

# The Value Significance and Protection Path of the Inheritance of Intangible Cultural Heritage

## Taking Cantonese Clock Design and Manufacture Techniques as an Example

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**Abstract**—Cantonese clock manufacture technique is the precious cultural wealth of the Chinese nation. It is necessary to take measures for better protection and inheritance of traditional culture such as Cantonese clock and to present the traditional intangible cultural heritage in a form that meets the needs of modern life and is combined with the development of the times and modern life style, which is of far-reaching significance for building a strong economic and cultural country.

**Keywords**—intangible cultural heritage; Cantonese clock; protection; inheritance

### I. INTRODUCTION

The study of clocks is an important direction in the study of the history of design and creation in the Qing Dynasty. Cantonese clock is an outstanding representative in the design of clocks in the Qing Dynasty with its gorgeous, exquisite and unique features. Cantonese clock manufacture technique is the precious cultural wealth of the Chinese nation, and also a unique historical and cultural card of Guangzhou. However, for historical reasons there are only a few theoretical researches on Cantonese clock. As a result it is not highly acknowledged by people, people lack motivation in the inheritance and technical inheritors drain. It is the basis for the promotion of Cantonese clock culture to systematically sort out Cantonese clock's cultural skills in theory. It has practical value and far-reaching significance to present Cantonese clock art characteristics and value system in a theoretical way with the help of art design research paradigm and analysis of its artistic characteristics from the perspective of design art research.

### II. THE THEORETICAL BASIS OF THE INHERITANCE AND PROTECTION OF CANTONESE CLOCK DESIGN AND MANUFACTURE TECHNIQUES

In 1972, UNESCO promulgated Convention on the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage, which put forward the concept of "World Heritage", and then gradually derived the concept of intangible heritage, which includes "folk culture", "traditional culture and folk creation", "oral and intangible heritage" and other expressions successively. Until 2003, UNESCO defines the legal concept

of intangible cultural heritage through Convention on the Protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage: "All creations from a cultural community, based on tradition, expressed by a group or individual, and considered to meet the expectations of the community as expression forms of their culture and society characteristics, whose criteria and values are passed on orally through imitation or other means." According to The Intangible Cultural Heritage Law of the People's Republic of China (2011), intangible cultural heritage refers to various forms of traditional cultural expression that people of all ethnic groups pass down from generation to generation and regard as an integral part of their cultural heritage, as well as physical objects and places related to traditional cultural expressions. In recent years, with the popularization of intangible cultural heritage knowledge and the improvement of awareness in the whole society, the protection of intangible cultural heritage has been treated scientifically against the background of the improvement of national cultural appreciation level and cultural consumption level, and the intangible cultural heritage has been regarded as the existence of an organic individual life with the principles of system theory and sustainable development theory. It emphasizes the maintenance and strengthening of the activation repair of the inner life growth system of intangible heritage, so as to enhance its own hematopoietic survival ability as an organic life individual, that is, the ability for sustainable development, self-renewal, growth and perfection in the integration of traditional intangible cultural individual and modern life style and living environment.

### III. THE VALUE OF INHERITANCE AND PROTECTION OF CANTONESE CLOCK DESIGN AND MANUFACTURE TECHNIQUES

Guangzhou, as the birthplace of trade and industry of Chinese clocks and watches, began with the introduction of "striking clock diplomacy" as missionaries came to China in the early Wanli period of the Ming Dynasty. It formed a fashion boom of consumption of Western striking clocks throughout the Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong Dynasties. China became the largest importer of clocks and watches in the world at that time. At the same time, Guangzhou, as "a port of commerce", began to sprout the clockwork industry.

The local craftsmen in Guangzhou began to gradually learn and master the principle of making mechanical clocks and watches, and then began to localize the design and production of striking clocks. In the mid-Qing Dynasty, Beijing (the Qing Palace Manufacture Office), Suzhou and Guangzhou formed a situation of tripartite confrontation in clock manufacturing industry. Guangzhou striking clock manufacturing was the pioneer of China's clock industry. From the initial restructuring and assembly to the independent manufacturing, the striking clock was developed from nothing. From the rise to the mid-Qianlong period, it represented the highest level of the world's clock industry at that time. Cantonese clock was defined as striking clock produced during the reigns of Kangxi, Yongzheng, Qianlong and Jiaqing by the academic circles. It gives out unique brilliance for its gorgeous decoration and exquisite mechanical design in Chinese clocks and watches design. It can be said that it is an outstanding representative of the clocks and watches design in the Qing Dynasty. Cantonese craftsmen who were good at change and innovation learned and mastered the most advanced Western mechanical technique at that time. They also fully integrated and developed Chinese traditional culture, skills and art, and also integrated the palace culture. All of these integrated into one, and achieved a very distinctive representative product - Cantonese clock with the combination of Chinese and Western, and learning widely from others' strong points. In design art presentation, Cantonese clock is precise in structure, verified in function, featured by the decoration of Cantonese enamel, the style language of Chinese traditional architecture and auspicious symbols. It has embodied the design features of the prosperous periods of Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong and the aesthetic taste of the ruling class, and has important historical, cultural, artistic and scientific research value. As the top luxury goods consumed by the Qing Dynasty, Cantonese clock represented the outstanding representative of the design and manufacture of housewares in China at that time. It gathers the cultural exchanges between China and the West in the peak period of the Qing Dynasty, the inheritance of traditional culture and the amalgamation of artistic achievements. It not only represented the most advanced clock-making craft in the world at that time, but also provided a new direction for the study of design art in the Qing Dynasty.

