

# The Construction of ethnic communities in the Intergenerational transmission of Intangible Cultural Heritage: An Analysis Based on the Practice Path of Longsheng Autonomous County of Various Ethnic Groups in Guangxi

Huilin Hou

School of Politics and Public Administration, Guangxi Minzu University, Nanning, Guangxi, 530000, China

## Abstract

The sense of community for the Chinese nation is the foundation of ethnic unity. The intergenerational transmission of intangible cultural heritage, as an important way of cultural identity, provides key support for the construction of the Chinese national community. This paper takes Longsheng Autonomous County of Various Ethnic Groups in Guangxi as the research object, combines its regional characteristics of multi-ethnic settlement and rich intangible cultural heritage resources, analyzes the coupled symbiotic logic of intergenerational inheritance of intangible cultural heritage and the construction of ethnic communities, and sorts out Longsheng from the three dimensions of cultural identity, interest identity, and governance identity. Specific measures to empower the construction of the Chinese national community through practical paths such as cross-ethnic intangible cultural heritage inheritance, the development of the intangible cultural heritage industry, and the integration of fire pit deliberation with modern governance. The study found that Longsheng's practice solved problems such as intergenerational breaks in intangible cultural heritage inheritance, provided micro-practical experience for the construction of the Chinese national communities in multi-ethnic areas, and also pointed out the practical problems existing in its development, with the aim of enriching the practical research on the construction of the Chinese nation as a community.

## Keywords

Intergenerational inheritance of intangible cultural heritage; The sense of community for the Chinese nation; Longsheng Autonomous County of All Ethnic Groups; Multi-ethnic integration.

## 1. Introduction

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, guided by the important thought of General Secretary Xi Jinping on strengthening and improving ethnic affairs work, the Party's ethnic affairs work has achieved new historic successes. On March 12, 2026, the Fourth session of the 14th National People's Congress voted to pass the Law of the People's Republic of China on Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress, marking a new stage of the rule of law in China's ethnic unity work and providing a solid legal guarantee for promoting ethnic unity. It is evident that the work of ethnic unity has always been a priority of the Party's work, and how to adapt to the development of The Times and explore a common practice path that is universally applicable to all ethnic regions has always been an important issue of concern to the Party and the state. Therefore, it is necessary for the country to study the practical experience of constructing a community in ethnic areas in order to explore feasible paths.

General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized: "Ethnic unity is the lifeline of all ethnic groups in our country, and the sense of community for the Chinese nation is the foundation of ethnic unity." Among them, the core of constructing the Chinese nation community lies in fostering the value recognition of "sharing weal and woe, honor and disgrace, life and death, and destiny" among all ethnic groups, and cultural recognition is the deepest and most enduring spiritual support. Intangible cultural heritage, as a "living cultural gene", carries the historical memory, production wisdom and value concepts of all ethnic groups. Its intergenerational transmission is not only the continuation of skills, but also the process of the transmission of national sentiment, cultural consensus and community consciousness. Mr. Fei Xiaotong(1989) pointed out in his theory of "the pattern of the Chinese Nation as one of diversity" that the formation of the Chinese nation is a dynamic process of long-term contact, mixture, connection and integration among all ethnic groups, and intangible cultural heritage is a vivid witness to this process.

Longsheng Autonomous County of All Ethnic Groups in Guangxi(referred to as"Longsheng") is the earliest established autonomous county of ethnic groups in Central and South China,with ethnic minority population accounting for 79.15%(data from the seventh national census). Five indigenous ethnic groups, namely Zhuang, Miao, Dong, Yao and Han, are concentrated in the county, and it has rich intangible cultural heritage resources such as Red Yao costume making skills and Northern Zhuang embroidery.Among them, there is 1 national-level, 12 district-level, 21 municipal-level and 30 county-level. In addition, Longsheng was not only the first region to successfully implement ethnic policies during the Long March of the Red Army, but also a micro-practice field of the "multi-ethnic unity of the Chinese nation" pattern, where the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage has always been deeply intertwined with the cause of ethnic unity and progress. In recent years, Longsheng has been promoting the intergenerational transmission of intangible cultural heritage through various measures. While solving problems such as generational breaks and ethnic divisions, it has explored a practical path of promoting the construction of a community through cultural inheritance.

Existing studies have mostly explored the connection between intangible cultural heritage and national communities at the macro level, or focused on the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage of a single ethnic group, but have paid insufficient attention to the micro mechanism of how intergenerational inheritance of intangible cultural heritage in multi-ethnic communities specifically empowers the construction of communities. Based on this, this paper takes Longsheng as a case study, by sorting out the practical path of its intergenerational inheritance of intangible cultural heritage and analyzing the logic of cultivating the consciousness of ethnic unity community in the process of inheritance, enriches the micro-practice research on the construction of the Chinese national community.

