

Investigation and Practice of Traditional Craftsmanship in the Teaching University—— A Case Study of Freshman Craftsmanship Courses in Quanzhou Universities

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Abstract: With the rapid development of China's economy, the inheritance of excellent traditional culture is conducive to enhancing cultural identity and ensuring Chinese cultural characteristics. Traditional crafts are derived from folk wisdom in daily life and have strong national characteristics.

With time flies and development, many traditional crafts have disappeared and just only exhibited in museums. The new generation of young students are hard to contact traditional crafts. Based on the protection and redevelopment of traditional crafts in China, the integration of traditional crafts and art within specialized disciplines is the development trend of contemporary art education. Some universities should try to introduce traditional crafts courses into universities, inspired students to understand traditional crafts, learned from excellent traditional culture, and expanded the connotation of campus culture.

Keywords: University traditional craft; Traditional culture; Craft course; Contemporary art education

1. The understanding of traditional crafts

1.1 Combining technical and cultural attributes

Traditional crafts are techniques that were originally created to demand of daily life. They are experiential techniques that are passed down through oral tradition and apprenticeship. Typically, an older generation of craftsmen or artisans passed on their knowledge and experience to descendants or apprentices through working processes. Besides, in the process of inheriting a craft, there is also personal interpretation involved.

Since traditional crafts are closely related to people's daily lives, craftsmen or artisans are also influenced by the local culture. Just as Qiu Chunlin said that, a director of the Institute of Crafts and Arts at the Chinese Academy of Art, the traditional crafts are part of traditional technology and are one of the main productivities in traditional society, so that it takes a technical attribute.

When the traditional craft is aimed to production, it hardly separates from the constraints of social customs and personal creativity of craftsmen. Therefore, the traditional crafts are inevitably combined with cultural inheritance and personalized labor. Meanwhile, the cultural attribute of traditional folk crafts marked with a distinctive timeliness. Such as China's four kinds of embroideries, although they are all called embroidery, are influenced by regional culture and have different styles and techniques, presenting distinctively regional characteristics.

1.2 The advantages and disadvantages of folk craft heritage

Folk craft heritage often inherits skills from their families or through their lifetime of practical experience. These handmade skills can be unique that earn a living. These craftsmen are skilled in their techniques, and even possess some special technical abilities or many mysterious formulas.

However, with developments in productivity and social production, many time-consuming and slow traditional livelihood skills have gradually been banned, and the ability to continue inheritance has become weak. For example, paper cutting or flower cutting in Zhangpu, Minnan, is mostly considered an intangible cultural heritage to protect. The iron craftsmen of Xihe Ancient Town who recruited apprentices in their early years, but now these iron craftsmen abandoned their skills and turned to other work.

At the same time, the craftsmen who persist in traditional skills are also facing style changes in their work, due to moving away from production for daily life. How to further create the new theme is an important issue for these craftspeople. Such as a traditional handcraft in Jilin Province of China, Sui-dynasty style hammersmith, has focused on developing innovative and creative iron decorative goods after moving away from the model of daily products.

1.3 The current situation of traditional crafts in college

After the new curriculum reform, the traditional cultural education has been enhanced, and the inheritance of traditional crafts has been paid attention in college education. College teachers are continuous learning and updating new courses, which boosts their professional quality and ability that shows a steady trend of improvement. In January 2008, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued the “Opinions on Comprehensive Deepening the Reform of the Construction of the New Era Teachers’ Team”, stating that “the teachers’ comprehensive quality, professional level and innovation ability will be greatly improved by 2035. It will cultivate millions of backbone teachers, tens of thousands of outstanding teachers, and thousands of education-type masters”. Meanwhile, “teachers should adapt to new technological changes in the new background, such as informatization and artificial intelligence, and actively and effectively carry out teaching”.^[1] To setup a solid theoretical foundation for college education.

However, the most of teachers are lack of long-term research and training in traditional crafts, resulted in a lack of practical experience. The various categories of crafts will also vary in form, technique, pattern and shape due to regional differences. Due to various limitations, our teachers explore and understand on the traditional crafts that remains low-level teaching.

1.4 Students performance in the classroom

Through traditional craft courses, the students can quickly gain an understanding of a particular culture’s art and its development. As a result, this teaching plays a positive role in promoting cultural dissemination. However, the traditional craft course often focus on theoretical teaching, neglecting practicality. In other words, current courses emphasize on guiding theories but ignore comprehensive and design-oriented practices.

