

# Ceramic Thang-Ga from the Perspective of Cultural Industry

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**Abstract.** This paper focuses on the relationship between contemporary ceramics Thang-ga and traditional Thang-ga and the characteristics of its artistic language from the perspective of cultural industry. This paper analyzes the relationship between ceramic Thang-ga and the current Tibetan lifestyle; the relationship between cultural industry and ceramic Thang-ga development; the production mode and mode of communication of ceramic Thang-ga. This paper examines the similarities and differences between ceramic Thang-ga and traditional Thang-ga from these three aspects, and further explores the contemporary, national and cultural characteristics of ceramic Thang-ga. Moreover, this paper explores the living space of traditional handicrafts under the modern lifestyle.

## Introduction

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the cultural industry has gradually attracted more and more attention in China, and it has also been greatly developed, but there are many understandings of its concept in both theory and practice. According to the definition of “Cultural and Related Industries Classification (2012)” promulgated by the National Bureau of Statistics, culture and related industries refer to the collection of production activities that provide cultural products and cultural related products for the public. The cultural and creative industry is an important carrier for the prosperity and development of socialist culture under the conditions of a market economy. It is also an important focus for promoting China’s economic restructuring and transforming the mode of economic development and has become one of the core contents of the national cultural strength.

Minority culture is also an indispensable part of Chinese civilization. With the advent of the information age, people’s production methods and lifestyles have also quietly changed. Changes in lifestyle suggest that we should re-examine traditional culture and traditional handicrafts in modern life. We must think about whether the art of handcraft needs to re-adjust its form in the information age and find contemporary realities and humanistic meanings that can combine the development of intangible cultural heritage and cultural and creative industries.

## Nomadic or Settled

Among the 56 ethnic groups in China, Tibetans are a special one. Tibetan culture has added many features to the huge system of Chinese culture. In literary works, Tibetans are often described as “closest to the sky” and “closest to the sun”. This seems to be very romantic, but the plateau is a harsh environment for human survival.

Thang-ga is interpreted in the book “Tibet Painting” as “a scroll painting made of colored satin.” Italian Tibetan scholar Tuqi explained that Thang-ga is “can be rolled up.” Moreover, he explained that “Thang-ga is a religious painting that can usually be rolled up on cotton.” Thang-ga has undergone development, not only in the form of painting, but also in the form of embroidery, satin and beading.

A great change has taken place in the life of modern Tibetan areas, that is, the polarization between urban and rural areas has increased. Urban development is changing rapidly, and cultural changes are great. In areas where there are more and more semi-agricultural and semi-pastoral areas that even herders can live a settled life. But for the majority of farming and pastoral areas, basic values are still preserved.

Due to work reasons, I often go to Xiahe County in Gannan for investigation. Most of the families I visited lived in buildings or traditional bungalows. If the conditions permit the decoration of the house in the early stage, the professional design company will also be invited to design the interior decoration and decoration. The overall color and pattern are designed in accordance with the Tibetan style. In addition to the main living room, the interior furnishings of the hall are very particular.

In the historical changes, we can easily see that the lifestyle of Tibetans is constantly changing, and the changes in residential places have brought huge demands to modern handicrafts with Tibetan national characteristics. Tibetans pay attention to the beauty, comfort and cleanliness of the home. Many places in the modern living room can reflect the influence of Buddhist culture and their unique superb color application ability. Even in the black tent woven by yak hair, the interior is neat and colorful, and the use of blankets and carpets gives a gorgeous feeling. All of this brings new opportunities and challenges to traditional handicrafts. In this context, ceramic Thang-ga came into being. Ceramic Thang-ga contrasts strong colors, exquisite ceramic crafts, and patterns related to Buddhist content. These elements inherit the characteristics of traditional Thang-ga art, and open the decorative room to carry and spread the functions of national culture.

### **Holy Device or Product**

It is easy to understand their unique culture by understanding the Tibetan religious beliefs and values from the unique living environment of the Tibetans. Living at a height of several kilometers above sea level is by no means an easy task. There is less oxygen in the air, and the food is more single throughout the year, so once you stay here, faith is very important as a spiritual support for life.

Ceramic Thang-ga came into being with modern life. Ceramic Thang-ga is an art form that draws Thang-ga on a special high-temperature porcelain plate. Ceramic art has been associated with Buddhism for a long time. Since the birth of ceramics, Buddhist theme has always been an important subject of ceramic art performance. In the Ming Dynasty, Jingdezhen had burnt a large number of porcelains with Tibetan and Tibetan patterns. In the 1970s and 1980s, a large number of porcelain-painted porcelain paintings began to appear. The idea of practicing Buddhist monks can also become a Buddha, and the process of sublimation into porcelain by the tempering of ordinary ceramic clay has a similar spiritual inclusion. From this perspective, ceramics are very suitable for expressing the world of Buddha, carrying the spirit of the Buddha, that is, the perfection and eternity achieved through the overcoming of difficulties. Ceramic Thang-ga carries the religious functions of traditional Thang-ga art on the one hand, and adapts to new living styles and lifestyles on the other hand, and caters to the mass demand of national handicrafts in modern society. It is also a perfect collision between modern craft design and traditional craft culture. Therefore, Thang-ga porcelain is a new art form that shines in national craft innovation.

