

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Open Access

Research on the Innovative Path of Cultural and Creative Transformation of Tibetan Thangka Intangible Cultural Heritage

Da Wazhasang¹, Wang Lulu^{2*}, Fauzi Naeim Mohamed³

^{1,2*} College of Humanities, Wenzhou University, Chashan University Town, Wenzhou City, Zhejiang Province, China.

³ Malaysian Institute of Information Technology, Bandar Wawasan, Kuala Lumpur, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

*Correspondence email:
20180213@wzu.edu.cn

Received: 27 June 2025
Accepted: 20 July 2025
Published: 31 July 2025

Full list of author information is
available at the end of the article.

Abstract

This study examines the innovative integration of Tibetan Thangka, a 1,300-year-old painting tradition and national intangible cultural heritage, with contemporary cultural and creative industries. The research aims to identify effective strategies for preserving Thangka's cultural essence while enhancing its market viability and social relevance in the digital age. Using a mixed-methods approach combining literature analysis, case studies of successful cultural transformations, and comparative evaluation of existing Thangka initiatives, this study develops a "Four Crosses" framework for cultural heritage innovation: cross-element integration (talent and capital collaboration), cross-platform integration (digital communication matrix), cross-industry integration (extending the "Thangka+" value chain), and cross-audience integration (targeted product design). Results demonstrate that successful transformation requires balancing traditional craftsmanship with contemporary design approaches, leveraging digital technologies for wider dissemination, creating immersive cultural experiences, and adapting cultural symbols for modern consumption while maintaining their philosophical integrity. The findings contribute to broader discussions on sustainable preservation of intangible cultural heritage in market economies.

Keywords: Intangible Cultural Heritage; Cultural and Creative Products; Thangka; Cultural Inheritance; Digital Transformation; Cultural Innovation.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji integrasi inovatif antara Thangka Tibet, tradisi lukisan berusia 1.300 tahun dan warisan budaya takbenda nasional, dengan industri budaya dan kreatif kontemporer. Penelitian bertujuan mengidentifikasi strategi efektif untuk melestarikan esensi budaya Thangka sekaligus meningkatkan kelayakan pasarnya dan relevansi sosialnya di era digital. Menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran yang menggabungkan analisis literatur, studi kasus transformasi budaya yang berhasil, dan evaluasi komparatif inisiatif Thangka yang ada, penelitian ini mengembangkan kerangka "Empat Lintas" untuk inovasi warisan budaya: integrasi lintas-elemen (kolaborasi bakat dan modal), integrasi lintas-platform (matriks komunikasi digital), integrasi lintas-industri (memperluas rantai nilai "Thangka+"), dan integrasi lintas-audien (desain produk terarah). Hasil menunjukkan bahwa transformasi yang berhasil memerlukan keseimbangan antara kerajinan tradisional dengan pendekatan desain kontemporer, memanfaatkan teknologi digital untuk penyebaran lebih luas, menciptakan pengalaman budaya imersif, dan mengadaptasi simbol-simbol budaya untuk konsumsi modern sambil mempertahankan integritas filosofisnya. Temuan ini berkontribusi pada diskusi yang lebih luas tentang pelestarian berkelanjutan warisan budaya takbenda dalam ekonomi pasar.

Kata Kunci: Warisan Budaya Takbenda; Produk Budaya dan Kreatif; Thangka; Pewarisan Budaya; Transformasi Digital; Inovasi Budaya.



1. Introduction

Thangka art from Tibet stands as a world-class intangible cultural heritage with over 1,300 years of history. These sacred paintings serve beyond visual artistry—they function as repositories of Buddhist cosmology, Tibetan historical narratives, and profound spiritual wisdom. Each brushstroke carries philosophical meaning and complex symbolism, making Thangka a visual encyclopedia of Tibet's rich civilization. Recent decades have seen the Thangka industry grow at an annual rate of 12%, nurturing more than 38 nationally recognized cultural inheritors, reflecting heightened awareness about preserving such heritage. Yet amid accelerating globalization and modernization, Thangka faces complex existential challenges. The gap between authentic cultural values and market demands continues to widen, creating tension between maintaining tradition and adapting to contemporary tastes. Traditional Thangka artists often struggle financially, while younger Tibetans show diminishing interest in mastering skills that demand years of dedication. Demographic data reveals that only about 20% of potential inheritors fall within the 18-30 age bracket, signaling a threat to knowledge transmission.

