

On the Innovative Development of Woodblock New Year Picture Products in Shandong Province

Feng Zong^{1*}, Ying Zhang²

{nfxzf@163.com¹, 121021582@qq.com²}

Jinan Preschool Education College, Shandong, 250307, China

Abstract. Shandong Province was once one of the major provinces producing woodblock New Year pictures in China. Through on-site investigations, online surveys, and questionnaires, we have gained an understanding of the current development status of woodblock New Year painting products in Shandong Province. Analyzing the data in the survey questionnaire, it was found that there are many constraints in the development of woodcut New Year pictures in Shandong Province, such as small profit margins, the impact of modern craftsmanship and technology, the dilution of traditional folk customs, changes in people's aesthetic perspectives, and the discontinuation of inheritance. After argumentation and analysis, in response to these constraints, reference suggestions have been proposed for the innovative development of woodcut New Year pictures in Shandong Province, including innovation in screen content, production technology, expression forms, communication channels, and marketing objects. Through further practice of these suggestions, we hope that the woodblock New Year painting industry in Shandong Province can improve the current awkward situation and develop better.

Keywords: Woodblock New Year Pictures; Innovation; Develop

1 Introduction

So far, the State Council of China has released five batches of national intangible cultural heritage representative projects in 2006, 2008, 2011, 2014, and 2021, totaling 1557 national intangible cultural heritage representative projects. They are further divided into 3610 sub projects according to the application region or unit, including 17 woodblock New Year projects and 3 projects under the jurisdiction of Shandong Province, namely the Yangjiabu woodblock New Year Pictures in Weifang City, Shandong Province, Dongchangfu woodblock New Year Pictures in Liaocheng City, Shandong Province, and Zhangqiu woodblock New Year Pictures in Yanggu County, Liaocheng City, Shandong Province [1]. In addition, there are many high-quality woodblock New Year Pictures of intangible cultural heritage at the prefecture level, such as Jinan Zhangqiu woodblock New Year Pictures, Jining Yutai woodblock New Year Pictures, Qingdao Pingdu Zongjiazhuang woodblock New Year Pictures, all of which have left a strong mark in the history of the Chinese nation; However, with the progress of society and the development of technology, the once brilliant woodblock New Year Pictures have gradually faded out of people's vision [2].

* Corresponding author

2 Investigation on the Development Status of Woodblock New Year Pictures in Shandong Province

Through on-site investigation, online research, and questionnaire distribution, we conducted research and analysis on the current development status of woodblock New Year Pictures in several well-known woodblock New Year painting producing areas in Shandong Province, including Zhangqiu in Jinan, Yangjiabu in Weifang, Dongchangfu and Yanggu in Liaocheng, and Zongjiazhuang in Pingdu, Qingdao. The following conclusions are drawn.

2.1 In terms of national policies

China's protection of intangible cultural heritage has been increasing year by year, with great economic and policy support. Local governments are also continuously increasing their investment in local intangible cultural heritage; In November 2011, the Chinese Folk Literature and Art Association officially released the "Declaration on the Application of Chinese Woodblock New Year Pictures for World Intangible Cultural Heritage" [3][4], marking the official launch of the application for world intangible cultural heritage of Chinese woodblock New Year Pictures. Over the past decade, the Chinese government has invested more than 40 million yuan in the protection and inheritance of woodblock New Year Pictures [5][6]; In this environment, several woodblock New Year painting production areas in Shandong Province surveyed have shown a thriving scene, and printmaking practitioners also hold a positive attitude towards the development prospects of the woodblock New Year painting industry.