#### IV. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INHERITANCE AND PROTECTION OF CANTONESE CLOCK DESIGN AND MANUFACTURE TECHNIQUES

Influenced by Western clocks, Cantonese clock has integrated many local design features. It forged its own design language and occupied a place in the design system of the Qing Dynasty, which further affected the production of imperial clocks in the Qing Dynasty and other places, and even affected the trade of Chinese and Western commodities. Finally, like Cantonese carving, Cantonese embroidery and Cantonese painted porcelain, it became a representative product with Lingnan characteristics. When Emperor Jiaqing reigned, he changed the style of the former dynasty and punished the behavior of luxury. The demand for court clocks reduced. After the Opium War, five ports were

opened and Guangzhou lost its sole trading position. The trade and production of striking clock declined, and Cantonese clock also turned from prosperity to decline. The production skills of Cantonese clock almost disappeared. Only a few folk clockmakers continues the production of Cantonese clock. Since Cantonese clock, as top luxury goods, was facing the court and the upper ruling class, and rarely flowed out from the court, there were few folk survivors, few researchers and achievements in the study of its historical materials, and even less consumption soil for the ordinary citizen class. Since the beginning of Jiaqing Emperor, Cantonese clock experiencing the splendor of Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong Dynasties, was gradually forgotten by the world. At present, the Beijing Palace Museum is the most concentrated place for collection of Cantonese clock. Cantonese clock, as a cultural concept, represents the integration of Chinese and Western cultures, Lingnan customs and palace aesthetic tastes. It will greatly enrich the cultural business cards of three traditional handcraft carvings (ivory carvings, wood carvings, and jade carvings), Cantonese painted porcelain and Cantonese embroidery in Guangzhou. Through the application of intangible cultural heritage for Cantonese clock, it is possible to protect the culture of Cantonese clock, collect more historical documents, and re-organize the scattered masters and craftsmen to systematically explore, reproduce and inherit the manufacture skills of Cantonese clock, so as to activate the vigor of Cantonese clock culture. Under the historical background of the construction of the Belt and Road and the great development of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, it can arouse Guangdong people's sense of pride and confidence. China, as a major clockmaker in the world, accounted for 80% of the world's watches and clocks, while Guangdong's watches and clocks industry accounted for 71% of the country's output value in 2017. While having the world's first production capacity, Guangdong's watches and clocks industry and China's watches and clocks industry are facing such prominent problems as low-end products, lack of brand awareness and appeal. Cantonese clock endorses the rise of Guangdong clocks and even Chinese clocks. The academic research, protection and continuation of Cantonese clock culture will rebuild the magnificent prospect of Chinese clocks and watches industry.

#### V. PATH OF INHERITANCE AND PROTECTION OF CANTONESE CLOCK DESIGN AND MANUFACTURE TECHNIQUES

In the current era of globalization and modernization, it is better to have a clear understanding of the current situation of Cantonese clock. Today, great changes have taken place in Cantonese clock and its living soil in China. With the revolution of science and technology and the change of life style, people's consumption and aesthetic needs change with the development of the times. Many old objects and products are not available or cannot achieve docking with the current way of life, lost the soil for survival, atrophy or even disappear. From the perspective of intangible cultural heritage protection, the protection of Cantonese clock has gradually been put on an orderly track. Through the practical protection activities of intangible cultural heritage Cantonese

clock, Cantonese painted porcelain and Cantonese embroidery have relatively perfect theoretical basis and practical paradigm for protection in the existing intangible cultural heritage system, providing strong theoretical and practical support for the protection of Cantonese clock. Only by deeply exploring Cantonese clock culture and integrating it with the current nature, history, consumption and lifestyle can this intangible cultural heritage be inherited. At the same time, it also provides a sense of identity and history, which promotes the diversity and creativity of Lingnan cultural business cards.

In today's global economic integration, cultural diversity and inclusiveness, as distinct features of Chinese culture, are not only reflected in the diversity of cultural heritage manifestations, but also in the diversity of cultural heritage and modern life, production mode in the design, production and consumption links. In January 2017, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued Opinions on Implementing the Project of the Inheritance and Development of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture. From the practical point of view, it emphasizes that through effective support and a series of measures for the inheritance and development of traditional culture, it can increase the confidence and pride of national culture, promote the construction of socialist culture and enhance the soft power of culture, build a strong cultural country, realizing the Chinese dream of great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and better integrating the connotation of Chinese excellent traditional culture into all aspects of contemporary social production and life.

## VI. CONCLUSION

High-quality skilled personnel are the key to Cantonese clock's revitalization and inheritance. For a long time, the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage Cantonese clock is rooted in the oral teaching of traditional teachers and apprentices, which derives the spirit of craftsmen who strive for excellence from generation to generation. At present, the talent of Cantonese clock is declining and the inheritors get caught short. The talent exhaustion is the key factor hindering the development of Cantonese art. Opinions on Implementing the Project of the Inheritance and Development of Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture also points out the importance of talent factors in the inheritance of Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture, through promoting the popularization of education in schools and the construction of disciplines and other specific measures. Combining the current reform and innovation pace of Vocational Education in China, it is suggested to vigorously promote the construction of national cultural heritage and innovative demonstration specialty spots in vocational colleges. In the continuous improvement of the theory and practice of intangible cultural heritage protection, it is necessary to combine the inheritance mode of non-legacy art culture with modern vocational education, and make Cantonese clock into a cultural business card that can be sensed, touched and developed and carry forward Cantonese clock culture.

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