Our research addresses these concerns by examining innovative integration strategies that bridge cultural preservation and creative economic development. Taking a multidisciplinary approach, we analyze various scholarly perspectives. Galusam (2024), through studying Tibet's four-level intangible cultural heritage protection system and Thangka Painting Academy policies, confirmed that measures like tuition reduction have substantially increased young student participation. Wu (2024) focused on the Lhasa Thangka Industrial Park cluster effect, showing how short video promotions have expanded online reach by 63%. International researcher Zirui (2022) employed 3D scanning technology to reproduce the British Museum Thangka collection, validating digitalization's positive effect on cross-cultural communication. Radwan's (2025) "cooperative model" in Nepal emphasizes community participation value for industrialization, while Mønsted (2025), drawing from the Jimei Museum case in France, advocates positioning Thangka as a "visual carrier of Eastern philosophy" to strengthen international recognition.

Though these studies cover policy, technology, and cultural adaptation dimensions, clear limitations exist—only 12% of literature involves audience psychological analysis (as in Zirui 2022 work), and systematic research from cultural-creative industry perspectives remains scarce. Particularly, key issues like Generation Z acceptance and commercialization boundaries remain unexplored. Our work addresses these gaps by developing a "Four Crosses" framework for Thangka cultural heritage innovation: cross-element integration (talent and capital collaboration), cross-platform integration (digital communication matrix), cross-industry integration (extending the "Thangka+" value chain), and cross-audience integration (targeted product design). By analyzing successful cultural transformation cases and evaluating existing Thangka initiatives, we aim to identify strategies that maintain Thangka's spiritual and artistic essence while enhancing its social relevance and economic viability in the digital age. In broader terms, our study adds to global discussions about how intangible cultural heritage can survive and thrive in market economies without sacrificing core values. By combining traditional knowledge with contemporary innovation, we offer fresh perspectives on how Tibetan Thangka—a window to ancient wisdom—can remain a living, relevant cultural force for future generations.

2. Methodology

Our research employs three primary methods to examine the innovative integration of Tibetan Thangka cultural heritage with creative industries. First, we conducted an extensive literature review analyzing research on Tibetan Thangka, establishing a foundation of current academic understanding from both domestic and international scholars. This process yielded theoretical reference materials essential for our thesis development. Second, we applied case analysis methodology to examine inheritance and development patterns of Tibetan Thangka, current industrial integration trends, and innovative development approaches to Tibetan Thangka cultural heritage. Based on these analyses, we formulated actionable recommendations for sustainable development. Third, we utilized a technological roadmap as our methodological framework to visualize research stages and component relationships. This roadmap appears in Figure 1, illustrating the workflow and interconnections between various research aspects.

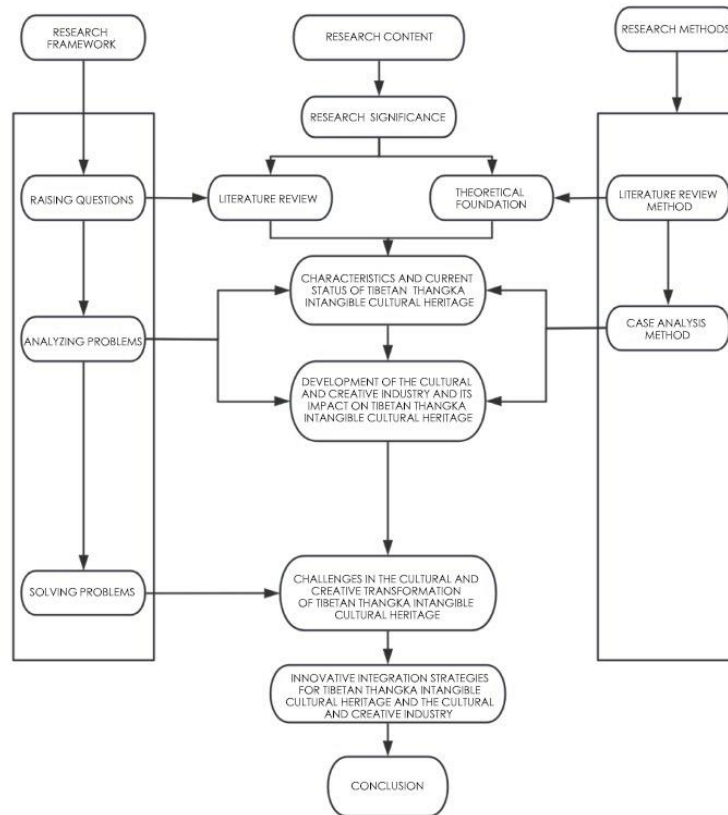


Figure 1. Technical Roadmap

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

3.1.1 Characteristics and Current Situation of Tibetan Thangka Intangible Cultural Heritage

3.1.1.1 Historical Origin and Cultural Value

Tibetan Thangka art embodies the spiritual beliefs and aesthetic wisdom of the Tibetan people, holding three key cultural values: First, it creates a sacred space through a complex symbolic system, visualizing Buddhist philosophy and serving as a medium for spiritual practice. Second, it records historical events and mythological legends, preserving ethnic memory. Third, its artistic language reflects the Tibetan concept of "perfect harmony," mirroring their understanding of the cosmic order. Today, Thangka appears on the national intangible cultural heritage list. Its protection and inheritance matter greatly for both technique survival and Tibetan cultural gene dissemination.