## **2. The Logical Relationship between Intergenerational Inheritance of Intangible Cultural Heritage and The Construction of The National Community**

a) Intangible cultural heritage is the cultural carrier for the construction of the national community

The Chinese nation community itself is a community where cultures of all ethnic groups blend and coexist, and cultural soft power is an important foundation for maintaining community identity(Mo Jiali et al., 2021). Intangible cultural heritage embodies the shared memories, emotions and values of the Chinese nation, providing rich cultural nourishment for the cultivation of the sense of community for the Chinese nation(Tan Hongling et al., 2024). It exists in living forms such as skills, rituals, and folk customs, transforming the abstract core of national culture into perceivable and inheritable content through concrete cultural symbols,

thereby uniting people and shaping a unified national cultural identity(Wang Dan, 2023). In particular, the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage of ethnic minorities can enhance the community identity of all ethnic groups(Li Xiangzhen, 2020). It is evident that intangible cultural heritage has become an important cultural carrier for constructing national communities. It makes the sense of community no longer empty and truly rooted in the cultural soil.

b) Intergenerational inheritance is an emotional connection in the construction of a national community

Wang Dan(2023) believes that the strengthening of the sense of community of the Chinese nation by intangible cultural heritage emerges in the daily lives of all ethnic groups, and its excellent cultural genes are transformed into perceptible life practices through embodied inheritance behaviors, laying a realistic foundation for the cultivation of community sentiment. Feng Yueji et al.(2021) also believe that the formation of community consciousness is a process in which national emotions converge into shared cultural symbols, and only by forming a universal emotional resonance beyond the individual can a stable emotional guarantee be laid for the construction of the community. It can be seen that the intergenerational transmission of intangible cultural heritage is far more like a relay of cultural sentiment, values and national identity than a simple transmission of skills. Through generations of inheritance, members of all ethnic groups share the culture and form emotional connections, constantly strengthening their sense of belonging to the Chinese nation community and becoming an essential emotional support for forging a strong sense of the Chinese nation community.

c) The construction of a national community empowers the innovative development of intergenerational inheritance of intangible cultural heritage

The strengthening of the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community can promote the organic unity of individual and collective interests in daily life, and then achieve the joint development of the individual and the community, which also provides an important guideline for the value orientation of the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage(Jia Liqin et al., 2023), gradually breaking the narrow boundaries of ethnic groups, families and regions, Shouldering the responsibility of consolidating cultural identity and promoting ethnic unity. Furthermore, the cultural protection and social dissemination power resulting from the construction of the community have largely alleviated the problems such as the inheritance gap, and have promoted the transformation of intangible cultural heritage through the inheritance of tradition and innovation in terms of continuously expanding the inheritance field and stimulating the enthusiasm of the inheritance subjects.

d) Intergenerational inheritance of intangible cultural heritage and the construction of a national community coexist

The consolidation of the sense of community for the Chinese nation is a process of coupled construction among multiple elements, which starts with ideological cognition, connects with emotional identification to internalize value, and ultimately transforms into embodied practice, thereby providing a solid guarantee for the construction of the Chinese nation community(Huang Yan et al., 2025). The intergenerational inheritance of intangible cultural heritage is one of the core elements. On the one hand, intangible cultural heritage lays the foundation of the community in the form of cultural carriers. Concurrently, intergenerational inheritance constructs the consensus of the community through emotional connection. On the other hand, the construction of the national community in reverse leads the direction of intangible cultural heritage inheritance, guarantees its inheritance practice, and enhances its inheritance value. Therefore, the two are deeply interwoven in terms of cultural identity, practical paths and development goals, forming a virtuous cycle of "strengthening identity

through inheritance and promoting inheritance through identity", working together to ensure the perpetuation of the roots of Chinese culture and the deepening of the sense of community.

### **3. The Practice Path of Longsheng Intangible Cultural Heritage's Intergenerational Inheritance Empowering the Construction of the National Community**

#### a) Practical carriers for the construction of cultural identity

The academic community generally holds that cultural identity is the core path to constructing the sense of community for the Chinese nation, and cultural symbols are the most direct manifestation[6]6-7. Intangible cultural heritage is regarded as a form of cultural symbol, which connects all ethnic groups through "tangible" forms, enhances the cultural identity of all ethnic groups with unique cultures, and promotes the construction of the Chinese nation community in daily life[4]19. The intangible cultural heritage of all ethnic groups in Longsheng, as a cultural symbol carrying collective memory, has achieved the cohesion of cultural identity through intergenerational transmission.

