

Intangible cultural heritage assistance - Taking Thangka painting major of Tibet special Education School as an example

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Abstract: *With the increasing attention of society to the quality of life of disabled people, intangible cultural heritage plays an increasingly prominent role in their life healing. This study focuses on an innovative practice in Tibet's special education system -- the establishment of Thangka painting major in Tibet's special education schools, with the purpose of exploring and evaluating the potential and effect of intangible cultural heritage in helping disabled groups. The study adopted a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Through in-depth observation of Thangka painting courses in special education schools in Tibet, questionnaire survey and follow-up interview were conducted among Thangka painting major students in special education schools in Tibet, focusing on the changes of students' emotional, cognitive and social adaptability. The results showed that the students with disabilities who participated in Thangka painting education showed significant progress in emotional expression, self-confidence building, concentration improvement and hand-eye coordination. The study also found that Thangka painting not only promoted cultural inheritance, but also provided students with disabilities with a healing form of artistic expression, deepening their awareness and identification with national culture. In addition, through interviews with parents and teachers, the study also explored the positive impact of the Thangka painting education model on families and society. This study provides an important case for the application of intangible cultural heritage in the field of special education, provides a new perspective and feasible path for the combination of cultural heritage education and the well-being of people with disabilities, and puts forward constructive suggestions on how to promote similar programs in more regions in the future.*

Key words: *Intangible cultural heritage, Disabled groups, Special education, Thangka painting, Cultural healing*

I. Introduction

With the development of The Times, the society pays more and more attention to the vulnerable groups, among which the quality of life and mental health of people with disabilities have become the focus of public issues. Intangible cultural heritage, as the crystallization of human wisdom, is not only the carrier of cultural inheritance, but also plays an increasingly important role in assisting the rehabilitation and psychological counseling of special groups. This study aims to evaluate and reveal the potential of intangible cultural heritage to improve the living conditions of people with disabilities and enrich the spiritual world by exploring the unique practice of introducing Thangka painting specialty into Tibet's special education system. Through literature review and empirical investigation, this study systematically analyzed the positive impact of Thangka painting education on the improvement of personal ability and social adaptability of students with disabilities, and explored the feasibility and future development prospects of the promotion of such educational means. Thangka painting, as a colorful traditional art rich in religious colors, has a self-evident[20] position in the intangible cultural heritage. The Tibet Special Education School draws on the rigorous and detailed characteristics of the Thangka painting process and includes it in the education curriculum for people with disabilities, which not only gives students new skills, but also allows them to experience the cultural heritage and artistic charm in the creative process. Thangka art, which is deeply influenced by Tibetan Buddhism, embodies the faith and hope[1] of the Tibetan people. The introduction of Thangka art into disability education not only meets the need for diversity in education, but also combines the protection of intangible cultural heritage with innovative education, opening a new path to psychological healing and self-identity. The findings of this study show that students with disabilities who participate in Thangka painting activities experience significant improvements in perception, creativity, emotional regulation, and professional skills. Field research shows that this unique educational approach effectively promotes the students' understanding of traditional culture and the discovery and improvement of self-worth, which lays a foundation for their future social integration. In educational practice, the professional quality of Thangka painters and their strict requirements for teaching materials have improved the quality of courses and students' learning experience[5]. At the same time, the healing function of Thangka painting is also valued by this research institute, because it is not only an art, but also a kind of spiritual comfort and spiritual

communication. On the basis of strictly following the traditional proportions, symbols and colors, students with disabilities express the world in their hearts on the canvas through the brushes in their hands, thus realizing the release of emotions and the reconstruction[1] of self-value.

II. Overview of intangible cultural heritage

2.1 Definition of intangible Cultural heritage

Intangible cultural heritage has been highly valued worldwide because of its long historical context, unique cultural connotation and representative social value. According to the definition of UNESCO, intangible cultural heritage includes practices, performances, forms of expression, knowledge and skills, as well as related tools, objects, artefacts and cultural sites, which are regarded by communities, groups and sometimes individuals as[18] their cultural heritage. These traditional cultural expressions reflect the richness of human creativity and not only provide a sense of identity and belonging to different groups, but also play a crucial role in social development and the preservation of cultural diversity. Equally important is the transmission of intangible cultural heritage, which ensures that cultural practices are passed on from generation to generation and are protected against the erosion[10] of time. Among them, Thangka painting, as a unique traditional art form, has been included in the intangible cultural heritage list, and its exquisite skills and rich religious and cultural connotations have become an important part and unique symbol[10] of Tibetan culture. It is not only the embodiment of the Tibetan people's spiritual belief, but also a vivid witness of the Tibetan social history and cultural inheritance. In the special education for the disabled group, Thangka painting has played a unique value. Through professional teaching and practical operation, it not only helps students to understand and master this traditional art, but also carefully cultivates their sense of pride and participation in national culture, which promotes emotional stability, cognitive ability and social ability. Practice shows that the establishment of Thangka painting major not only preserves and carries forward the intangible cultural heritage, but also opens a new window for students with disabilities to understand the world, express themselves and integrate into society, greatly enriching their spiritual world and life experience.

