

# Research on Rural Art Design and Brand Establishment

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## Abstract

Art helps rural revitalization, and various regions explore and practice based on actual analysis of the current situation. This article uses real cases to illustrate the relationship between rural art design and branding, drawing inspiration from the “Gesar King Tibetan Culture and Skills Park”. The park is dedicated to providing skills training and promoting Tibetan culture and Gesar culture among impoverished children in Tibetan areas. Currently, children in Tibetan schools have created their own brand of thangkas. Tibetan cultural, creative products, as well as highland specialties are highly popular. This not only improves the living environment, but also optimizes production, life, and ecological space through artistic design. This article delves into the Gesar King Tibetan Culture and Skills Park from the perspectives of the form, content, achievements, difficulties, and problems encountered in establishing a brand through the empowerment of art and culture in rural construction. It promotes Tibetan thangka art and daily applications, digital sales, and the residency and inheritance of artistic achievements, providing reference for more aspiring thangka artists in the future.

## Keywords

art design, brand effect, rural revitalization, inheritance

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## 1. Introduction

The 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China proposed the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy, and the initial draft of the “National Rural Revitalization Strategy Plan (2018-2022)” was formed on February 5, 2018. 2021 is the first year of China's comprehensive promotion of rural revitalization construction. Rural areas have multiple functions such as nature, society, ecology, and culture. Rural revitalization and urban development promote and coexist with each other, and the public constitutes the main space for human activities. The implementation of the rural revitalization strategy is an effective way to inherit the excellent traditional Chinese culture, and the integration of art and design adds new innovation and competitiveness to it. Art design enters the countryside, helps rural revitalization, forms its own brand, and assists its sustainable development.

## 2. The Current Situation of Rural Cultural Construction and the Challenges in the Implementation Process

In recent years, rural areas have generally achieved road connectivity, tap water through, and improved sanitation conditions, indicating that rural infrastructure and living environment have been improved; In terms of spiritual civilization, each village has a cultural activity square where villagers participate in rich and diverse artistic and cultural activities to improve their artistic participation. Rural areas inherit and protect traditional rural culture through the implementation of memory projects and promote the introduction

of local art into modern civilization. Soft power and hard support are being strengthened. However, the implementation process of rural construction still faces difficulties and challenges.

## 2.1 The Speed of Rural Destruction Exceeds the Speed of Rural Construction

In 2014, there were nearly 5000 traditional villages with conservation value in China, many of which suffered varying degrees of damage, divided into natural damage and social damage. The former is located in remote, poor and backward mountainous areas, where the village's appearance naturally deteriorates due to geographical and economic limitations; Social destruction is an intangible damage to traditional culture caused by convenient transportation, developed commerce, high population mobility, and frequent cultural exchanges. a) Young people enter the city while the elderly stay behind, leading to empty nests for the elderly and weak in rural areas, and the loss of farming. Table 1 shows the age composition data of the population in previous censuses. It can be seen from the data in the table that the proportion of 60+(including 65+) population is gradually increasing, and the proportion of the population aged 15-59 is gradually decreasing, which indicates that the aging situation of China's population is intensifying.

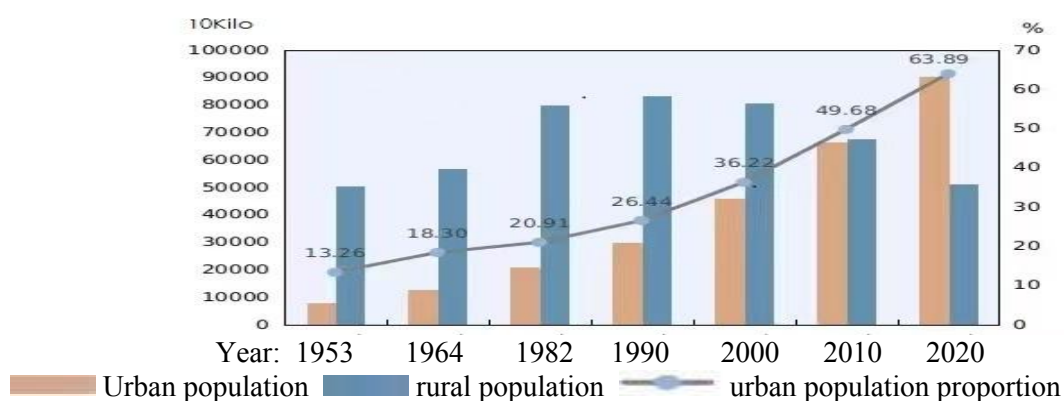
Table 1: Age composition of population in previous censuses