From the perspective of family inheritance, cross-ethnic families have become micro-units of cultural integration. Pan Hongmei's family, a four-generation household that combines the Yao, Zhuang and Han ethnic groups, saw Zhuang daughter-in-law Hou Yanlu, who learned the skills of long Red Yao long hair, fully devoted herself to the performance of Red Yao songs and dances. This cross-ethnic intangible cultural heritage learning and inheritance enabled the cultural skills of different ethnic groups to be passed down from generation to generation within the family, and also formed cultural identity among the members of each ethnic group through emotional interaction. Also in community inheritance, Pan Jifeng, a national-level intangible cultural heritage inheritor, not only teaches the art of Red Yao costumes to young people of her own ethnic group, but also goes into schools to give public welfare lessons to students of different ethnic groups, allowing students to experience the beauty of each ethnic group in extracurricular activities and understand the concept of diversity in unity and harmony in diversity imperceptibly[8]. It has also transformed intangible cultural heritage skills from a single ethnic culture to a shared culture across ethnic groups.

Furthermore, the rich national spirit of festival culture can play a positive role in uniting the nation[10], and its integration can be regarded as one of the important forms of intergenerational inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, providing a natural and equal contact platform for interaction and integration among all ethnic groups. Longsheng is known as the "county of a Hundred festivals", and intangible cultural heritage festivals such as the Red Yao Double Sixth Clothes Drying Festival and the Northern Zhuang Ox Worship Festival have long been cultural events that people of all ethnic groups can participate in. During the festival, people gather in the village square to display intangible cultural heritage works such as Red Yao costumes, veteran artisans teach skills to young people of all ethnic groups, and young people experience the cultural charm of different ethnic groups through immersive participation. The equal treatment cross-ethnic contact and interaction constantly dissolve the cultural barriers among ethnic groups. This is even more evident in multi-ethnic families, where they incorporate festival elements of different ethnic groups in their homes and participate as "family members" on an equal footing, maintaining family bonds while making cross-ethnic cultural contact a part of daily life. From village communities to individual families, this festival integration practice has enabled the people of all ethnic groups in Longsheng County to gradually form a collective identity of "Longsheng people" beyond a single ethnic identity in the intergenerational inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, practicing Fei Xiaotong's multi-ethnic integration development concept of "each beauty in its own way and the beauty of others", and constructing a deep cultural foundation for the ethnic unity community.

### b) Key paths for the construction of interest identity

Marx and Engels once said that everything people strive for is related to their interests[11]24. Only when the economy of ethnic regions develops and people of all ethnic groups have hope will they make the greatest efforts to enhance their self-awareness of community consciousness and create a better life together[7]38. It is thus evident that the sharing and connection of economic interests is an important support for the construction of national communities. In this area, Longsheng has taken the marketization and industrialization of intergenerational inheritance of intangible cultural heritage as a starting point to gradually construct a community of shared interests across ethnic groups.

On the one hand, Longsheng has introduced the "Regulations on the Protection of Ethnic and Folk Traditional Culture of Longsheng Autonomous County of All Ethnic Groups" to provide institutional support for the development of the intangible cultural heritage industry. At the same time, through the "Five Homes" and "Sixteen Same" projects, ethnic unity has been integrated into all aspects of development. On the other hand, the country has continuously optimized the benefit-sharing mechanism, intensified targeted support and assistance, and mobilized more social forces to participate[11]25. The Guangdong-Guangxi cooperation project is a typical example in the local area, injecting strong impetus into the development of Longsheng's intangible cultural heritage industry. For instance, in Jinjiang Village, Longji Town, the "Guangdong-Guangxi United Corridor" was built and the National Long Hair Science and Technology Museum was created. Through intangible cultural heritage exhibitions and sales, online live streaming, cultural tourism experiences and other means, the intergenerational innovation and market transformation of intangible cultural heritage skills such as Red Yao long hair care were promoted, and the proceeds benefited people of all ethnic groups through villagers' dividends, job creation and other means. At the same time, Longsheng has deeply integrated intangible cultural heritage resources with the tourism industry, creating multiple rural tourism demonstration sites and characteristic brands, turning the local area into an open "multi-ethnic ecological museum" showcasing ethnic culture and ethnic unity, with people of all ethnic groups participating through intangible cultural heritage performances, homestay operations, etc. From the tourism dividend of 6.936 million yuan in Dazhai Village, Longji Town in January 2025, with an average dividend of 24,600 yuan per household, it can be seen that the intangible cultural heritage industry has become an important engine to boost the income and prosperity of people of all ethnic groups, and they have truly felt the economic dividends brought by the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage.