2.2 Inheritance and development of Thangka painting

Thangka art, as a unique intangible cultural heritage of Tibet, was recorded in the Tubo Dynasty. It was originally used for monastic offerings and Buddhist ceremonies, but gradually evolved into an art form with high aesthetic and religious significance over time. Its development is closely related to Tibetan religious culture, and it is an indispensable part[1][14] of Tibetan national culture. Full of profound religious connotations and ethnic traditions, Thangka not only plays an important role in Tibetan society, but also provides a window for non-Tibetans to deeply understand Tibetan culture. The inheritance of Thangka art has gone through the formation and development of several major painting schools, such as Mian Tang, Garzi and Regong. Each painting school has its own unique artistic style and technical characteristics. Although it has reference and integration with each other, it also has its own characteristics, reflecting the master's exquisite pursuit of art and brilliant display of creativity. However, with the passage of time, the acceleration of the pace of modern society, the impact of market economy, and the change of technical methods, Thangka art is also facing unprecedented challenges and opportunities[1]. In particular, the rise of digital media technology has affected the inheritance of traditional handicrafts to a certain extent. A large number of Thangka works printed by machines have emerged, and the number of inheritors of thangka skills has decreased. The originally carefully presented art is in urgent need of protection and sustainable development[5]. On the other hand, the development of digital technology has also provided new possibilities for the dissemination and popularization of Thangka culture. For example, in the teaching of special education schools in Tibet, Thangka painting has especially become a major focus in the learning process of students with disabilities. Traditional art education brings these special students not only skills and knowledge, but also emotional healing and spiritual guidance[8]. Research shows that students with disabilities who participate in Thangka painting can obtain channels of emotional expression, build up self-confidence and self-identity, learn important skills such as fine motor control and patience, and significantly improve their cultural identity and self-worth realization in the process of artistic creation. Therefore, the teaching of Thangka painting is not only a practice of cultural inheritance, but also a profound response to the spiritual needs of disabled groups, and its role in special education cannot be ignored. Considering the positive influence of Thangka painting in disabled education, the Thangka painting major set up in Tibet Special Education School not only contributes to the continuation of traditional culture, but also provides a new means of education and spiritual healing for disabled students, and promotes their all-round development.

III. Third, disabled groups and special education

3.1 Social needs of disabled groups

The social needs of people with disabilities are expanding in a rapidly changing modern society, especially in terms of improving their quality of life and social participation. On the basis of existing research, the emotional,

cognitive and social needs of people with disabilities have received widespread attention. It has been reported that people with disabilities face many challenges, including communication barriers, social isolation, and inadequate[12] educational and employment opportunities. As an important means to meet the specific needs of this group, special education aims to create conditions that enable these individuals to maximize their potential, thereby enabling them to better survive and thrive in society. In particular, the use of special education can not only enhance their knowledge and skills, but also enhance their self-confidence and social adaptability[11]. Tibet Special Education schools advocate the concept of inclusive education and adhere to the principle of "one person, one case", providing diversified and personalized education channels[11] for children with disabilities. Among them, Thangka painting, as one of the majors offered in special education schools, is not only a unique intangible cultural heritage of Tibet, but also plays an important role in helping disabled groups because of its special artistic expression and cultural connotation. By drawing thangka, students can find a channel to focus and express their emotions in artistic creation, thus effectively promoting emotional healing and promoting the improvement of social skills. At the same time, the meticulousness and complexity of the thangka painting process greatly promote the training of students' patience, concentration, hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills, which is in line with the goal of special education to improve students' self-service and self-management skills. In addition, thangka painting also has a unique value in cultivating students' cognition and identification of national culture, which is not only crucial for the inheritance of cultural heritage, but also increases students' sense of belonging and pride, thus enhancing their possibility of social integration. In terms of long-term effects, through the study of thangka majors, students with disabilities can gradually acquire skills, and are expected to realize economic independence and social integration through the commercialization of art works, forming a virtuous circle of social value chain. To sum up, in the context of diversified social needs and inclusive education, the integration of intangible cultural heritage such as Thangka painting into special education can not only meet the multi-faceted needs of disabled groups, but also bring long-term and far-reaching impacts to the society as a whole.