3.1.1.2 Production Techniques and Style Characteristics

The production of Tibetan Thangka follows strict traditional norms, with three core processes: pigment preparation, canvas processing, and measurement painting. Mineral pigments, sourced from natural minerals like cinnabar and malachite, undergo grinding and mixing with yak bone glue to create durable colors. Canvas production involves stretching, gluing, grinding, and threading, resulting in a smooth, satin-like surface. The composition follows the "Three Sutras and One Commentary" system, ensuring precise proportions of figures and ritual objects. The blend of mathematical precision and sacred symbols reflects the integration of reason and spirituality in Tibetan art. The three major Thangka schools—Mentang, Qinze, and Gamagazi—each showcase distinct styles. The Mentang School, founded by Menla Tenzhu Gyatso, features gradient colors, round faces, and intricate patterns, with a luxurious touch from gold outlining. The Qinze School, rooted in Tibetan traditions, emphasizes strong lines and vivid color contrasts, often depicting fierce deities with angular shapes and flame designs. The Gamagazi School, originating in the Kham region, incorporates ink-wash techniques, leaving blank spaces to create a misty atmosphere and dynamic poses.

3.1.1.3 Inheritance Methods and Contemporary Predicaments

Thangka inheritance traditionally relies on a religious master-apprentice system, with a decade-long training process: three years for pigment and canvas preparation, five years for mastering composition rules, and five years for spiritual cultivation. However, challenges plague the system: reliance on individual experience without standardized materials, a long learning cycle that deters contemporary youth, and minimal innovation due to strict religious rituals. In 2023, only 20% of apprentices were aged 18–30, with a dropout rate exceeding 50%. Additionally, over 60% of inheritors are over 60, while less than 20% are under 40. Commercialization has further complicated matters. "Hastily made" Thangkas using acrylic pigments and printing substrates undermine traditional craftsmanship. Religious-themed works struggle in the mass market, while innovative designs often spark controversy. Products like Q-version guardian deity phone cases and fluorescent acrylic murals trivialize sacred art. Balancing modern transformation with traditional preservation now stands as a critical issue for Thangka inheritance.

3.1.2 Development of Cultural and Creative Industry and Its Impact on Tibetan Thangka

3.1.2.1 Definition and Core Characteristics of Cultural and Creative Industry

The cultural and creative industry represents a new economic model that decodes cultural genes and industrializes cultural resources through creative transformation. It integrates "culture - creativity - industry" to create value: Culture forms unique IP assets through historical and symbolic aspects; creative design reinterprets these aspects using modern aesthetics and technology; and industrial operations realize value through production, branding, and market expansion. For example, the Palace Museum transforms cultural symbols from its relics into modern consumer products like lipsticks and stationery, maintaining cultural authenticity while enhancing market adaptability. The industry's core competitiveness lies in linking cultural scarcity with consumer needs, transmitting cultural values through products and services. Current trends in the cultural and creative industry include: digital technology reconstructing cultural experiences (*e.g.*, "Digital Dunhuang" using AR and virtual cave technology); cross-border integration creating new business forms (*e.g.*, Sanxingdui Ruins collaborating with e-sports brands); and the experience economy transforming consumers into cultural participants (*e.g.*, immersive dramas like "Encounter with Dunhuang"). These trends shift the industry from one-way cultural output to two-way value co-creation and from physical consumption to emotional engagement. However, the industry must balance commercial value with cultural depth to avoid diluting cultural symbols through excessive entertainment.

3.1.2.2 Its Role in Thangka Culture Inheritance

1) Positive Impact

The cultural and creative industry has significantly enhanced Thangka culture inheritance. Digital technology has expanded its reach, such as the "Decoding Thangka" project on Douyin, which garnered over 32 million views, and the "Thangka Metaverse" project using 3D technology to allow close-up experiences. Cultural and creative products have also generated economic value, with the "Mobile Thangka Workshop" series achieving annual sales of 18 million yuan and Thangka-themed hotels in Lhasa increasing occupancy rates through AR technology. Trendy Thangka toys have also gained popularity among younger generations. These innovations provide both new communication channels and financial support for Thangka preservation.