Census Years	Proportion of Population by Age Group to National Population (unit: %)			
	0-14	15-59	60+	65+
1953	36.28	56.40	7.32	4.41
1964	40.69	53.18	6.13	3.56
1982	33.59	58.79	7.62	4.91
1990	27.69	63.74	8.57	5.57
2000	22.89	66.78	10.33	6.96
2010	16.60	70.14	13.26	8.87
2020	17.95	63.35	18.7	13.5

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2021a).

b) Merge natural villages. The 2016 Shandong New Rural Construction Policy stipulates that the data from the “Shandong New Rural Construction Plan” illustrates this situation. From 1996 to 2013, the number of urban and rural areas in Shandong Province sharply decreased from 1022 to 89, the number of administrative villages decreased from 83000 to 65000, and the number of natural villages decreased from 98000 to 86000. Many villages have become “empty nesters” (Wang & Xu, 2017). From the chart below, It is not difficult to see that the urban population is gradually increasing, and the growth rate has been accelerating in recent years, while the rural population was the largest in 1990, and then gradually decreased.

Table 2: Urban and rural populations



Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2021b).

### c) The destruction of traditional culture

Villagers are migrating to cities for work, and the number of rural residents is decreasing, making it difficult to preserve the original rural way of life, resulting in the disappearance or “hollowing out” of traditional villages. It is mainly manifested in: a) the gradual weakening of traditional rural customs, the weakening of relationships between farmers and people after they migrate to cities for work, the decrease in trust, and the weakening of local customs. b) The crisis of the disappearance of intangible cultural heritage in

rural areas has led to a large influx of young farmers into cities to integrate into urban life, while the intangible cultural skills of the elderly have not been inherited and are facing the danger of extinction.

## **2.2 No Development Oriented Protection, Seeking Uniqueness and Innovation, Large-scale Demolition and Construction**

In recent years, a large number of tourist attractions such as ancient villages and castles have emerged across the country. Many of these attractions involve the demolition of traditional buildings and the construction of modern and antique style buildings, which are called “ancient towns” or “ancient villages”. This has changed the production and lifestyle of the original residents, forming modern pastoral villages instead of traditional ancient villages, let alone traditional rural culture. There are few professionals conducting research on the protection of “ancient village culture”. Although “ancient village culture” is a hot topic for scholars to study, many places have declared traditional villages and built new and old imitations. Many local governments blindly pursue economic value without considering the protection of traditional culture. On April 25, 2014, the national government issued the “Guiding Opinions on Effectively Strengthening the Protection of Traditional Chinese Villages”, which aims to prevent blind construction, excessive development and other destructive phenomena. Currently, only Yunnan, Anhui, Fujian and Guangdong provinces have issued management mechanisms to effectively protect cultural heritage and inheritance. Therefore, more places need to participate, improve protection mechanisms, and strengthen the protection of traditional villages and culture.

## **2.3 Rural Residents Have Low Levels of Education and Insufficient Awareness of Inheritance**

Many rural residents who migrate to cities for work are attracted by modern cities and gradually leave the countryside to live in the city. Their descendants also study, work, and settle in cities. For left behind residents, getting rid of backward economy and lifestyle and improving their living standards is a big deal, and they do not pay attention to protection issues. Traditional village culture not only retains the connotations of various ethnic cultures in China, but also serves as the cultural foundation for the inheritance of local civilization and other humanistic spirits in traditional Chinese culture. The inheritance of generations and the formation of distinctive features are necessary to realize the beautiful brand of “rural culture”. The protection of these inherited local cultures has practical significance for the inheritance and development of traditional culture.

