

A Study On The Living Inheritance And Innovative Development Of The She Ethnic Group's Traditional Culture: Take Muchen She Ethnic Township In Longyou County, Quzhou City, As An Example

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Abstract:

The traditional culture of the She ethnic group is an important component of the Chinese nation's cultural treasure trove, encompassing elements such as She clothing, She medicinal practices, the She language, and She folk songs. It carries the historical memory and ethnic spirit of the She people. Currently, due to factors such as the accelerated pace of modernization and a weakening willingness among younger generations to carry on their cultural heritage, the traditional culture of the She ethnic group faces practical challenges including a shortage of inheritors and insufficient innovation, which in turn jeopardize its sustainable development. This article, set against the backdrop of the digital and intelligent era and taking Muchen She Township in Longyou County, Quzhou City, as a case study, focuses on the dynamic preservation and innovative development of She traditional culture. First, it systematically outlines the major forms and core values of She traditional culture; second, it analyzes existing explorations of how digital and intelligent technologies are being applied in the preservation of She culture; and finally, it delves into the current challenges facing its preservation and development, proposing targeted solutions for building a "Culture + Platform" model. +Technology"Integrated models and other countermeasures,"Aims to throughConduct innovative development research on certain issues within the integrated She ethnic traditional culture that are facing a crisis of inheritance.

Keywords: *She ethnic group's traditional culture; living heritage*

Date of Submission: 10-01-2026

Date of Acceptance: 20-01-2026

I. Introduction

Muchen She Ethnic Township is located in Longyou County, Quzhou City, Zhejiang Province. It is an ethnic minority township with distinctive She ethnic cultural characteristics. The township has preserved a wealth of traditional She culture, including unique clothing, cuisine, music, dance, and festive celebrations. However, as the process of modernization advances, She culture faces challenges in terms of inheritance and preservation. Therefore, deeply exploring the traditional She ethnic cultural resources of Muchen She Township in Longyou County, Quzhou City, and activating the intrinsic motivation for the protection and inheritance of She culture will help break through the challenges facing the transmission of traditional She culture and facilitate the innovation and development of She culture.

II. She Ethnic Group's Traditional Culture

She ethnic group clothing

The She ethnic group boasts a rich cultural heritage and unique ethnic charm, and its traditional clothing is an important component of She culture.

Characteristics of the traditional attire of She women:

The Phoenix Costume is one of the most iconic garments worn by She women. It derives its name from its patterns, which closely resemble those of a phoenix. Typically worn during major festivals or weddings, the costume consists of four main components: the upper garment, the skirt, the headpiece, and accessories. The upper garment, also known as the "Wu Yi," features vibrant colors—often red or blue—and is adorned with intricate colorful embroidery along the neckline, cuffs, and hem. The skirt is long and usually in black or dark shades, with embroidered floral patterns along its edges. Today, She women's headpieces are commonly referred to as the "Phoenix Crown" and the "Phoenix Hairdo." The "Phoenix Crown" is an external-

type headpiece that relies primarily on externally decorated components for its design, while the “Phoenix Hairdo” is a hairstyle-based headpiece, with the woman’s hair itself serving as the primary structural element [1]. As for accessories, silver bracelets are typically worn on the wrists, and embroidered shoes are worn on the feet.

Characteristics of traditional attire for She men:

Generally, men wear cyan-blue cross-front short shirts and wide-legged trousers, with straw sandals or cloth shoes on their feet. On special occasions, men also wear hats adorned with a variety of decorative ornaments on the crown.

Meaning of clothing

The traditional attire of the She ethnic group is not merely a customary way of dressing; it also carries profound cultural significance and...Aesthetic characteristics.

The traditional attire of the She ethnic group has developed a unique visual language and cultural symbolism in its use of color[2], imbued with rich symbolic meanings. The She people traditionally favor black and blue, as these colors convey a sense of depth and solemnity. Black represents night or the earth, while blue symbolizes the sky or water—both reflecting the She people’s close connection with nature. In daily life, the She often employ contrasting color combinations, adorning the collars, diagonal fronts, cuffs, and hems of their garments with vividly embroidered patterns that enhance the overall vibrancy of the clothing. In the traditional beliefs of the She people, the beautiful and auspicious phoenix serves as a symbol of the founding ancestor of the She matrilineal society; thus, the She have a custom of “revering the phoenix and honoring women.” In women’s “phoenix attire,” red is widely used, as it embodies passion, joy, and good fortune in She culture. Red headbands and red motifs on garments symbolize the phoenix’s head and body. Gold and silver colors represent wealth and nobility, serving as symbols of prosperity and high status. The embroidery of “phoenix attire” also frequently employs color contrasts—for instance, floral patterns often feature combinations of red with green or yellow with blue, accentuating the sense of depth and dimension. Gold and silver threads are likewise used to embroider various designs, lending the garments an even more lavish appearance and creating a striking visual impact. The colors and color combinations in She attire not only possess aesthetic value but also carry profound cultural significance and symbolic meaning. The selection and combination of these colors reflect the She people’s distinctive aesthetic sensibilities, their reverence for nature, and their heartfelt aspirations for a better life.

