

# Research on the Public Education System of Textile Intangible Heritage in Museums

## Taking the Ethnology Museum, South-Central University for Nationalities as an Example

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### ABSTRACT

The intangible cultural heritage of textile is the treasure of human history and civilization, and the carrier of the fine traditional culture of all ethnic groups. As important space for public education, museums shoulder the important mission of inheriting traditional Chinese culture. Taking the Ethnology Museum, South-Central University for Nationalities as an example, this paper analyzes the deficiencies of the public education system of textile intangible cultural heritage in museums from the perspectives of sensory experience, exhibition mode and educational activities. The essential characteristics of textile are also combined to discuss and study, so that the museum can better play its educational function, and at the same time endow the textile relics in the museum with new life.

*Keywords: intangible cultural heritage of textile, museum, public education*

### I. INTRODUCTION

With its growing economic strength, China is attaching more and more importance to the protection of intangible cultural heritage. At present, there are 93 intangible cultural heritages of China's textile industry, 3 of which are world-class intangible cultural heritages. Textile intangible cultural heritage is an important window to understand the survival and development of a nation, and the best way to get close to the public is the platform of museum. Public education, one of the functions of museums, refers to the communication process in which museum management and staff, with museum collections as the core, provide exhibition and explanation of collections for the public, and provide cultural needs for the public in the form of restoring historical images by scientific and technological means and organizing seminars and lectures on thematic theories. Therefore, it is particularly important to improve the public education system of textile intangible cultural heritage in museums, not only for the inheritance of national culture, but also for the promotion of social and cultural development.

### II. THE CURRENT SITUATION AND PROBLEMS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION OF TEXTILE INTANGIBLE HERITAGE IN THE MUSEUM

The Ethnology Museum, South-Central University for Nationalities is the first professional museum named

after "ethnology museum" in China. The museum mainly collects and displays the material and intangible cultural heritage of ethnic minorities in south China. It is an education base for ethnic theories and policies, and plays an important role in displaying ethnic diversity and protecting traditional Chinese culture.

Textile intangible cultural heritage can be divided into traditional art, traditional techniques and traditional costumes. In recent years, the inheritance of China's textile intangible cultural heritage has faced many difficulties, such as the "erosion" of traditional handicraft by modern new technology and the lack of inheritors of textile intangible cultural heritage. The textile intangible cultural heritage collected and exhibited in Chinese museums are mainly traditional techniques and traditional costumes. However, there are many problems in the public education system of textile intangible cultural heritage in Chinese museums, such as relatively few items in the collection, single mode of exhibition and lack of professional docents. As a public place for people to study, the museum's handling of the public education of textile intangible cultural heritage will play a great role in the inheritance, dissemination and innovation of China's national culture.

#### A. Lack of innovation in the way collections are displayed

Museum display refers to the display group that takes the cultural relic specimens as the main body,

with appropriate auxiliary exhibits, and forms them in accordance with certain themes, sequences and art forms to conduct intuitive display education, spread cultural and scientific information and provide aesthetic appreciation within a certain space. Therefore, the textile intangible heritage displayed in the museum not only enables the audience to know and understand the unique characteristics of each national culture, but also serves as a physical evidence of superb skills.

The textile intangible cultural heritage in Ethnology Museum, South-Central University for Nationalities is mainly displayed by means of human model display, bracket support display, and plane layout display. (See "Fig. 1") The traditional presentation method with simple words, pictures and images gives the audience a visual effect that each textile is isolated, without connectivity and integrity. In addition, the static display brings little readable information to the audience. Most of the audience are just passing by, and few can give play to their own subjective initiative to discuss and understand the textile intangible cultural relics. The traditional way of exhibition in the Ethnology Museum, South-Central University for Nationalities leads to a lack of time and space, authenticity and immersion in the audience's experience. Although some textiles are displayed in simulated scenes, this is only the restoration of a specific scene. What the audience would like to see is the restoration of the manufacturing process, its current application in daily life, and its future development in a number of different environments. (See "Fig. 2")



Fig. 1. Textile display.