## **3. Tailored to Local Conditions, Scientifically Planned, Rural Art and Design Should Have Life and Soul**

To avoid the above problems, Gesar Tibetan Culture and Skills Park has studied relevant policies, combined with its own reality, explored traditional art and culture, focused on cultivating more excellent painting technicians, and increased the training of artistic talents: first, to strengthen the participation awareness of villagers; second, to retain the handicraft skills of villagers; third, to jointly supervise by grassroots governments; fourth, to seek investment and have control over investment and income funds.

### **3.1 Unique Environment Forming Unique Nature and Art**

a) Geographic location and geomorphic features: Ganzi Prefecture is located in the west of Sichuan Province, in the southeast of the Qinghai Tibet Plateau, bordering Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture and Ya'an City in the east, Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture and Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in the south, Changdu City in the Xizang Autonomous Region across the Jinsha River in the west, Yushu and Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in the north. Ganzi Prefecture is a transitional area between the Sichuan Basin and the the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, characterized by high terrain, high in the north and low in the south, central prominence, deep in the southeast edge, and significant regional differences between mountains and rivers.

b) Climate type: Ganzi Prefecture belongs to the subtropical climate zone. Due to strong elevation and complex terrain, it has formed a continental plateau mountainous monsoon climate with complex climate and significant regional differences.

c) Ecological Culture: Ganzi Prefecture is a part of the Qinghai Tibet Plateau and a gathering place for ethnic minorities such as the Tibetan people. Its rich ethnic cultural resources are a major industry in the local economy. Located in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River, Ganzi Prefecture is a natural ecological barrier.

In summary, Garze Prefecture in Sichuan Province is not only a natural barrier to the national ecological environment, but also an important region for local economic development. Unique agricultural products have their own unique qualities influenced by natural environment, seasonal climate, and other factors. Therefore, establishing a unique brand is beneficial for improving the quality of agricultural products and promoting local economic development.

### **3.2 National Highway 317 Originated from a Historical Landmark on the Plateau, Pointing Towards Art and Promoting Brand Building**

On National Highway 317, when Gesar Tibetan culture appears on the roadside, all its postures point towards art and humanities, which is the direction of Himalayan art inheritance and development. The teachers and students of the craft park overcome difficulties to install road signs, pointing to scenic spots, villages, cities, post stations, as well as traditional art and Tibetan culture. Starting from the road signs, it leads to an artistic palace and unexpectedly meets countless high-altitude art brands. We look forward to Tibetan culture connecting ancient plateau art with contemporary journeys, presenting a global perspective.

Cordyceps, Sanghuang, Lingzhi, beeswax, Tibetan incense, and Buddhist bead bracelets, tourists from all over the world come to the plateau every year to experience the people's adherence to ancient culture, as well as its development and progress. Tangka art has become a new cultural landmark on the snowy plateau, showcasing the inheritance and innovation of Tibetan culture. In the process of safeguarding and inheriting intangible cultural heritage, Himalayan art has achieved “tangible tradition and continuous evolution”.

### **3.3 Tangka Art Classic Brand**

The positioning of the intangible cultural heritage protection project is rural literature and art. Tangka, an intangible cultural heritage, is the first impression that consumers have when they come into contact with a brand. As a symbol of Tibetan cultural heritage, Tangka has attracted attention both domestically and internationally for its unique artistic charm and profound cultural heritage. Tangka culture has not only been inherited and developed domestically, but has also become an intangible cultural heritage advocated by UNESCO, and has connected with world culture and grown stronger. Gesar King Tibetan Culture and Skills Park has been committed to teaching Tangka skills for free and inheriting Tibetan culture for many years. In 2006, Tibetan thangkas represented by the Karma Gazi School of Painting, Miantang School of Painting, and Qinze School of Painting were included in the national intangible cultural heritage list. In the following years, 16 types of thangkas were successively selected as representative projects of China's national intangible cultural heritage. Successful brand visual images can stimulate consumers' purchasing desire, improve brand awareness and loyalty, and bring more business opportunities and competitive advantages to the brand.

