

Discussion on the Development and Value Orientation of Craftsmen

Investigation on the Current Situation of Fujian Woodcarving Craftsmen

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Abstract—Based on the investigation of the present situation of Fujian woodcarving handicraftsmen, this paper discusses the basic rules of the development of handicraftsmen from the perspective of Marxism Theory of "Marx's Theory of "Man's Development"" and Maslow's demand theory. And the article explores the value orientation of the transition from ordinary handicraftsmen to creative handicraftsmen in the internet age.

Keywords: *craftsmen, development, value orientation, Fujian woodcarving*

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping as the core has attached great importance to the inheritance and development of Chinese excellent traditional culture. In March 2017, the General Office of the State Council publicly issued the "Plan for Revitalizing Traditional Chinese Crafts" jointly formulated by the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and the Ministry of Finance. The document defines the scope of traditional crafts: they are manufacturing processes and related products that have historical heritage and national or regional characteristics, which are closely connected with daily life and are mainly produced through manual labor. They belong to creative hand-made labor and individualized production based on aptitude, which have the characteristics of irreplaceable industrial production.

Traditional handicrafts mainly refer to the process and result of applying a certain method (or multiple methods) to a certain material (or multiple materials) to change its form by manual operation in the pre-industrial period. [1] Craftsmen are the successors and practitioners of traditional crafts, and they are the creators of traditional crafts culture. Their survival and state of development is directly related to the quality of handmade products and the development of traditional crafts industry.

II. THE BASIC LAW AND DEMAND-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT OF CRAFTSMEN

The author interviewed several woodcarving masters during his fieldwork in Fujian woodcarvings. Although these masters have different carving techniques and creative concepts and their work styles are different and exquisite, their growth process is consistent. They basically all have gone through three stages: training period, growth period and creative period. According to the growth environment and individual differences of craftsmen, the length of each stage varies. Although the information age and the network society have shaped and changed human development in a completely new way, for the special group of craftsmen, the new way can only accelerate its growth but can't step over these three development stages.

Maslow's demand theory mentions that the level of human needs in order from low to high is physiological needs, safety needs, emotional and fate needs, social needs and self-actualization needs. Although there are some disputes about this theory in the academic circle due to the differences between eastern and western societies and cultures, they all agree that people in different stages of development have different needs. The survey found that it is the driving force for higher demand that promotes the development of craftsmen. In the initial stage of the development of craftsmen, they paid attention to the needs of survival and safety. Most people at this stage were ordinary craftsmen or apprentices. They made product according to the requirements of the order and didn't participate in the process of design and creation. The manual work was in exchange for basic means of living, and in this process, craftsmen themselves also made progress. After the basic survival needs were met, some craftsmen began to have creative consciousness. They paid more attention to social and intellectual needs, and often shared their experiences with fellow people to learn from each other for progress. Based on the improvement of skills and creation, the craftsmen pay more attention to the realization of self-worth and the need of getting social respect. They will gradually enter the highest stage of professional development, namely creative craftsmen. They have strong comprehensive qualities with skilled manual skills, unique insights into the

industry and the ability to create independently. Most creative craftsmen are senior directors of crafts companies or independent operators who integrate creative management. Creative craftsmen often integrate their emotions and values into their creations, pay attention to self-expression, and gradually form unique styles. Most of their works are works of art or collectibles, which are often less affected by the market. Maslow mentioned in "The Theory of Human Motivation": Need is the intrinsic motivation of human

development. When the lower level needs are met, there will be higher levels of demand to drive human behavior. The needs that have been met will no longer be an incentive factor. As the saying goes: "If the granaries are full of grain, people may know manners; if people have plenty food and clothes, they may know honour and disgrace." It also reflects the stage and level of demand. The relationship between the development law of craftsmen, demand-driven and creation at different stages is shown in "Fig. 1".