2.2 In terms of economic benefits

In recent years, the popularity of China's China-Chic style has brought a certain eye economy to woodcut New Year pictures, but the actual marketing situation is not particularly optimistic; On the one hand, woodblock New Year Pictures have transformed from practical ones to collectible ones, and the shift from necessities to collectibles has resulted in a sharp decrease in sales. On the other hand, the profit model of traditional woodblock New Year Pictures itself lies in small profits and quick sales, and a decrease in sales will inevitably lead to damage to economic benefits. According to the statistics of this survey, the audience of woodblock New Year Pictures and their surrounding products is generally narrow. The buyers of woodblock New Year Pictures are generally traditional cultural enthusiasts or collectors, while the buyers of woodblock New Year Pictures' surrounding products are relatively more, such as young people who pursue trends, traditional cultural enthusiasts, and students in universities and vocational schools. However, overall, the purchase volume is not very high, and some New Year painting workshops can even be said to be unable to make ends meet, Relying on government financial appropriations to make a living.

2.3 In terms of social needs

A random interview was conducted with a group of tourists traveling in the origin of woodcut New Year Pictures. Most people believe that woodcut New Year Pictures are exquisitely crafted and have a strong cultural heritage, but they are not suitable for posting in their own homes. Even if they are purchased, they are only collected as a piece of art. The reasons are mainly due to the inconsistency between the style of New Year Pictures and the style of home

decoration, the abrupt appearance of such Pictures on the indoor walls, and the outdated theme of New Year Pictures; That is to say, in terms of social demand, the current woodblock New Year products have a relatively weak public foundation and are no longer essential items for festivals. Their existence is due to cultural and artistic values, and most ordinary tourists' support for woodblock New Year Pictures and their surrounding products is only limited to taking photos and posting on social media.

2.4 In terms of craft inheritance

Through interviews with several owners of New Year picture workshops, it was found that thanks to the support of national policies, more and more young people are showing strong interest in woodblock New Year picture craftsmanship, and there are not many obstacles to the inheritance of craftsmanship; In Shandong Province, the traditional New Year painting industry was mostly passed down through family style and apprenticeship style inheritance. Nowadays, many New Year painting producing areas have begun to try to incorporate the craftsmanship of woodblock New Year Pictures into the classroom, allowing more people to be exposed to woodblock New Year Pictures from a young age, understand them, and fall in love with them. This has a positive impact on the inheritance and development of woodblock New Year painting craftsmanship.

3 Analysis of the main problems in the development of Woodblock New Year Pictures

In this study, a total of 1500 survey questionnaires were distributed, and 983 valid questionnaires were collected. Through analysis of the survey questionnaires, it was found that there are mainly the following constraints in the development of woodcut New Year pictures in Shandong Province.

3.1 Low profit margin

The production of traditional woodblock New Year pictures is a purely manual process, which takes at least a month from material processing, to artwork design, to sample loading, engraving, color matching, and printing. In the printing process, each color has one plate, and even the simplest New Year pictures require four plates. Moreover, handmade New Year pictures also have a scrap rate of 5% -10%, all of which will increase the cost of New Year pictures. Overall, A handmade woodblock New Year picture with a cost price of no less than 10 yuan [7], so the selling price of each New Year picture needs to be higher than 10 yuan and sold in a certain quantity to have the possibility of profitability. In the past, the New Year picture market was able to generate profits mainly through small profits and quick sales. However, today's New Year picture products have a limited audience, and the difficulty of achieving high sales is significant. Therefore, it is necessary to increase the product price to ensure a balanced profit space. Therefore, profit is one of the main factors that constrain the development of woodblock New Year pictures.

3.2 The Impact of Modern Process Technology

It is precisely because the profit margin of handcrafted woodblock New Year pictures is too small now, that the quality of New Year pictures on the market is uneven. In order to save costs, many of the New Year pictures sold by merchants use machine offset printing, or even machine engraving. The production of machine New Year pictures in one hour can surpass the production of manual New Year pictures in one month, bringing a huge impact to traditional handmade woodblock New Year pictures; In theory, a truly handmade woodblock New Year picture should be unique for each piece, even for the same artist, at the same time, and on the same plate. Due to the differences in strength and angle during each printing process, there will inevitably be subtle differences in printmaking. Therefore, machine New Year pictures using modern technology have the "shape" of New Year pictures but lack the "spirit" of New Year pictures, which has caused great trouble for the producers and consumers of woodblock New Year pictures. At the same time, it will also restrict the development of woodblock New Year pictures.