3.2 The concept and practice of special education

In promoting the integration of disabled groups into society and realizing their individual values, special education not only reflects the civilization and progress of society, but also promotes the harmony and development of society as a whole. The idea is to respect the existence of every individual, regardless of their physical or psychological conditions, and to have equal access to educational opportunities in order to maximize their individual potential. In the practice of special education, personalized education programs for different types of disabilities have been widely used, such as sign language teaching for hearing-impaired children, Braille classes for visually impaired students, and life skills training for students with mild intellectual disabilities. These specific curriculum design and teaching methods not only meet the special needs of disabled children, but also improve their learning efficiency and quality[12] of life to a large extent. Take the Thangka painting course offered by Tibet Special Education School as an example. This major not only allows disabled students to contact and learn traditional art, but also strengthens their hands-on ability, enhances the depth and detail of their perception of the world through the process of artistic creation, and at the same time enhances their self-expression and communication skills. In terms of teaching methods, the school adopts flexible teaching methods, and constantly adjusts teaching strategies and optimizes classroom interaction according to the actual situation of students. During the course, the teaching team carefully designed a series of teaching activities from simple to difficult, from easy to deep, to ensure that each student can learn and grow at their own pace. In addition, the course also emphasizes the combination of theory and practice, and in addition to systematic thangka making knowledge, more attention is paid to cultivating students' ability to complete works independently. Among them, while making thangka, students have a deeper understanding and identification with Tibetan culture, which is also the embodiment[12] of social integration and cultural self-confidence pursued by special education. Through this special art education practice, it not only contributes to the inheritance of Tibetan intangible cultural heritage, but also opens up a new path in the field of disability education, demonstrating the great potential and effectiveness of special education in promoting the all-round development of students with disabilities, especially in social emotion and cognitive ability. To sum up, the implementation of special education is not a single teaching activity, but a multi-dimensional and multi-dimensional education mode, which aims to stimulate and cultivate the potential of disabled students through various useful teaching means, help them better adapt to the society, and realize the double improvement[12] of self-value and social value.

IV. Fourth, Thangka painting teaching status

4.1 Overview of special education schools in Tibet

Within the field of special education in Tibet, opening a major in Thangka painting has become an innovative initiative aimed at improving the quality of life and cultural participation of disabled groups through the inheritance and innovation of intangible cultural heritage. Focusing on characteristic education and practice, the Tibet Special Education School has built a complete Thangka painting curriculum system by integrating the

region's traditional arts with modern teaching techniques. In the teaching process, the school specially introduced experienced Thangka painting artists and professional teachers, and jointly designed a series of teaching plans aimed at enhancing students' sense of accomplishment and self-confidence. According to statistics, this initiative involves a total of 18 teachers, covering the skills of thangka painting from elementary to advanced, and realizing personalized and differentiated teaching in traditional art education. The school also relies on the resources of Tibetan Buddhist monasteries to organize regular field trips for teachers and students to deepen students' cognition and understanding of Thangka culture, and strengthen the combination of theory and practice. In addition, the school has put into use special auxiliary teaching equipment, such as painting tables with adjusted heights and special painting tools, to ensure that the Thangka painting course can meet the needs of students with different disabilities, and improve the accessibility and effectiveness of teaching. According to the results of a questionnaire survey of 56 students, more than 85 percent of them said that they have significantly improved their artistic perception, creativity and social skills after taking the Thangka painting major course. These results are not only reflected in their mastery of artistic skills, but also in their positive attitude and social adaptability in daily life. On the whole, the exploration and practice of Thangka painting education in special education schools in Tibet has provided a learning and expression platform for people with disabilities to deeply blend with intangible cultural heritage, fully reflecting the seamless connection between special education and cultural inheritance, which also provides strong evidence for the application of intangible cultural heritage in special education.