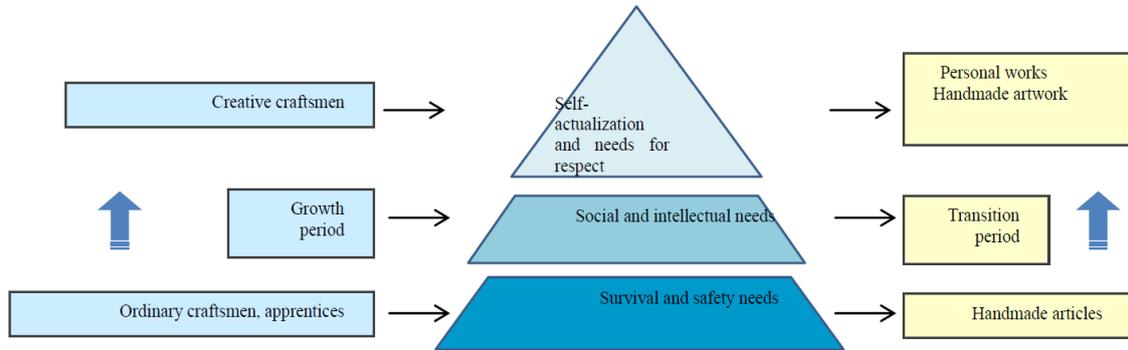


Fig. 1. The relationship between the development law of craftsmen, demand-driven and creation at different stages.

III. FREE TIME AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRAFTSMEN

"Free time" means "creating a large amount of freely available time for the entire society and each member of society in addition to necessary labor time". [2] The true free and comprehensive development of men must be based on free time. Marx pointed out: "All free time is the time for free development" or "time for individual's full development" [3].

The improvement of social productivity lays the material foundation for the all-round development of human beings, and the concept of free time is thus proposed. As a traditional mode of production, craftsmen have their unique "favorable position for the use of their skills" in modern society. The free time of craftsmen includes three aspects: First, the process of learning manual skills is a combination of free time and necessary labor time. A lot of time must be devoted to mastering craft skills during the growth process of craftsmen. The improvement of craft skills promotes the self-development of craftsmen. The second is the use of advanced operating tools to improve the efficiency of manual labor, reducing the necessary labor time for craftsmen, which means increasing free time. "Saving labor time is equivalent to increasing free time, that is, increasing the time for the individual to fully develop; and the full development of the individual, as a maximum productive force, affects labor productivity. From the perspective of the direct production process, saving labor time can be regarded as the fixed cost of production, which is the person himself." [4] "The Analects of Confucius" reads, "It is necessary to have effective tools to do good work". The third is to design and create high value-added handicrafts.

For more than 100 years, the British arts and crafts movement emphasized the combination of aesthetics and use functions. What was criticized most by scholars later was

that its method of advocating fine craftsmanship only served a few noble classes. It is true that in the early days of mechanization and the era of relatively backward productivity, advocating craftsmanship did have its social limitations. However, in today's world of great material abundance, craftsmen's pursuit of extreme and tailor-made creations happens to make up for the shortcomings of industrial civilization, meet the needs of society, and have its own unique way of survival.

IV. THE VALUE ORIENTATION OF CRAFTSMEN DEVELOPMENT

Under the impact of the modern industry and the digital media era, the development of craftsmen has undergone obvious levels of differentiation. Ordinary craftsmen are still in the production line, and they repeat daily manual labor. Most of the craftsmen in the transition period are self-employed and continue the traditional business model of "shop front and workshop rear". Most creative craftsmen are mostly national or provincial craft celebrities or representative inheritors of intangible cultural heritage. At the same time, the hierarchical differentiation of craftsmen has led to chaos in the industry. Some people have impetuous mentality and seek quick success and instant benefits without considering the long-term development of themselves and become slaves to the market. Some use unscrupulous means to achieve pleasing commercial purposes and compete for plagiarism without industry ethics and professional ethics. In the past two years, the training of the intangible cultural heritage inheritance crowd of the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education is an opportunity. Craftsmanship is an important part of intangible cultural heritage, and the key to its training is to build a value system for craftsmen. Taking woodcarving masters as examples, the following discusses the qualities that a

craftsman in the growing stage should possess, and the corresponding value orientation he or she should establish.