Each of craft course is arranged with a template. After teaching, the students are asked to finish a practice report or imitation paper. Although the course seems reasonable and complete arrangement, the students are likely to lose interest from theoretical courses and during completing homework. It is not conducive to students really feeling and understanding the charm of tradition. Hence, few students will continue to try to contact traditional crafts after the course.

2. The content of practice

2.1 Theory studying

Teachers should fully consider the current social and cultural characteristics, striving to be find interesting content of contemporary culture. Firstly, the teaching of traditional crafts should involve sorting out the development history of the traditional craft and art. Secondly, the teacher should help to students that constructing systematic perception and interpretation of traditional culture. Finally, understanding the tradition culture rooting the memory of culture in the context of history.^[2]

The teaching can be done by focusing on a specific craft, discussing its historical introduction during the period of its birth. This not only increases students’ sense of identification and pride in domestic traditional crafts, but also allows students to receive information from the traditional culture. For example, the prevalent worship culture in southern Fujian of China, has requirements for the decoration of altars in temples and family offering tables, which has given rise to the birth of Jin Cang Embroidery. This embroidery twisted from gold foil. The gold color presents a certain of artistic effect, it is deeply loved by the folk and therefore prevalent in southern Fujian of China.

2.2 Exploring the multidimensionality for teaching

Teachers need to help students build a “framework consciousness” of traditional crafts, encouraging students to break out of traditional learning patterns in classroom. At the same time, students should conduct effective field investigations, such as field surveys, using photos to create some descriptive narratives, and making their own understanding of the traditional craft. To the extent possible, students get to the root of the matter and create works with originality and innovation.

2.3 Understanding the Cultural Background of the City

Quanzhou was an important starting point for the ancient “Marine Silk Road” in China. This city has still many valuable relics related to the “Marine Silk Road”, creating its own unique elements culture. For example, the prosperity of overseas trade in the Song and Yuan dynasties which led to the development of marine shipbuilding technology. The “watertight compartment” and “multiple shipboards” that emerged are still proud technology. In the Ming dynasty, the white porcelain technology of Quanzhou’s Dehua was

famous “ivory white” porcelain in the world.

2.4 Understanding the Craft

As a carrier of historical and cultural heritage, the museums fully play their role as a second classroom, which lead students to visit museums to understand traditional crafts. Taking Quanzhou museums as an example, there are currently 31 museums that covering various aspects such as Min-Tai culture and traditional culture, with more than 100 traditional craft artifacts on exhibition. The museums display the process of change in craft artifacts in a chronological context. In the atmosphere created by the artifacts, it is beneficial to construct students’ systematic perception of ancient Quanzhou traditional culture. For example, the Jin Cang Embroidery craft in Quanzhou is not as delicate and exquisite as Su embroidery and brocade. Compared to many embroidered artifacts, the rough embroidery technique of cross-stitch embroidery brings a three-dimensional and full aesthetic sense, which has a strong expressive power in the form and color expression of embroidery. In Jin Cang Embroidery, the raised embroidery technique can create a relief effect and the raised parts can be up to 20 cm high, which increases the expressive power of the embroidered product. The representative techniques of Jin Cang Embroidery include gold-plated embroidery, litchi jumping, triple line, and dragon scale chain armor, etc. The folk artists of Quanzhou’s ancient city worked in the workshop and studio model, and we organized students to visit and investigate that intuitively understand the craft in actual production.

3. Results of practice

3.1 The diversity of the students’ final coursework

It is encouraged that students embrace tradition culture and try to absorb this information into innovation. For example, when finishing a project can combine with the needs of daily life to achieve production with traditional techniques. Such as the clocks or ornaments of cut paper, or using printmaking techniques to transfer designs onto New Year’s paintings and clothing patterns.

3.2 Artwork for exhibition

The artworks of students can participate in exhibitions that further motivate their creativity. During the course, the teacher should give an open-topic but not a certain object or task. After the course, students’ work can participate in exhibitions on related themes. The student could see their artwork in the exhibition hall, which further enhances their confidence in traditional techniques. Like, we previous participated in the annual New Year exhibition at the Quanzhou Sea Museum, which coincides with the end of the course, providing an opportunity for the works to interact with the audience.

3.3 Summary of practice

Under the guidance of theory and practice, we can fully utilize the advantages of urban and regional areas, through visits and learning to understand of traditional culture. We could coordinate the relationship between theoretical and practical teaching, taking advantage of oral and face-to-face method to enhance the vitality and tension of teaching. These methods strengthen creativity of the traditional craft courses. As a result, promoting application and transformation of traditional craft course, which is enable students to be more proactive attitude in applying the craft.

References:

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