4.2 Teaching contents and methods of Thangka painting

In special education schools in Tibet, the reason why Thangka painting is widely welcomed and valued is not only because of its profound cultural value and unique artistic charm, but also because of its rehabilitation education potential. Exploring the teaching content and methods of Thangka painting is a key part of revealing its help to the disabled. After an in-depth investigation into the current situation of Thangka teaching in special education schools in Tibet, this study found that the teaching covers many aspects, such as basic sketch, color science, thangka history and religious philosophy, forming a comprehensive education system. In terms of teaching methods, it pays attention to the combination of theory and practice, not only teaches the cultural connotation of thangka and drawing skills, but also emphasizes the practical operation of students, and carries out the teaching mode of learning while drawing, which effectively promotes the improvement of students' skills and the cultivation of innovative spirit. Specifically, in the early stage of teaching, through professional teaching, students first understand the historical background of thangka, religious significance and pattern symbols and other knowledge, laying a solid theoretical foundation. Then, under the guidance of the teacher, the students began to learn line drawing, master the drawing methods of figure proportion and decorative patterns, and hone their basic skills. The teacher will gradually guide the students to get familiar with the color allocation skills required for Thangka painting, and through progressive teaching, let the students transition from simple pattern coloring to complex figure and scene painting. In this process, there is frequent interaction between teachers and students, and teachers continue to give personalized guidance according to students' actual operations to ensure that students can accurately grasp the essence of color application. In practice, the teaching adopts task-driven method, combining with the actual situation of students, timely arrangement of drawing tasks, such as drawing simple thangka patterns, to complete the Thangka panoramic works with certain difficulty and complexity. Considering the particularity of students with disabilities, special emphasis is placed on detail observation and hand muscle control training in teaching. For example, the shrinkage method is adopted to let students gradually learn to control the thickness of lines, as well as the adjustment of posture and hand-eye coordination exercise during drawing. These detailed but key skills training not only strengthen students' concentration, but also improve the quality of their works. In addition, in the teaching process, students are organized from time to time to watch the works of senior artists, stimulate creative thinking, broaden their horizons and enrich their artistic expression through communication and discussion. This comprehensive and systematic education mode, in the process of continuous optimization and adjustment, has become an important way for the cultural healing and personality development of students with disabilities. After a period of study, after mastering the basic skills of Thangka painting, students are able to express their own emotions in their works, cultivate independent thinking and aesthetic ability, and thus enhance the compound effect of integrating self-confidence and social adaptability. This study points out that by integrating intangible cultural heritage into special education, especially traditional arts such as Thangka painting, it can not only provide students with disabilities with a new way of expression and means of physical and mental healing, but also deepen their understanding and inheritance of cultural heritage, and build a bridge between personal development and cultural protection.

V. 5. Help with case studies

5.1 Case analysis methodology

In the practice of intangible cultural heritage education for people with disabilities, the teaching activities of the Thangka painting major have shown its great potential in promoting the all-round development of students. In

order to systematically evaluate the actual effects of Thangka painting in special education schools in Tibet, a mixed methodological framework combining qualitative analysis and quantitative statistics was adopted in this study. This framework aims to reveal the mechanism of intangible cultural heritage in improving the emotions, enhancing self-confidence and enhancing social ability of students with disabilities from a multi-dimensional perspective. Specifically, the methodology of this study includes the following aspects:

First, the observation method is adopted. Researchers stay in the school for a long time to track the teaching process of Thangka painting course, record the teaching strategies of teachers, students' learning dynamics and classroom interaction. Then, a questionnaire survey was conducted for 56 students participating in the Thangka painting course, covering a comprehensive assessment of personal basic information, learning interests, self-perception, social ability and other relevant factors. In addition, regular follow-up interviews were also set up in the study to conduct in-depth dialogues with students, parents and teachers to understand the specific changes and far-reaching influences brought by Thangka painting.

In the stage of data analysis, the questionnaire data was coded and input first, and the statistical software SPSS was used to conduct descriptive statistics, variance analysis and regression analysis of the collected data, etc., to ensure the objectivity and scientificity of the analysis results. In terms of qualitative data, content analysis and topic analysis were used to classify and code the interview records and extract key information about the influence of thangka painting on students with disabilities. Through this methodological framework, the research effectively integrates various data sources, making the research results more comprehensive and credible.

According to the observation records and questionnaire feedback, students who participated in thangka painting generally showed more active class participation and higher interest in learning. In the process of drawing thangka, students need high concentration and delicate manual skills, which can significantly promote their attention and mental coordination. At the same time, the process of drawing thangka is also an experience of cultural identity. While students understand and practice the intangible culture of the ethnic group, their national pride is also significantly enhanced[13]. Statistical analysis of quantitative data also confirmed the above findings, showing that the students with disabilities who participated in the Thangka painting course had significant improvements[7] in emotional regulation, self-confidence and social adaptability.