A. Ethics orientation of traditional craftsmanship

The traditional handicraft inheritance system is mainly the "mentoring" inherited by masters with apprentices or families. This system is a stable and complicated inheritance system, including the ceremony of mentorship, family rules of ancestral warnings, the environment for performing arts, and the methods of performing arts. It not only inherits craftsmanship, but also includes life methods and moral principles. The passing on of art is mainly concentrated in the practice place, where the master and apprentice impart their skills in the common labor, forming a closed and stable environment for handicraft inheritance. Under the new situation, craftsmen must adhere to the craftsman system and industry norms. The "Book of Diverse Crafts", written in the Spring and Autumn Period, is an important masterpiece of traditional handicrafts. The book explores several issues of the traditional craft system from the aspects of national management and the overall social structure, including the management system, the social value and the production characteristics of craftsmen; it also includes the creation process and the evaluation and assessment standards, etc., which can be described as the traditional craftsmen's professional standards and ethical norms.

Craftsmanship is to create perfection: traditional craftsmanship originates from the needs of survival and ends up in daily use. Hand-made objects are a way of life in the past. The creation of a craftsman is a planned step, designed in advance, and its form and characteristics are known before manufacturing. [5] The pragmatism of "the existence of an object is the basic premise for its use, while the empty space in the object is the fundamental reason for its use" is the basic requirement of creation. The highest pursuit of handicraft is to improve the quality of livelihood and even the quality of life. "The Book of Songs" has the words: "like cutting, like grinding; like carving, like polishing", which means that the literati need to create the perfection like a craftsman. "Guan Zi" once mentioned that the craftsmen are engaged in manual labor day and night together, "devoting themselves to each other, learning skills from each other, and comparing each other's skill level". Craftsmen are engaged in manual labor day and night together with great presence of mind, competing with each other, comparing the level of skills with each other, commenting on the merits of the finished product, discussing the improvement methods, and accumulating over a long period. This spirit of striving for excellence has become the basic quality and spiritual core of craftsmen creation. [6]

B. Natural aesthetic orientation

Returning to nature is a way of life that modern people admire. Especially against the background of uncontrolled natural resource development and the deteriorating environment, people are more eager to integrate natural aesthetics into real life. Zhuangzi said: "There is great speechless beauty in the heavens and the earth," pointing out

that beauty is not lacking in nature, and what is lacking is discovery. Natural forms include attributes such as the shape, posture, texture, and color of objects, and are the source of materials and inspiration for human creation. There are a group of craftsmen headed by Master Lu Sili in the field of woodcarving in Fujian, advocating natural woodcarving. They use natural tree roots, burls, tree trunks and other natural forms as raw materials, make full use of the experience and ideas of craftsmen, and use "fine carving" techniques to express the charm of woodcarving with only a few moves of carving. "Fine carving" is based on the natural ingenuity of the material, letting nature take its course and retaining the most typical and meaningful "keynote" of the original material without destroying its original natural shape. It aims to apply techniques according to their aptitude; in terms of technique and form, it matches well with original texture rules and shape characteristics, using various techniques and skillfully learning from each other to make raw material a beautiful work of art. [7] Craftsmen make the most of the natural form of nature, and at the same time pay attention to the humanistic care of the physical nature, which is "70 percent depending on nature and 30 percent depending on manual work". The creation activities based on the beauty of natural forms examine the craftsman's creative experience, knowledge accumulation and aesthetic intuition.