As Mr. Fei Xiaotong said, a prosperous society provides more opportunities for its members to showcase their individuality, and this rule also applies to the ethnic domain. In other words, the more modernized the economy is, the greater the opportunities for each ethnic group to highlight their ethnic characteristics by relying on their own advantages[12]14. The intergenerational development of the intangible cultural heritage industry has enabled the younger generation to see the economic value of the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage and actively participate in the learning of skills and the development of the industry. Not only has the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage come alive, but it has also formed a close bond of interests among people of all ethnic groups under the common economic development goals. When the development of the intangible cultural heritage industry is deeply bound to the vital interests of people of all ethnic groups, ethnic unity is no longer merely a policy advocacy, but is transformed into the conscious actions of people of all ethnic groups, who cooperate and work together for the common economic interests to construct an economic community of "prosperity and decline together", providing a solid economic backing for the stability of the ethnic unity community.

### c) Guarantee paths for the construction of governance identity

In Guangnan Village, the fire pit is not only used for heating and cooking, but also serves as a spiritual home and cultural center for the villagers, where they sit and communicate, resolve conflicts, and pass on intangible cultural heritage songs. The hearth culture, originally an important carrier of Dong culture, has developed into a platform for sharing intangible cultural heritage resources of all ethnic groups in Longsheng through cultural exchanges and integration among the people of all ethnic groups. And in the process of continuous intergenerational inheritance, it has gradually evolved into the current local deliberation mechanism for resolving conflicts and negotiating affairs, becoming a typical manifestation of the deep integration of intergenerational inheritance of intangible cultural heritage and grassroots governance. A cross-ethnic social community has been built, providing a solid guarantee for governance identity. In dealing with issues such as resource allocation in the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage skills and neighborhood disputes among ethnic groups, people of all ethnic groups sit around the fire pit to negotiate on an equal basis, with ethnic elders presiding over justice, which respects the traditional customs of all ethnic groups and effectively resolves conflicts.

On this basis, Longsheng issued the "Rules for Deputies to the People's Congress of Longsheng Autonomous County on 'Fire Pit Deliberation'", innovated the "fire pit mediation" judicial service model, carried out communication work in ethnic languages, successfully mediated 1,569 disputes, the mediation rate consistently ranked among the top in the city, achieving a perfect integration of ethnic customs and legal norms. The practice of fire pit deliberation has enabled people of all ethnic groups to become the main body of grassroots governance, to participate equally and make joint decisions in the common affairs of intangible cultural heritage inheritance and village development, to consolidate the governance consensus across ethnic groups, to deepen the governance identity of the ethnic unity community, and to enable Fei Xiaotong's vision of "great harmony in the world" of multi-ethnic integration to take root in grassroots governance.

#### 4. Conclusion and Discussion

The practical achievements of Longsheng clearly confirm that there is a deep coupling relationship between the intergenerational inheritance of intangible cultural heritage and the construction of a national community. The spiritual connotation of intangible cultural heritage itself conveys the cultural consensus for the construction of the community, while the embodied practice of intergenerational inheritance deepens the emotional connection among members of all ethnic groups for the construction of the community. Ultimately, in the process of passing down intangible cultural heritage from generation to generation and connecting hearts among nations, a Chinese nation community of diversity and unity, sharing weal and woe, and a shared destiny is actively constructed. While the local community is practicing this logic, it has forged the cultural identity of the community through the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage across ethnic groups, connected the economic ties of the community through the market-oriented development of the intangible cultural heritage industry, and formed the governance consensus of the community through the deep integration of intangible cultural heritage and grassroots governance, with the core path of cultural identity as the soul, interest identity as the strength, and governance identity as the foundation. It provides a model of grassroots practice for strengthening the sense of community of the Chinese nation through cultural inheritance in multi-ethnic regions of China.

At the same time, there are some issues that need to be further explored, such as the increasingly commercialized tendency of the tourism industry under market-oriented development, which may overshadow the cultural attributes of intangible cultural heritage with economic attributes, and how to maintain the authenticity of its cultural core and ethnic

characteristics is worth paying attention to. Secondly, local subsidy policies for intangible cultural heritage inheritors are limited to the municipal level and above, and support for lower-level intangible cultural heritage inheritors is relatively weak. How to maintain the vitality of their cultivation also needs to be explored. Furthermore, the achievements of Longsheng benefit from the advantages of resource endowment and policy support. If one side changes, it may affect the stability of the overall development. A long-term mechanism needs to be studied to ensure the regular impetus of the intergenerational inheritance of intangible cultural heritage for the construction of the national community. This is also a common issue faced by other multi-ethnic regions. Finally, Longsheng, as a micro-practice field of the "diversity as one" pattern, has some replicability in its experience, but the actual situation varies from place to place. How to explore suitable paths for the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage and the construction of communities based on local conditions still requires more empirical research to support it. Therefore, in the future, the research perspective can be further expanded, targeted research can be carried out around this, and the high adaptability and sustainability of this path can be continuously enriched and improved in combination with Longsheng practice, providing more targeted references for solving the problems of intangible cultural heritage inheritance and strengthening the consciousness of the Chinese nation community in multi-ethnic areas.

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