Fig. 2. Restoration of specific scene.

### B. The museum is short of professional docents

In recent years, the number of visitors to museums in China has been increasing year by year, and the audience has become increasingly diverse. The public's demand for public education in museums has also changed from quantitative to qualitative. At present, the educational function of the museum mainly relies on the explanation of the museum collection by the docent. "The docent is the professional and technical personnel who directly provide explanation service for the audience face to face in the museum, is the bridge connecting the museum and the audience, is the museum's living "exhibit", is also the museum's window image". [1] Therefore, the docents will be of great help to the public education of the museum.

The biggest deficiency in the construction of the public education system in the Ethnology Museum, South-Central University for Nationalities lies in the lack of professional docents, which leads to the "generation gap" between the audience and the exhibits. Many of the intangible cultural heritage of textile products reflect the process and technology, so ordinary docent cannot meet the needs of making the audience understand and appreciate the hidden culture. Without the explanation of professional docents, most of the audience can see little effective information from the textile relics and pictures, let alone appreciate the historical and cultural information and national spirit of a certain nation carried by a certain textile. In addition, the small number of interpreters and large number of audiences greatly reduced the interest of visitors to visit the textile intangible heritage. Besides, some of the docents are not commissioner of culture and museology themselves, so they will not be convincing in the explanation of textile relics.

### C. The form of educational activities is simple

Museum education is one of the functions of museums. In the new era, this function is becoming more and more important. Museums began to transition from "collection-centered" to "audience-centered", and now more and more people are willing to enter museums to learn about Chinese culture. Therefore, traditional educational activities are not enough to meet people's needs.

The Ethnology Museum, South-Central University for Nationalities is a university museum, which plays an important role in the academic research of the university. The educational activities of textile intangible heritage are mainly themed exhibitions in the school. There are few activities such as academic research on textile intangible cultural heritage, special lectures and cultural publicity held in communities with other universities, and the frequency of such educational activities is relatively low due to the lag in funds and management. Because of the particularity of

the intangible cultural heritage of textile, different methods and techniques have been adopted in the production of the intangible cultural heritage of textile of different nationalities. It is difficult for the audience to understand and interpret the content just by looking at the pavilion. It can neither arouse their interest nor their resonance.

### **III. COUNTERMEASURES TO IMPROVE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM OF TEXTILE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN MUSEUMS**

#### *A. The combination of modern digital media technology and traditional presentation*

With the development of science and technology, the way of life has changed greatly. The application of modern digital media technology in museums has also become a topic of discussion in museum exhibition design. Therefore, the use of modern media technology on the basis of traditional exhibition will get twice the result with half the effort. First, because of the limitations of cultural relics, they cannot be touched and felt by the audience. Therefore, AR (artificial reality), VR (virtual reality), MR (mixed reality technology) and other virtual experiences are provided in the exhibition hall of textile intangible heritage of the museum, which gives the audience a wonderful feast visually. For example, Yunnan Provincial Museum has adopted a combination of digital media and physical exhibits in its exhibition. The virtual integration and dynamic combination of virtual contents and physical exhibits will not only upgrade the visiting experience, but also present a richer display information, so that the audience can understand the content of the exhibition more comprehensively. Secondly, digital media technology can create a better interactive space for the audience and cultural relics, and enhance the communication and interaction between the audience and the textile intangible cultural heritage. At the same time, the audience can choose according to their own preferences. Finally, most textiles involve many tedious steps in the manufacturing process. Without the interpreter, it is difficult for the visitors to understand from the surface. Therefore, the intelligent scene restoration and atmosphere creation can be used to allow visitors to further experience the process from nothing to something, which is to bridge the distance between them and the textile intangible heritage. The need of modern audiences for "happiness" must be fully appreciated in the exhibition of textile intangible cultural heritage in museums. The combination of knowledge and interest through scene design enables the audience to experience and gain knowledge in the museum. "Happiness attracts visitors to museums and encourages them to visit them again and again." [2] Therefore, textile intangible heritage is presented in more and more diversified ways in museums, and the

audience can have a better understanding of the cultural connotation behind it. Of course, the traditional way of exhibition should not be abandoned. Museum exhibition is mainly for the purpose of materiality and authenticity, and the application of digital media technology is only auxiliary.