With the acceleration of globalization and the changing nature of modern lifestyles, the traditional clothing of the She ethnic group is facing challenges in terms of inheritance difficulties and cultural decline.[3],Today, the everyday attire of modern She people has become increasingly modernized. However, during important festivals or celebratory events, they still wear these traditional garments rich in ethnic characteristics to show their respect for and commitment to preserving their culture.

She medicine

She medicine refers to herbal remedies traditionally used by the She ethnic group. Many She medicines have been proven through years of practical experience to possess remarkable efficacy and therapeutic effects., due toIt is widely used in healthcare and disease treatment in She ethnic areas due to its unique medicinal effects.She medicineIt harbors the precious survival experience and cultural genes of the She people.Common She medicine includes honeysuckle, turmeric, She grass, blackberry bush, and She yellow flower mussel, among others.

She medicine boasts unique therapeutic effects in treating various diseases. For instance, honeysuckle can relieve colds and sore throats; She grass and She fragrance have anti-inflammatory, analgesic, and anti-anxiety properties; turmeric can alleviate rheumatoid arthritis and lower-back and leg pain; and She yellow flower mussel can moisten the lungs, stop coughing, and clear lung heat. Meanwhile, the blackberry tree—a resource that embodies both medicinal and culinary uses—has a long history of application. On the third day of the third lunar month, the She people often gather fresh leaves to make “black rice,” which serves as both a seasonal delicacy and a traditional medicinal food.[4],It can tonify the liver and kidneys, improve vision, and stop diarrhea, among other benefits.[5]The application of these She medicinal herbs has brought health and well-being to many She people and has also enriched the diversity of traditional Chinese medicine.

She ethnic group language

Longyou MuDustThe She Ethnic Township is the only township in western Zhejiang Province inhabited by a minority ethnic group. The She population accounts for 16% of the township’s total population and boasts unique customs and ethnic characteristics. The She people have their own language, which is an essential component of She culture, featuring distinctive phonetics, vocabulary, and grammatical structures.

However, the She have no written script of their own; instead, they commonly use Chinese characters. Through surveys and research, our team found that the current state of the She language is not optimistic. According to incomplete statistics, fewer than 1,000 people still speak the She language, placing it among endangered languages. As modernization progresses, the She language and culture are facing integration and assimilation with Han Chinese culture, threatening the uniqueness and continued transmission of the She language. Moreover, today in China, only about a thousand She people living in counties and cities such as Haifeng, Huidong, Boluo, and Zengcheng in Guangdong Province still retain their original ethnic language—the She language. In other regions, the She people have largely abandoned their original She language, which originated from the Miao-Yao language family, and now predominantly use Shehua—a dialect closely related to Chinese dialects. During our field visits and interactions with local residents at the Shanha Reception Hall, we tried learning some simple, everyday phrases in the She language. Many of the pronunciations sounded like modified Mandarin. After conducting a series of on-site investigations and engaging in conversations with local people, our team discovered that most villagers are middle-aged or elderly, while young people tend to work or study outside the township. With the widespread promotion of Mandarin Chinese, the frequency of She language usage has declined, and younger generations of She people may no longer use the She language at all. Furthermore, since the She language lacks a written script of its own and relies on Chinese characters for communication, recording and disseminating the language has become even more challenging. Although certain traditional She cultural practices—such as She weddings and funeral rites—still preserve some contexts for the use of the She language to some extent, as the pace of modern life accelerates and people's attitudes toward customs and traditions evolve, these traditional activities are gradually diminishing, thereby impacting the language's transmission and preservation.

She ethnic group folk songs

The She ethnic group does not have a written script of its own; generally, the common writing system used by them is Chinese characters. She folk songs, however, represent the She people's primary form of oral literature. "She songs are the crystallization of the She people's spirit and the embodiment of their wisdom—they are no different from the 'writings' found in the Confucian academies of the Han people, nor are they any less significant than modern cultural textbooks,"[6] Thus, She folk songs serve as one of the most important avenues for studying She culture, having accompanied the She people through their migrations and shifting cultivation practices.[7] For instance, during times of war and strife, the She people relied on songs to relieve their inner suffering and used singing to pass down their cultural heritage. She folk songs encompass not only mythological and legendary ballads and historical and political songs, but also songs about fate, narrative ballads, and other genres. Moreover, mountain songs are an essential medium and tool for the She people to disseminate various social knowledge related to history, production, and daily life, as well as to engage in cultural and recreational activities. Singing mountain songs is a major form of cultural activity in the daily lives of the She people and an indispensable part of their cultural tradition. Both men and women, young and old, are skilled at singing, and this has given rise to unique ethnic song festivals and gatherings.