2) Negative Impact

Yet challenges persist. "Assembly line Thangkas" and overly commercialized derivatives, while bringing short-term gains, may dilute Thangka's religious and cultural authenticity. Maintaining the purity of Thangka's cultural core during innovation remains a pressing issue requiring attention.

3.1.2.3 Cultural Regeneration Driven by Innovation

The transformation practice of the Forbidden City's cultural and creative products offers a systematic approach for traditional art regeneration. The core lies in establishing an integrated innovation chain of "academic research - IP development - scene activation." Academic teams extract cultural genes from 1.8 million relics, building the world's largest digital resource library. Designers then deconstruct and reorganize these aspects through "symbol translation." For example, colors and patterns from the "Thousand Mile Long River and Mountain Painting" transform into modern products like porcelain and clothing. The operational end leverages "physical stores + e-commerce + theme exhibitions" for a full-channel marketing network, generating over 2.5 billion yuan in cultural and creative revenue in 2023. The "Digital Cultural Relics Library," co-developed with Tencent, opens high-definition images of 38,000 relics for secondary development by private creators, forming an "official guidance + UGC co-creation" ecosystem. The model breaks traditional "museum-style

protection" limitations, transforming cultural symbols into functional contemporary values and shifting from preservation to reproduction.

3.1.3 Problems Faced by Cultural and Creative Transformation of Tibetan Thangka

Tibetan Thangka intangible cultural heritage faces multiple challenges in cultural and creative transformation. A significant structural gap exists in talent. Traditional painters, while proficient in Thangka techniques, lack modern design thinking. Meanwhile, art college graduates possess insufficient understanding of Thangka culture, making it difficult for 70% of Thangka workshops to find qualified design talents. Traditional workshops generally face financial difficulties. Producing a single fine Thangka takes 6 to 18 months, but the payment cycle stretches to 2 to 3 years. A workshop in Chamdo has accumulated works worth 2 million yuan but cannot obtain financing, severely restricting industry development. Technical bottlenecks stand equally prominent. Currently, Thangka dissemination relies mainly on traditional channels like temple exhibitions. Digital construction remains at the basic picture display stage, lacking advanced presentation technologies such as 3D scanning, leaving young people's perception of Thangka at the stereotypical impression of "mysterious religious paintings." The technological lag limits both dissemination breadth and cultural interpretation depth. Capital intervention has brought new contradictions. Some capital providers, pursuing short-term benefits, arbitrarily modify core aspects such as guardian deity images, triggering cultural controversy. Traditional painters occupy weak positions in the industrial chain, and their artistic value rarely receives reasonable returns, dampening inheritance enthusiasm. The market faces dual challenges of product homogeneity and limited audience. Current cultural and creative products rely excessively on superficial symbols like mandala patterns and neglect exploring Thangka's rich knowledge system. Meanwhile, lacking effective modern narrative methods makes stimulating cultural identity among emerging consumer groups like Generation Z difficult, creating market expansion bottlenecks. The core problem lies in balancing traditional protection with modern innovation.

3.1.4 Innovative Integration Strategies of Tibetan Thangka and Cultural and Creative Industries

The innovative integration strategy for Tibetan Thangka intangible cultural heritage and cultural and creative industries focuses on multi-dimensional breakthroughs, activating traditional art vitality through the "four Crosses" path:

- 1) Cross-element integration emphasizes "talent + capital" synergy through policy support and industry-academia-research linkage, cultivating compound inheritors to solve creation-market disconnection problems
- 2) Cross-platform integration leverages digital communication matrices, using technologies like short videos and metaverse to expand cultural radiation boundaries and achieve global penetration of intangible cultural heritage IPs
- 3) Cross-industry integration promotes "Thangka +" industrial chain extension, integrating with tourism, education, and fashion while incubating immersive experiences and cross-border derivatives
- 4) Cross-audience integration focuses on niche product design, developing lightweight cultural products for young people and exporting high-end art collections to international markets

While adhering to cultural cores, this approach builds diverse consumption scenarios, forming a virtuous cycle of protection, inheritance, innovation, and value addition.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Cross-element Integration: Building a "Talent + Capital" Collaborative System