3.3 The Dilution of Traditional Folk Customs

The abundance of material life, the acceleration of life rhythm, the improvement of urbanization process, and the increasing busyness of people's work have led to the gradual weakening of traditional festivals and folk customs, and the lack of a sense of festival ceremony [8][9], which is also one of the factors restricting the development of woodblock New Year pictures. The lack of festive rituals and the increase in various electronic entertainment projects have led to an increasing number of young people, especially those living in cities, having little understanding and attention to the traditional customs of the Spring Festival. They have little interest in purchasing and posting New Year picture products, which has further reduced the purchasing group of New Year picture products.

3.4 The Change in People's Aesthetic Perception

Another reason why traditional woodblock New Year pictures have drifted away from the youth group is the issue of visual style. Many New Year picture products today, with their visual content, color patterns, clothing textures, etc., have been passed down for decades or even hundreds of years. They were products of the historical, cultural, and knowledge systems of that time, and were able to resonate with the public, attract people's attention, and stimulate customer purchases during that era; However, society is developing and the times are advancing. In today's era of information explosion, people's aesthetic perspectives are constantly changing and improving. If New Year picture products do not have corresponding innovative development and are detached from the characteristics of the times, it is difficult to arouse the public's purchasing desire again.

3.5 Discontinuation of Inheritance

The concept of "intangible cultural heritage" officially emerged relatively late. On October 17, 2003, the 32nd General Conference of UNESCO passed the Convention for the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage. On August 28, 2004, the Standing Committee of the 10th National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China approved the Convention for the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage. That is to say, the protection of intangible cultural heritage in China has been less than 20 years in total. Prior to this, the traditional handicraft

market was not prosperous, and New Year picture artists could not make a living relying solely on handicraft works. Therefore, some New Year picture products have experienced a gap in inheritance, which is also a major factor restricting the development of woodblock New Year pictures.

4 Suggestions for Innovative Development of Woodblock New Year Picture Products in Shandong Province

From the perspective of cultural heritage protection, woodblock New Year pictures should not change in the process of commercialization and marketization. They should continue the old style of painting and production techniques. However, the result may be that woodblock New Year pictures can only be stored in museums for people to appreciate, evaluate, and remember as historical relics. Intangible cultural heritage, as a cultural heritage that has been preserved in traditional society, is characterized by its "liveliness". If it is simply shelved and supported in museums, intangible cultural heritage will lose its inherent vitality. Therefore, in response to the development of woodcut New Year pictures in Shandong Province, innovation should be carried out while preserving their traditional essence, so that they can continue to maintain vitality in the 21st century.

4.1 Innovation in screen content

The woodblock New Year pictures in Shandong Province mostly originated from the Ming and Qing dynasties and have a history of several hundred years. The style, theme, content, and other aspects of the pictures will eventually differ from modern people's aesthetic views. So the innovative development of woodblock New Year pictures requires innovation in the content of the pictures. Firstly, it combines with traditional pattern elements. Firstly, the collected traditional pattern elements are classified and organized, and then relevant pattern elements are extracted and redesigned. By integrating traditional patterns into woodblock New Year picture products, woodblock New Year picture products that meet contemporary aesthetic requirements and possess traditional Chinese cultural colors are created; Second, in terms of material selection, we should reflect the regional color, further explore the traditional culture in Shandong, such as Confucius culture, Mount Taishan culture, Cuju culture, etc., extract themes suitable for New Year pictures, tell Shandong stories and spread Shandong voice.

4.2 Innovation in production process

Preliminary research has found that the profit margin of the woodblock New Year painting production industry is relatively low. One of the reasons is the impact of modern craftsmanship on the woodblock New Year painting industry. Additionally, the production cost of woodblock New Year pictures is too high. For example, in the process of printing color matching, for every additional color, an additional plate needs to be added. So, can the impact of modern craftsmanship on the woodblock New Year painting industry be transformed into the promotion of modern craftsmanship on the woodblock New Year painting industry? By combining traditional New Year painting techniques with modern computer design, that is, using manual engraving and computer color matching, we can not only solve the problem of

high printing costs and low profits, but also keep up with the times, achieving an organic combination of traditional culture and modern craftsmanship.