a) Brand visual image is an important factor in brand building and marketing. The uniqueness and innovation of visual image can make it stand out among many brands and attract attention. On November 27, 2017, Thangka was selected as the fifth batch of autonomous region level intangible cultural heritage by the Department of Culture of the Xizang Autonomous Region. This ancient art has been known, appreciated, studied, protected and created by more people.

b) Gesar Tibetan Culture and Art Park is well aware of the importance of the Qiwigangba School of Painting. Visual image design needs to combine psychology, communication studies, and other related disciplines to express the brand's personality, aesthetics, artistic style, etc., influence consumers' perception and behavior, and ensure the transmission of the Qiwigangba School of Painting. It is the responsibility of the craftsman. Tangka is a unique form of painting art that covers many fields such as Tibetan history, culture, and life, and is known as the encyclopedia of the Tibetan ethnic group (Tsering, 2011). In thangka, different deities and bodhisattvas represent different meanings and symbols, each with its own unique religious philosophy and aesthetic wisdom. The depiction of gods and Bodhisattvas reflects the profound cultural heritage of Tibetan culture, while also showcasing the devout religious beliefs and exquisite artistic skills of the Tibetan people.

c) Among the first batch of intangible cultural heritage, Gamagazi Painting School, Miantang Painting School and Qinze Painting School belong to the three major schools of Tibetan Tangka. Gamagazi Painting

School originated in Dege, popular in Kangba, Sichuan and Chang, Xizang, is the main intangible cultural heritage art inherited by the Arts Park. In recent years, painters have produced numerous masterpieces and have won numerous awards at the Golden Key Tangka Exhibition held in Dege County, making outstanding contributions to the inheritance and development of the Gama Gazi Painting School in the new era. The Miantang School of Painting is the most influential Tibetan thangka painting school after the 15th century, mainly popular in the Weizang region.

#### **4. Go Out of the Art Park and Invite in Students for Social Practice Activities**

##### **4.1 Local Residents' Educational Needs**

The students in the vocational park receive education, develop skills, and make contributions through social practice, changing the appearance of their hometown and influencing the lives and aesthetics of the villagers. Teacher Weng Jia from the Art Park led students to collect art sketches, conduct on-site visits, and inspect intangible cultural heritage techniques. Integrating art into rural areas, paying attention to the psychological situation of left behind children in rural areas, guiding them to discover the beauty of their surroundings and life, and appreciate beautiful art. Art helps rural construction, mobilizes local people to actively participate, learn, and meet their educational needs. Teachers use artistic concepts and actions, actively communicate, and inspire local people to actively participate in artistic and cultural construction activities. Practice has proven that the deep integration of Tangka professional courses with rural art greatly improves students' professional skills and innovation abilities, exercises their logical thinking, captures market opportunities, predicts risks in sales, processes information, and deploys decisions.

##### **4.2 Integration of Professional Courses in Colleges and Universities, Deepening the Reform of Professional Education**

In May 2015, the State Council issued the “Implementation Opinions on Deepening the Reform of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education in Higher Education Institutions” (Guobanfa [2015] No. 36), which pointed out that deepening education reform is an urgent need for the country to implement development strategies and promote economic benefits. Professional education should not only enable students to master professional knowledge, but also cultivate them into professional skilled talents. The National Rural Revitalization Plan provides a platform for this. Rural revitalization guides teachers and students from colleges and universities to engage in rural construction, using professional skills to serve rural revitalization. Through school land and school enterprise cooperation, “art design and rural revitalization” are integrated into practical teaching such as graduation design and job internships. Professional teachers and enterprise mentors lead students to form teams to carry out project design and implementation teaching. While assisting rural revitalization, they also complete practical teaching tasks such as graduation design and job internships, integrating theoretical knowledge into rural revitalization practice. This not only enhances students' professional and practical abilities, but also injects new vitality into the construction of beautiful countryside.

#### **5. The Development of Digital Culture Promotes the Construction of Rural Art and Culture**

The development of digital culture plays a huge driving role in economic development, and the emergence of digital economy plays an important role in the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage resources and the development of rural real economy in China.