To overcome talent and capital predicaments in Tibet's Thangka cultural and creative transformation, building a collaborative system integrating "education chain - industrial chain - capital chain" becomes necessary. For talent cultivation, promoting organic connections between traditional master-apprentice systems and modern higher education systems establishes a "dual-mentor system" characteristic major - with national-level Thangka inheritors leading skill inheritance modules, systematically teaching core skills like measurement classic systems and mineral pigment preparation; digital art designers handle innovation and transformation modules, guiding students in translating Thangka symbols into modern design language. The curriculum system must break mechanical superimposition of traditional and modern knowledge, offering cross-border courses like "Digital Modeling of Thangka" and "Contemporary Narrative of Religious Symbols" to cultivate compound talents integrating cultural decoding and creative coding. Simultaneously building "industry-university-research" collaboration platforms, such as Thangka Cultural and Creative laboratories, enables students to conduct practical activities like Thangka AR interaction design and metaverse space construction in real projects, shortening learning-to-application transformation cycles. For capital integration, establishing diversified

financing mechanisms with "government guidance + social participation" proves vital: governments should create special funds for Thangka intangible cultural heritage transformation, supporting basic projects like mineral pigment standardization and digital resource library construction; guide cultural investment funds to inject capital into quality projects through models like "copyright pledge" and "revenue sharing"; encourage financial institutions to develop "credit loans for intangible cultural heritage inheritors," assessing credit limits based on skill levels, solving workshop financing collateral shortage problems. The "Thangka Young Designer Support Program" jointly initiated by Tibet University and local brand "Zangyuan Workshop" provides a replicable practical model. The project activates innovative momentum through a "three-stage empowerment" mechanism: Initially, participants complete two-year studies copying "Sutra on the Measurement of Images" and religious philosophy in inheritor workshops, laying solid cultural foundations. In advanced stages, they enter the school-enterprise jointly built "Digital Thangka Studio," learning 3D scanning, dynamic visual design and other technologies, completing interactive adaptations of traditional Thangka "The Transformation of the Medicine Buddha Sutra." The final stage enters product incubators, where brand supply chain teams guide design achievement transformation into derivative product series, like "Wearable Thangka" smart Buddhist prayer beads. These beads feature built-in sensors triggering AR Buddha image display functions on mobile phones. Within six months of launch, sales exceeded 5 million yuan. Plans include establishing "Tian Gong Fund," with 40% contributed by the Autonomous Region's Culture Department and 60% subscribed by enterprises, providing 100,000 to 500,000 yuan industrialization support for outstanding graduation works. Seven Thangka cultural and creative brands have been successfully incubated, ensuring cultural gene purity while screening truly commercially potential innovative directions through market mechanisms, providing systematic solutions to talent gaps and funding shortages.

3.2.2 Cross-platform Integration: Building a Digital Communication Matrix

Building a digital communication matrix for Thangka culture requires shifting from traditional one-way output to three-dimensional models integrating immersive experience, social interaction, and scene adaptation. Core strategies involve using technology to enhance cultural perception. Creating online museums with AR/VR technology transforms static Thangka into interactive dynamic fields. Users can disassemble mandala patterns through gesture operations and follow virtual painters experiencing mineral pigment grinding processes, deepening craft understanding. Short-video platforms should move beyond simple demonstrations to build communication chains linking symbol decoding, emotional resonance, and value recognition. For example, serialized animations based on Thangka imagery can convey ecological concepts through engaging narratives. Live-streaming promotion should enhance cultural interpretation by explaining symbolism behind Thangka imagery, such as wrathful Guardian deities, converting one-way sales into participatory creation through interactive live streams. Platform integration keys lie in establishing collaborative content ecosystems where WeChat mini-programs offer Thangka knowledge queries, Weibo initiates user co-creation topics, and e-commerce platforms embed AR trial functions, forming closed loops of viewing, learning, interaction, and consumption. Douyin's "Intangible Cultural Heritage Partner" program exemplifies reshaping Thangka dissemination ecosystems through comprehensive empowerment systems. Technically, it develops exclusive filters allowing users to upload selfies and create personalized Thangka-style avatars, expanding cultural reach through viral sharing. At content levels, it trains inheritors to combine epic "Legend of King Gesar" with Thangka imagery, resulting in highly viewed 3-minute micro-documentaries. Sales ends set up interactive live streaming rooms where viewers watch painters work in real-time and vote on themes for next-day creation, turning sales into participatory experiences. More profound values lie in building new inheritance paradigms in digital ages. Young apprentices act as "cultural translators," explaining Thangka concepts in modern language, increasing Gen Z viewership to 34%. User-generated content, like cyberpunk-style White Tara illustrations, feeds back into physical Thangka innovation, breaking physical space constraints and cultivating new digital-native inheritors, enhancing cultural dissemination while fostering new cultural inheritor generations through digital engagement.