4.3 Innovation in expression form

With the weakening of traditional folk customs and the change in people's aesthetic perspectives, the audience of a single paper product for New Year pictures will become narrower and narrower. Therefore, innovation in the expression forms of New Year pictures is imperative. It can be considered to expand the woodcut New Year pictures to other carriers, such as clothing, shoes, hats, bags, daily necessities, interior decoration, etc. By taking advantage of the trend of China-Chic, New Year pictures can be applied to various cultural and creative products, breaking the traditional methods and realizing diversified forms of expression.

4.4 Innovation in communication channels

The regional color of woodblock New Year pictures is strong, and due to limitations such as transportation, communication, and logistics, the dissemination speed of woodblock New Year pictures in the past was slow, and there was relatively little communication between New Year pictures from different regions. After the painting products shed their essential clothing for the Spring Festival, the level of attention they received, especially from the public outside the province, was pitiful. Therefore, in today's information society, it is necessary to leverage the advantages of the Internet to innovate the dissemination channels of woodcut New Year pictures in Shandong Province. Firstly, short video platforms can be used to promote and introduce woodcut New Year pictures in various cities within the province, showcasing the unique charm of Shandong's woodcut New Year pictures to more domestic and foreign people; Secondly, establish an online woodblock New Year painting classroom, and after basic promotion and promotion, create a more systematic Shandong Province woodblock New Year painting online brand to further attract fans and attract followers; Third, after the brand of Shandong New Year pictures has reached a certain level of attention, timely design and launch the IP image and cultural and creative products of Shandong Woodcut New Year pictures in line with the characteristics of the times, and create an industrial chain of "Internet plus Woodcut New Year pictures traditional skills".

4.5 Innovation of marketing objects

Traditionally, the marketing target of New Year picture products is ordinary people, because in the past, every household had to replace them with new New Year pictures during festivals, which can meet the demand for selling New Year picture products; In today's society, New Year picture products are no longer a necessity for the Spring Festival, and most people no longer post New Year pictures during the Chinese New Year. As producers of New Year pictures, they should promptly change their marketing strategies and seek new sales targets, such as cultural parks, industrial parks, parks, enterprise companies, restaurants, and shopping malls in various large and medium-sized cities. The purchase quantity and consumption level of these large and medium-sized objects are far higher than that of ordinary people users, Therefore, if suitable marketing channels can be found and appropriate marketing objects can be identified, it means that another spring for woodblock New Year picture products is about to come.

5 Conclusions

For woodblock New Year pictures, opportunities and challenges coexist in today's society, and opportunities far outweigh challenges. Because in any historical period, the development and inheritance of cultural heritage has not been as important as today. It is precisely because the country and society attach importance to it that it provides new living and development space for woodblock New Year pictures. However, how to develop better and go higher and further on the basis of existing policies, It is necessary to constantly innovate and develop in various aspects such as screen content, production techniques, forms of expression, communication channels, marketing objects, etc., so that intangible cultural heritage can once again become truly popular and live up in life.

The main contribution and innovation of this study lie in several innovative suggestions for the development of woodcut New Year paintings in Shandong Province. Through innovative visual content, works that conform to modern aesthetic perspectives can be created, which can be accepted by today's customers and increase sales volume; By innovating the production process, we can not only reduce the production cost of woodblock New Year paintings, but also effectively respond to the impact of modern craftsmanship technology, with the aim of increasing profits; By innovating the form of expression and expanding the products of woodblock New Year paintings to various other carriers, more people can see woodblock New Year paintings in more occasions. This method can increase the sales volume of woodblock New Year paintings and bring greater profits; Innovation through communication channels is to utilize the advantages of the internet to attract more people outside Shandong Province to understand and fall in love with woodblock New Year paintings, which is also an effective way to expand sales channels; By innovating marketing objects and finding more major customers, the ultimate goal is to expand sales. Only with increased sales can profits be improved, and woodblock New Year paintings truly move towards glory.

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