##### **5.1 Smart Public Welfare Cloud Platform: The Integration of “Self Media+Services+Commerce” Injects a Booster for Plateau Agricultural Brands**

Firstly, taking the Gesar Tibetan Culture and Skills Park as an example, it is suggested to establish a Tangka Art Museum to support rural tourism. Museums will attract a large number of tourists to learn about Tibetan culture and participate in its dissemination, greatly promoting rural economic development.

Secondly, Thangka art emphasizes the integration and symbiosis with local culture. When art and life are integrated, design supports the development of cultural tourism and characteristic industries, fully respects

local customs and traditions, and explores traditional culture. Industrial upgrading and artistic enhancement are achieved through innovative thinking in art, changing the image of rural areas and residents' lives, and creating a harmonious ecological environment where humans and nature are interdependent and develop in harmony.

## **5.2 Common Development Ideas for Agriculture, Tourism, and Art Industries**

Cultivate leading industries with rural characteristics, carry out rural revitalization construction, establish rural tourism with Tangka skills learning, tourism vacation and recuperation projects, innovate models such as high-altitude climbing sports activities, Tangka art and cultural exchanges, and vacation tourism, and help establish unique brands and upgrade products in Tibetan areas.

Sharing a Happy Life - Restoring Tibetan Civilization “attracts users to place orders online. Empowered by digital technology, the development of cultural and creative artworks such as thangka has guided the direction of rural revitalization, making digital highland agricultural products more intelligent.

## **5.3 Gradually Reduce the Gap in Urban and Rural Life Services and Improve the Happiness of Farmers' Lives**

The implementation of the rural revitalization plan has attracted more attention and support from all sectors of society for the construction of rural culture. The construction of rural culture has made positive progress in various aspects. We need to further strengthen cultural guidance, digital reform, obtain more policy support, comprehensively enhance the strong strength of rural culture, and promote rural revitalization.

## **6. Current Problems and Suggestions in the Construction of Art and Design Brands in Our Village**

a) Lack of technical talents: Strengthen professional skills training for villagers, enhance their literacy and skill level, and enable them to better adapt to the needs of rural revitalization and development. Utilize policy advantages to guide professionals in digital culture, art design, and other fields to actively participate in rural revitalization, such as tourism and cultural and creative product design, as well as Tangka and plateau product brand image design and packaging, to create regional characteristic brands and enhance rural brand value.

b) Shortage of funds: Encourage participation from all sectors of society, integrate different artistic methods with different industries, and collaborate with authoritative institutions such as calligraphy, art, dance, music, etc. on self media platforms to launch extensive publicity and attract government and social funding support. Utilize digital inclusive finance to provide more convenient and efficient services for rural revitalization, and solve the problem of financial difficulties.

c) Deepen the exploration of artistic and cultural schools: strengthen cultural exchange with local partners, protect traditional culture, absorb new styles of art, form regional and local characteristic culture, and attract more support and cooperation with characteristic culture.

## **7. Conclusion**

The inheritance of intangible cultural heritage of folk art, brand design and development, digital design and dissemination, ecological construction, etc. are all links between rural art and brands. The relationship between art design and brand not only requires economic support but also the support of all sectors of society in order to steadily develop. As an important branch of the cultural industry, art and design enable Tibetans to leverage their strengths, absorb and update Tibetan culture and cultural and creative products, and inject new vitality into the local area. Tangka Art Design brand not only beautifies the rural environment in rural cultural construction, but also enhances the rural living environment and cultural heritage through artistic design methods; We have also developed cultural products that are in line with local cultural characteristics, promoting the development of cultural and creative industries and rural tourism, and driving the development of the local economy. Tangka is a treasure of intangible cultural heritage and a source of national pride. As one of the oldest ethnic groups in China, the Tibetan people have created a brilliant national culture and left

behind an extremely rich cultural heritage. Tangka, on the other hand, is a precious and splendid part of Tibetan culture, adding bricks and tiles to the development of rural areas.

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### Funding

This research received no external funding.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

### Acknowledgment

This paper is an output of the science project “i-DeskResearch”, Thank you again to the personnel and institutions involved in this research. This paper is the result of teamwork, and we will continue to contribute to it.

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