3.2.3 Cross-industry Integration: Promoting "Thangka +" Industrial Chain Extension

Extending Tibetan Thangka industrial chains requires breaking traditional art carrier physical boundaries and building multi-dimensional value networks through "decoding cultural genes + scene recreation." In cultural-tourism integration dimensions, creating "perceptible, participatory and derivative" immersive experience systems becomes essential: constructing theme light and shadow spaces based on Thangka painting "The Transformation of the Pharmacist's Sutra," using 3D Mapping technology to make mural medicinal herb graphics dynamic. Tourists can trigger AR pharmacological explanations by capturing and "picking" virtual Tibetan medicines through gestures. Maze theaters designed based on mandala schema spatial philosophy

allow audiences to complete mandala spiritual picture assembly during path exploration, finally arriving at central areas to watch holographic Thangka painting demonstrations. Such projects must break "visual wonders" superficial logic, transforming Thangka cosmology and life views into experiential narrative scripts. For instance, developing escape room games based on "Diagram of the Cycle of Life and Death" allows players to advance plots by cracking symbolic signs in six reincarnation paths, having fun while grasping Buddhist philosophy cores. Technology enterprise cooperation should focus on developing "digital native" products. Limited edition dynamic Thangka NFTs issued based on blockchain technology allow holders to own digital assets while unlocking rights like offline workshop experiences and master lectures, building cultural consumption ecosystems integrating virtual and real worlds.



Figure 2. Cross-industry Integration of Lasa Thangka

The "Dynamic Thangka Light and Shadow Show" at Potala Palace Cultural and Creative Store in Lhasa provides a practical model. Based on classic Kagdang Thangka "Shambhala Pure Land," the project reconstructs pictures through four-dimensional projection and sensor technology: when viewers approach murals, scripture flying apsaras automatically stretch their robes, and scripture transformation stories unfold frame by frame as gazes move. Touch screens synchronously analyze picture Esoteric symbols. Clicking treasure bottles pops up evolution histories of Thangka painting objects throughout history. The light and shadow show has spawned three industrial chains - education sector "Thangka Decoding" study tour courses where students scan physical Thangka with tablets to activate AR historical figures for explanations; consumer end "Light Painting Thangka" customization services transforming tourist-created digital drafts into miniature mineral pigment paintings; copyright end core IP authorization to game companies developing mobile game "Thangka Guardian" where players unlock cultural knowledge cards by repairing damaged Thangka, extending average exhibition viewing times from 25 to 90 minutes while increasing cultural consumption unit prices by 300%, verifying cross-industry integration multiplier effects on Thangka value release.

3.2.4 Cross-audience Integration: Innovative Product Design and IP Development

Expanding Tibetan Thangka culture audiences requires breaking traditional belief circle boundaries and reconstructing cultural consumption logic through "symbol translation - emotional connection - scene implantation" triple strategies. In product design dimensions, establishing "cultural decoding - contemporary coding" two-way transformation mechanisms involves anthropological in-depth analysis of Thangka symbols, stripping surface visual aspects to extract underlying cultural genes - transforming mandala pattern "center - square" structures into modular assembly collectibles, allowing users to experience order aesthetics by combining mandala units. Medicine Buddha gestures develop into intelligent Buddha lamps with adjustable angles, retaining religious gesture healing symbols while meeting modern home lighting needs. Clothing products must transcend totem printing primary stages. For instance, Thangka "Six Longevity" stories transform into detachable embroidered seals, allowing consumers to freely combine patterns completing personalized narrative expressions. IP development requires establishing cross-media narrative systems: creating animated short film series based on "The Legend of King Gesar" Thangka, while serializing on video platforms, simultaneously developing color blind boxes and AR battle cards, allowing epic heroes to be reborn conforming to Generation Z aesthetic standards. Such innovation doesn't dissolve tradition but discovers resonant frequencies between ancient wisdom and contemporary life through design wisdom, allowing Thangka culture to move from sacred spaces into daily scenes.