#### *B. Strengthening the management system for educational personnel*

The education of textile intangible cultural heritage in traditional museums mainly relies on the explanation of docents in museums. Therefore, it is possible to increase cooperation with colleges and universities, especially those with a large number of ethnic minorities. Students from ethnic minorities can volunteer and then dress up in their most distinctive costumes to explain to the audience, which can not only increase the intimacy with the audience, but also promote the culture of the nation, making the explanation more convincing. As for the personnel system in the museum, regular training should be carried out for educational personnel. The intangible cultural heritage of textile involves a lot of knowledge, from the history of its development, the materials used for the cultural relics, to the production process, as well as the meaning of the patterns on it. The professional competence of the docent is required. The interaction with the audience should also be valued. The explanation should be based on the interests and hobbies of the audience, so as to complete the work and bring a pleasant experience to the audience. Thirdly, the relevant reward system can be formulated for the docents, which can stimulate the docents' work enthusiasm and initiative by means of optimizing educational performance assessment and professional title promotion. The fourth is to introduce outstanding professionals to the public education of museums, and encourage them to reconstruct the education system with their professional knowledge of museology and history.

#### *C. Developing a multi-channel education model*

Different educational modes should be carried out according to the characteristics of the intangible cultural heritage of textile. "Personality is the soul of a museum, a trait formed by the full collision, blending and precipitation between the museum and the society. The characteristics of each museum are different. It is not only manifested in the sense and external, but also in the hidden connotation and identity. Even two museums of the same type should have their own characteristics." [3] Textile intangible cultural heritage is a unique historical product of a national culture. It can be said that textile is a nation's unique "language". its use of color has a specific connotation, and its choice of pattern is the imprint of cultural heritage. Game experience can be set in the process of textile

exhibition, which can greatly increase the enthusiasm of visitors. The textile made by tie-dye process will be different in pattern because of the way of binding, the degree of infection and different stitching. Therefore, game apps can be designed according to the unique features of some textiles. Visitors can learn more about the textile production process through the game experience, which also enhances their interaction with the cultural relics. Secondly, modern social media can be used to push the relevant knowledge of textile intangible heritage and the situation of the activity site to the audience who cannot attend the event through the official website, WeChat public account, weibo, etc. In addition, cooperation with universities and communities should be strengthened, lectures should be held irregularly, workshops related to intangible cultural heritage of textile should be held, and inheritor of the intangible textile heritage should be invited to present the production process on site. Finally, relevant cultural and creative products are developed for visitors to buy, such as pillowcases, small accessories, cultural shirts, etc., which can not only make a deep impression on the audience, but also make the intangible cultural heritage of textile into people's life.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

With the increase of economic strength, China attaches more and more importance to cultural construction, and the protection of China's textile intangible cultural heritage is also an ongoing project. "The intangible cultural heritage of textile is the physical witness of national cultural heritage. The appearance, materials, ornamentation or color, or use, manufacturing process or emotion of the collection are all witnesses of the rise and fall of China's ethnic minority society and the development of civilization, representing the material needs and spiritual creation in a certain historical period." [4] Museums are the "second classroom" of the public, and they are nonprofit institutions for cultural inheritance and education. The important value of museums is to answer the numerous question marks in the minds of the audience, instead of relighting them. There are many cultural relics on display in museums, among which textile intangible cultural heritage is one of them. The way to make textile intangible heritage known to more people and integrated into daily life has also become a topic of discussion in the museum. "Museums are not only places to entertain, to touch art and enrich life, but also places to develop knowledge and to think about personal and cultural values through aesthetic experience." [5] Therefore, the public education system of museum textile intangible cultural heritage should also fully consider the best interests of mankind, effectively maintain and inherit the cultural tradition behind it, so that visitors can experience more

intelligent services, acquire knowledge and sublimate spirit.

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