Ceramic Thang-ga is the perfect illusion of mud, fire and glaze. From the unique ontology language of ceramics, various ceramic techniques such as blue-and-white, pastel, new color, enamel, color glaze can make the performance of ceramic Thang-ga bring more possibilities of language and bring out endless vitality.

The ceramic Thang-ga production process is complex and reflects the superb skill. After the drawing on the porcelain plate or the blank is completed, the ceramic Thang-ga will be fired for the last time. The production process of a ceramic Thang-ga requires several firings, and the time, temperature and heat of each firing will affect the final presentation of the work. This is also the place where ceramic Thang-ga is more unique than other paintings or other carriers on Thang-ga.

The traditional Thang-ga is mostly painted by temple craftsmen. Most of the craftsmen are originally monks. They regard the process of drawing Thang-ga as a process of practice. They experienced prayers, vicissitudes, and prayers; in the process, the corresponding Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in the picture injected their power into the paintings; After the ceremony, Thang-ga was a spiritual process of religious sacred objects. The traditional process of the traditional Tibetan Thang-ga was completed.

With the advent of the industrialization and digital era, the traditional way of life has changed. The artisan group that inherits Thang-ga skills, draws Thang-ga, and even draws Thang-ga has

changed a lot. These add a modern meaning to Thang-ga. Thang-ga, which has been hit by commodity economy and technology, is no longer a pure Tibetan Buddhist religious product. The people facing Thang-ga are no longer limited to Tibetan Buddhist monks and believers. It became a work of art and even crafts that was popularized by the public and was hung in the living room of the museum, Thang-ga showroom, Thang-ga store and art lovers.

### **Digital Mass Production or Manual Workshop**

Thang-ga has a history of more than 1,300 years. The splendid Thang-ga is not only a symbol of the sacredness and dignity of Tibetan Buddhism, but also a heritage of Tibetan culture. Chinese ceramic painting process is perfect in the history of ceramics millennium development. An important part of ceramic painting is the traditional fairy tales. Artists often look at historical legends, plus their own understanding and imagination, and paint different styles of works on porcelain plates or ceramic objects. The contemporary ceramic Thang-ga can be seen as an extension of this kind of subject, and more people in Tibetan Buddhism are selected as the subject matter. This not only inherits the colorful character of Thang-ga culture, but also expresses the artistic feelings of solemn piety and longing for the other side. It also sublimates the art of painting on the original cloth surface to the artistic level of the comprehensive performance of the three-dimensional transformation of mud, fire and glaze. The color is more stable and more “eternal” after high temperature firing. Ceramic Thang-ga not only inherits the artistic value and cultural connotation of Thang-ga, but also creates a new artistic carrier for contemporary Thang-ga art.

After the industrialization intervention, social life and production structure have undergone earth-shaking changes, and traditional farming manual production methods have been replaced by mechanized large-scale production. The survival carriers relying on folk crafts have declined one after another, resulting in the shrinking of its practical space and the strengthening of aesthetic functions. Many of the folk crafts have turned to “folk arts and crafts”, which has the potential to combine folk art with industry. In fact, the Thang-ga printed by the current computerized color inkjet printers in Tibet has to replace the traditional hand-painted Thang-ga. Then, the problem has arisen. Should we let the production of machines replace the artificial, large-scale or small workshops?

I think that the artificial spirituality of handicrafts cannot be replaced by machine production. Traditional handicrafts are a general term for the types of arts and crafts based on manual processing, with morphological attributes as a means, process and result. At present, the concepts related to traditional handicrafts include traditional crafts, traditional craftsmanship, folk crafts, folk art, folk arts and crafts, traditional arts and crafts, etc. From the connotation and extension of these vocabulary, there is overlap between them, but In general, it tends to describe and protect artificial techniques.

### **Conclusion**

Under the cultural industry context, the protection of national characteristic culture is the premise and guarantee for the sustainable development of the national cultural industry. Not only can national cultural protection create value, but industrialization itself is a form of protection. Ceramic Thang-ga is more stable in color and texture due to high temperature firing. Compared with traditional Thang-ga such as cloth and silk, the artistic expressions are more diverse, more resistant to deterioration and oxidation, and more “eternal”. At the same time, the chemical pigments and production technology that are more suitable for the ceramic Thang-ga production process are constantly being updated, which is the inevitable result of the development of science and technology. Modern living styles and living spaces promote the exchange of various art forms. As people's life scenes change, Thang-ga art is constantly injecting new vitality.

From the development of ceramic Thang-ga, it can be easily seen that traditional culture is transformed into cultural resources, and it is a new path to cultural protection of ethnic characteristics in inheritance and development. Appropriate industrialization is a new demand for the sustainable development of national characteristics culture. The development of national cultural industry

provides funds for the protection of national characteristic culture, opens up space, and at the same time reluctantly protects consciousness and confidence.

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