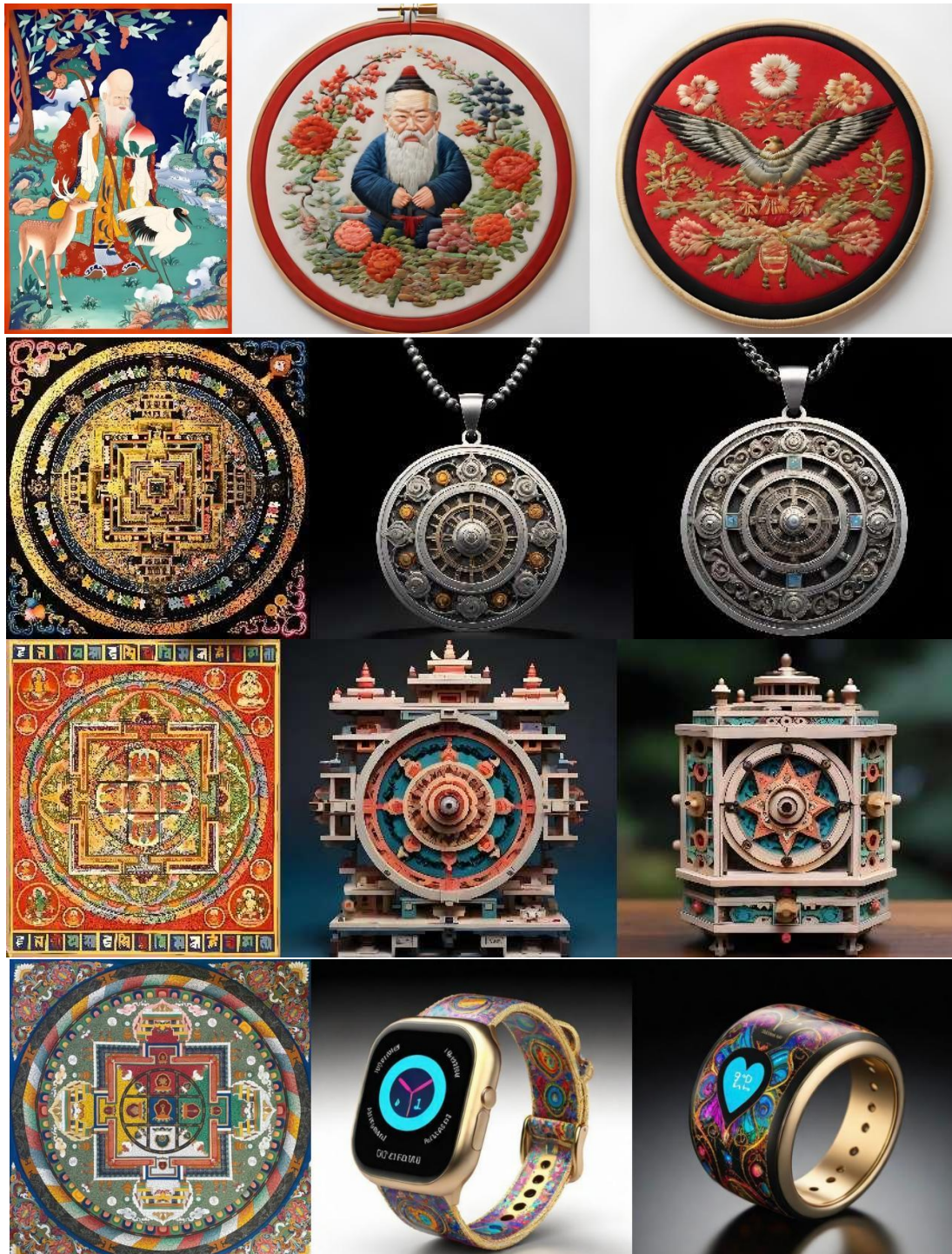


Figure 3. Innovative Design of Lhasa Thangka

The Tibetan brand "Tihu" successfully demonstrates translating Thangka culture into contemporary products. Inspired by Kavagazi School painting, Tihu developed "three-dimensional engraving" techniques transforming traditional Thangka symbols like auspicious clouds into three-dimensional reliefs embedded in titanium steel. Their "Xumi" necklace series, based on "Time Wheel Mandala," uses micro-carvings revealing nine-layered mandala structures when rotated, with accompanying apps explaining each layer's symbolism. Tihu also introduced "Thangka wearable art," such as smart bracelets with Thangka gold lines and heart rate monitoring triggering changes in mineral pigment faint light, visualizing data aligned with Buddhist philosophy. The approach has successfully attracted urban women aged 25 to 35, achieving 37% repurchase rates. Precise cultural translation can activate consumer demand by creatively reconstructing traditional aspects while maintaining philosophical cores, providing valuable models for intangible cultural heritage innovation.

4. Conclusion

This research examines the transformation pathway connecting Tibetan Thangka heritage with contemporary cultural and creative industries. The findings reveal that successful integration requires a multidimensional approach addressing four critical domains: talent-capital collaboration, digital communication frameworks, industrial chain extensions, and audience-specific product development. The "Four Crosses" model proposed in this study offers practical strategies for balancing traditional preservation with market innovation. Evidence from case studies demonstrates that when properly implemented, these approaches can enhance cultural transmission while generating sustainable economic value. For meaningful progress in this field, future research must establish longitudinal studies tracking the effectiveness of these integration strategies over extended periods. Additionally, empirical validation through quantitative market analysis and audience reception studies would strengthen the theoretical framework presented here.

