritage Regulations* has brought the folk cultural arts of Danba County under the legal system, providing effective institutional guarantees for various intangible cultural heritage projects. This not only helps clarify protection responsibilities but also provides a legal basis for inheritors and related institutions in the field of cultural protection.

7.2 Financial Investment and Support

The Danba County has provided substantial material support for cultural heritage protection through special funds and project funding. For instance, financial support has been provided for the establishment of databases for *Dingmaishan Songs* and *Guozhuang Dance*, as well as for the surveying, registration, and application for heritage status of watchtowers and villages. These financial investments ensure the systematic protection of cultural resources and the smooth implementation of inheritance efforts.

Additionally, the introduction of social capital has provided new momentum for the revitalization and utilization of folk cultural arts. By encouraging businesses to participate in the development of intangible cultural heritage creative products, it is expected that 25 types of cultural and creative products will be launched by the end of 2024, further promoting the integration of cultural arts with the market economy and achieving dual benefits in both economy and culture.

7.3 Talent Cultivation and Educational Inheritance

Danba County emphasizes the training of cultural inheritors and intergenerational transmission of skills. Through organizing various training programs and cultural inheritance activities, the professional abilities of inheritors are enhanced. For example, training in *Jiarong embroidery* and *Tibetan watchtower construction techniques* not only imparts traditional crafts but also focuses on enhancing the trainees' understanding of the cultural significance, fostering cultural confidence and responsibility.

In terms of educational inheritance, Danba County plans to adapt folk songs, dances, and other intangible heritage content into school-based curricula to bring folk cultural arts into schools. This educational approach provides opportunities for young people to engage with and learn about traditional culture, effectively nurturing the next generation's interest in and identification with local culture.

7.4 Cultural Excavation and Documentation

Danba County has systematically carried out a cultural resource survey, compiling a comprehensive record of folk cultural arts and establishing relevant databases. For example, the construction of a database for *Guozhuang Dance* and *Mountain Songs* not only provides important resources for future research but also lays the foundation for the digital protection of cultural heritage. At the same time, cultural materials such as albums on ancient watchtowers and collections of folk stories have been published to further enrich the forms and connotations of cultural inheritance.

7.5 Publicity, Promotion, and Cultural Exchange

Danba County has continuously expanded the social influence of folk cultural arts through multi-level publicity and exchange activities. The county has organized and participated in various cultural festivals and exhibitions, such as the 5th *China Chengdu International Intangible Cultural Heritage Festival*, which showcased the charm of Danba's cultural heritage. Additionally, through media programs like *Seeking Beauty in Danba*, the use of modern communication methods has enhanced the visibility of Danba's culture. Furthermore, the planning and implementation of cultural and tourism brand activities, such as *Flowers Bloom in Danba*, *Coming for Pears*, has facilitated the deep integration of cultural arts and the tourism industry, creating a positive cycle where "culture promotes tourism, and tourism brings culture."

7.6 Discussion

The participation of non-official organizations and universities has injected new vitality into the protection and inheritance of Danba County's folk cultural arts. For example, the *College of Music and Dance* at Sichuan Minzu University has provided academic support for the protection of *Dingmaishan Songs* through fieldwork. Additionally,

the *Chenghua District* in collaboration with *Chengdu Television* launched the *Seeking Beauty in Danba* program to further enhance the dissemination of Danba culture.

7.7 Cultural Ecological Protection and Integration of Culture and Tourism

Jiarong culture has successfully been approved as a provincial-level cultural ecological protection experimental zone, creating favorable conditions for the survival and development of folk cultural arts through the holistic protection of cultural ecology. This model of comprehensive protection emphasizes the diversity of culture and the sustainability of inheritance, providing innovative ideas for the protection of intangible cultural heritage. At the same time, Danba County has achieved notable results in integrating culture and tourism, such as setting up an experience zone for the ancient Tibetan watchtower and house construction techniques at the *Jiaju Scenic Area*, where tourists can participate and deepen their understanding and love for folk cultural arts.

7.8 Incentive Mechanisms and Sustainable Support

Danba County has established incentive mechanisms through the recognition and funding policies for intangible heritage inheritors to encourage them to engage in protection and inheritance work. At the same time, reward systems have been set up to honor individuals and groups that stand out in cultural inheritance, creating a favorable social atmosphere for the transmission of folk cultural arts.

COMPETING INTERESTS

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