C. Life aesthetic orientation

The rapid economic development promotes people's pursuit of a higher level of quality of life. When people begin to pay attention to "life aesthetics", life aesthetics is born naturally. "Life aesthetics" means "aestheticization of daily life". It is an aesthetic phenomenon of "anti-aesthetics" of avant-garde art, and it is a new aesthetic interpretation and aesthetic thinking. It transcends the aesthetic view of "art for art's sake" and becomes a life art or artistic life.

The biggest feature of handicraft is that it is integrated with people's daily life. The purpose of handicraft creation is for human use. Craftsmen must have a keen observation of daily life and a personal understanding of life aesthetics. Craftsmen should make the best of their handicraft skills, and infect others with the temperature of handicraft creation and the ethical orientation of craftsmen, so as to inherit the traditions, gain respect from others and spread to the society, thus leading the way of life and social fashion. Today, people start pursuing the aesthetics of life and craftsmanship is undoubtedly an excellent way to meet this demand.

D. Orientation of Chinese classical culture symbols

Chinese culture is self-initiated, has its own characteristics and slowly takes shape without copying other countries. [8] Outstanding cultural elements, such as humaneness, righteousness, propriety, trustworthiness, humbleness and frugality in traditional Chinese culture, are engraved on the imposing dwellings and spacious courtyards as well as platforms and horizontal inscribed boards, integrating into daily life. Fujian traditional folk woodcarvings are wrapped by a constantly changing macro-cultural system. The contents expressed are mostly "praying

for a better life" and "human ethics education" based on historical allusions. In the interview, the author found that the modern woodcarving masters of Fujian have continuously excavated traditional classics, interpreting and expressing the excellent culture of Chinese civilization for decades. The handicraft industry needs time to settle. Craftsmen should establish the self-confidence and consciousness of Chinese culture, and explore the essence of aesthetics from the traditional classics.

E. Internet-based information orientation

Information is generally understood as the object transmitted and processed by the communication system, and generally refers to all content transmitted by human society. In the era of relatively low productivity farming, craftsmen have limited access to craft information. Some people say that the history of Chinese civilization is a history of handicrafts, but unfortunately, in the long process of inheritance of skills, there are only a handful of books about manual skills. The inheritance of traditional handicrafts is mainly "oral imparting with physical instruction", that is, two forms of oral formula and physical samples. The physical sample is a direct reference to the practice of craftsmanship, and the oral formula is a theoretical summary of handicraft skills, both of which are the main carriers of handicraft information. From traditional craftsmanship, the great influence of information on creativity can also be seen.

The biggest feature of the Internet age is the digitization of information, which can be widely disseminated through the Internet. The Internet is an open information network that integrates various regions and various types of information resources for network users to share and provide information exchange and social services. As human beings enters the information age, people gradually master the use of electronic computers, software, Internet and other concepts and means to digitize all kinds of knowledge, technology, culture, ideas and creativity, making knowledge the most valuable wealth and the latest and highest productivity. [9] The digital media era provides a soaring sky at will for today's handicraft creation, and provides more open resources for the equal development of people. In the ocean of information, craftsmen can draw a variety of creative inspirations and expressions, find points of integration with individuals in practice, and give full play to the value of information.

V. CONCLUSION

The handicraft inheritance in the farming era is a complete system, and the craftsmen have a mature development model. In the modern industrial society, the economic environment and cultural ecology of handicrafts have undergone tremendous changes. Coupled with the influence of individual differences, there has been a clear hierarchy of handicraftsmen. Craftsmen at different levels have different needs, and demand-driven is the inherent motivation for the development of craftsmen. "Free time" is an objective condition for the development of craftsmen. Craftsmen who depend on craftsmanship should have an

objective evaluation of themselves, face up to the stage of their development, and avoid impetuosity and pride. Against the new social background, the role of craftsmen from craftsmanship to craftsmanship needs to be achieved in two aspects: one is to adhere to the extreme craftsmanship ethics created by traditional craftsmanship; the second is to be good at using the technological media of modern science and technology, and constantly draw new ideas and new methods while sharing so as to achieve the transformation from ordinary craftsmen to creative craftsmen.

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