References

- Chen, M. (2024). *Translation and expression of Tibetan culture in contemporary Tibetan logo design* [Doctoral dissertation, Tibet University].
- Deng, L. (2024). *The balance between culture and economy: Research on the inheritance and development of Tibetan Thangka art in the context of market economy* [Doctoral dissertation, Tibet University].
- Fan, S., Jiang, Q., & Zhang, X. (2024). Research on the policy evolution of intangible cultural heritage in border and ethnic minority areas in the new era. *China Border History and Geography Research*, 34(3), 36-47, 213-214.
- Galusam. (2024). The mural Thangka of the Miantang School in the Qing Dynasty: The visual narrative and skill inheritance of the integration of Han and Tibetan cultures. *Chinese National Fine Arts*, 4, 56-64.
- Gu, R. (2024). Three-dimensional, diverse and focused: Analysis of Austrian intangible cultural heritage protection laws and regulations. *Research on Intangible Cultural Heritage Inheritance*, 3, 4-7, 47.
- Kong, S., Li, H., & Yu, Z. (2024). Measurement and comparative analysis of the integration characteristics of culture and tourism in Tibet: Based on input-output theory and symbiosis theory. *Journal of Tibet University (Social Science Edition)*, 39(3), 187-198.
- Liu, W. (2024). Research on the path of digital transformation promoting the development of rural cultural tourism and cultural and creative industries. *Agricultural Economics*, 9, 122-124.
- Liu, X. (2024). *Research on the mural art of Lalong Monastery in Shannan, Tibet* [Doctoral dissertation, Tibet University].
- Liu, Y. (2024). *Digital activation and innovative design expression of Re Gong Thangka* [Master's thesis, Shandong University of Art & Design].
- Luo, Z. (2024). *Research on the inheritance and development of traditional colored sculpture art in Tibet at present* [Doctoral dissertation, Tibet University].
- Ma, X., & Guo, L. (2024). Research on the creative transformation of Tibetan traditional culture in the design of Tibetan cultural and creative packaging. *China Packaging*, 44(9), 99-103.
- Mønsted, A. (2025). *Re-activating Indigenous Knowledge from Oral History: Landscape and Intangible Cultural Heritage in Greenland*. Taylor & Francis.

- Pingcuo, D. (2024). A brief discussion on the current situation and opportunities of intangible cultural heritage protection in Tibet. *Tibetan Art Research*, 4, 114–120.
- Radwan, C. (2025). The role of historical knowledge among contemporary Druze in Lebanon: Applying anthropology to preserve intangible cultural heritage. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 61(2), 303-318.
- Wu, D. (2024). An analysis of the "Eastward Spread" of Tibetan painting in the historical background of cultural integration: A case study of the Mensa School. *Journal of Qinghai Minzu University (Social Science Edition)*, 50, 75–81.
- Xiong, Y., & Zhao, M. (2024). Conceptual analysis and characteristic discussion of Tibetan folk arts and crafts. *Chinese National Fine Arts*, 3, 6–17.
- Xu, X., & Shuyoulin. (2024). Research on strategies for enhancing the resilience of the cultural and creative industry ecosystem in the VUCA era: A case study of Yangzhou. *Chinese and Foreign Corporate Culture*, 6, 158-160.
- Zhao, M. (2024). *Research on the evolution of visual art in Tibet since the 1950s* [Doctoral dissertation, Tibet University].
- Zhou, G., Ren, J., Yu, S., Wang, L., & Chen, T. (2023). Research on marketing strategies of cultural and creative products of intangible cultural heritage in Tibet. *Modern Business*, 1, 35-38.
- Zirui, M. (2022). Tibetan cultural and creative product design -- wisdom and compassion. *International Digital Design Invitation Exhibition*.
- Zirui, M. (2022). Tibetan cultural and creative product design -- wisdom and compassion. *ICCC Conference Proceedings*.

How Cites

Wang, L., Da, W., & Mohamed, F. N. (2025). Research on the Innovative Path of Cultural and Creative Transformation of Tibetan Thangka Intangible Cultural Heritage. *Design Journal*, 3(2), 63–72. <https://doi.org/10.58477/dj.v3i2.306>.

Publisher's Note

Yayasan Pendidikan Mitra Mandiri Aceh (YPPMA) remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations. Submit your manuscript to YPMMA Journal and benefit from: <https://journal.ypmma.org/index.php/dj>.