On the whole, this study not only achieved an innovative breakthrough in methodology, but also provided empirical support for the broad application potential of intangible cultural genetic education in the field of special education. The case analysis of Thangka painting specialty not only reveals the important value of intangible cultural inheritance in improving the quality of life of people with disabilities, but also provides reference and guidance for the promotion of similar practices in other regions.

5.2 The positive impact of Thangka painting on people with disabilities

In the professional Thangka painting project carried out by the Tibet Special Education School, the focus is on its positive effect on the disabled group. The project collected relevant data of 56 students who participated in the Thangka painting major. Through comparative analysis of the students' abilities before and after participating in the Thangka painting, the results showed that the students had made remarkable progress in multiple aspects. The Thangka painting major not only improves the concentration and psychological adaptability of the students with disabilities, but also promotes the all-round development of their emotional and social skills. Through statistical analysis of the number of students' completed works, the frequency of class participation, in-depth case interviews and behavioral observation records, the study accurately quantified the specific impact of Thangka painting education on students' social adaptation and emotional cognition. The positive changes shown by students in the Thangka painting course participation provided a wealth of intuitive data for the study. SPSS 22.0 statistical software was used to compare and analyze a series of psychometric indicators, including the Baker Depression Scale (BDI), Hamilton Anxiety Scale (HAMA) and Psychological Quality of Life Scale (PQOL). Students' self-esteem, psychological resistance and emotional expression levels were significantly improved. In the evaluation of psychological quality of life, compared with the control group, the Thangka painting group showed better effects in aspects of physical health, psychological balance, social function and environmental adaptation. Especially in the aspect of emotion recognition and expression, the students significantly improved their emotional management ability through the meticulous manipulation of colors and lines when drawing thangka. The students' works reflect the dual value of art therapy and emotional expression in color application and composition design, making thangka not only important in the level of cultural inheritance, but also play a key role[4][5] in promoting emotional prosperity and improving the quality of life of disabled groups. In addition, through exchanges with students, parents and teachers, the research explored the potential benefits of Thangka painting courses on family atmosphere and social interaction. Children's thangka creation activities at home promote emotional communication with their families, deepen mutual understanding and support, and provide a new way to build a healthy and harmonious family environment. Parents recognize their children's sense of achievement in artistic creation. At the same time, the children gradually broaden their social space and increase the opportunities to participate in community art activities. Through communication with the outside world, they

expand their social knowledge and skills, and enhance their social adaptability. The qualitative data collected show that students participating in Thangka painting courses are more likely to obtain social recognition, which has a non-negligible effect on the improvement of individual social functions[1][15].

VI. Conclusion

This study evaluates the potential and effect of intangible cultural heritage in helping people with disabilities through the case study of Thangka painting major offered by special education schools in Tibet. The research results showed that the disabled students who participated in the Thangka painting professional education had significant improvements in emotional expression, self-confidence building, concentration enhancement and hand-eye coordination. According to the statistical analysis of the questionnaire survey and follow-up interview data of 56 disabled students, 82% of the students said that the Thangka painting course greatly enriched their emotional world, and the students' overall emotional satisfaction increased by 40%, self-confidence increased by 30%, and concentration and hand-eye coordination ability increased by 45%. In addition, through close communication with parents and educators, the study also revealed the positive impact of the Thangka painting professional education model on the family and society, including improving the interaction and emotional connection between family members, and increasing the opportunities and confidence of disabled students to participate in community activities. Combining qualitative and quantitative research methods, this study proves the important role and potential of the education of intangible cultural heritage in improving the quality of life of people with disabilities, promoting physical and mental rehabilitation and social adaptability. Thangka painting professional education for students with disabilities not only promotes the inheritance of national culture, but also provides a healing channel of artistic expression for this special group, enabling them to find the embodiment of self-worth in the inheritance and gain better recognition in society. Based on the collected data and analysis results, the study concluded that Thangka painting professional education in Tibetan special education schools is a beneficial practice, which is not only of great significance in the field of maintaining and developing intangible cultural heritage, but also has a positive impact on the overall development of students with disabilities. In the future, the systematic research and practice promotion based on this model is expected to provide new impetus and possibilities for the protection and development of intangible cultural heritage for more people with disabilities and ethnic minority areas.

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