She ethnic group people On festive and joyous occasions, songs soar high. Even when working in the mountains and fields or visiting relatives and friends and welcoming guests, people often engage in musical dialogue through song. Over 1,000 mountain songs, comprising some 40,000 to 50,000 lines, have been passed down through the ages. Among the long narrative poems, the most famous is the "Gao Huang Ge." The "Gao Huang Ge" is also known as the "Pangu Ge" or the "Panhu Wang Ge." This is a seven-character epic poem spanning three to four hundred lines. "The Song of the High Emperor" Narrated in the form of a myth, The extraordinary origins of the She ethnic group's mythological legend "Panhu," his remarkable achievements in pacifying rebellions and saving the country, and the tale of how he fearlessly overcame hardships to give rise to the four surnames—Pan, Lan, Lei, and Zhong., Reflects the She ethnic group's primitive religious beliefs and totem worship. It is an exceptionally outstanding work among the various forms of songs and ballads of the She ethnic group.

III. In The Era Of Digital Intelligencean Exploration Of Applications In The Inheritance Of She Ethnic Group's Traditional Culture—Taking As An Examplelongyou Muchen She Ethnic Townshiptake "Shanha Reception Hall" As An Example.

She ethnic group's traditional culture with popular aesthetics resources modernization with digitalization 2022 In the year, the State Council released the "14th Five-Year Plan for Tourism Development," emphasizing the integration of culture and tourism—using culture to enrich tourism and using tourism to highlight culture—in order to meet people's aspirations for a better life.[8]. The She ethnic group boasts a wealth of unique cultural resources, including distinctive clothing, literature, and folk songs. She culture is an important component of the Chinese nation's cultural heritage, and its preservation and development are of great significance in promoting China's outstanding traditional culture. Therefore, to disseminate She culture, it

is essential to integrate it with tourism initiatives in She villages, enabling She culture to provide rich, meaningful content for She-village tourism, while tourism, in turn, offers a platform for showcasing this culture.

Longyou Muchen She Ethnic Township has begun experimenting with ways to combine the traditional She ethnic festival “March 3” with modern elements that appeal to young people. In 2025 This year, the “March 3rd” Ethnic Wind Music Festival held in Mucun She Township, Longyou, was a bold and innovative endeavor. The “March 3rd” Ethnic Wind Music Festival has shown young people that traditional culture can indeed evolve with the times. In addition, Mucun She Township in Longyou has actively leveraged new media channels to encourage and guide local makers, village officials, and villagers to showcase Mucun’s folk activities and natural scenery from multiple angles through short videos and live broadcasts—such as She ethnic wedding ceremonies. These ethnically-themed study-and-experience programs have attracted widespread attention precisely because of their unique aesthetic value and distinctive ethnic customs. As their visibility and popularity continue to rise, more and more young people will be drawn to visit, participate, and spontaneously take photos and share them online, thus creating a positive feedback loop that helps spread She ethnic culture and promote tourism in Mucun She Township.

Innovative design and development of She ethnic group’s clothing and medicinal herbs driven by big data

Traditional costume experiences are typically presented either through static displays or short-term rental services. However, due to constraints such as venue availability, time limitations, and financial considerations, the experiential nature of cultural tourism is hindered, its outreach is restricted, and interactive engagement is compromised. Nevertheless, with the advancement of technologies such as computer simulation, 3D imaging, and artificial intelligence, virtual reality (VR) technology has begun to be applied to the preservation and dissemination of intangible cultural heritage. This shift has facilitated a transition from a passive, object-centered approach to digital preservation of intangible cultural heritage toward an immersive, user-centered experience. Liu Feiyang (2025) and colleagues have established a VR-based digital exhibition hall for intangible cultural heritage, integrating VR technology with traditional craft skills and thus opening up a brand-new immersive and interactive pathway for the inheritance of She ethnic group’s intangible cultural heritage [9].

Longyou Muchen She Ethnic Township has introduced a big-data visualization screen. In the Shanha Reception Hall, visitors can stand in front of the “Transformation Magic Mirror” and select their favorite traditional She ethnic costumes. The very next second, the visitor on the big-screen display will be magically transformed into someone wearing She ethnic attire. By moving the cursor—corresponding to your hand—onto the camera icon on the screen, you can instantly generate a photo of yourself “wearing” She ethnic clothing. Simply scan the QR code displayed on the screen and save it to obtain a high-quality image of your ethnic costume. Additionally, you can use the big-screen display to create a group photo featuring all the ethnic groups as a cherished memento.

The integrated approach of “culture and tourism + She medicine,” Okay. Taking the development of tourism villages as an opportunity, we will promote She medicine-based health and wellness tourism, create a number of health-care and wellness programs, and foster the coordinated development of the She medicine health industry and rural tourism. At the same time, ensure quality and safety by strengthening the supervision of traditional Chinese medicine use in medical institutions, actively exploring a normalized regulatory model that aligns with the unique characteristics of She medicine, and using scientific regulation to safeguard the quality of She medicine.

The integration approach of “culture and tourism + She medicine” The distinctive promotion of traditional She ethnic group activities is indispensable. The She’s “March 3rd” is a traditional folk festival of the She people, typically celebrated on the third day of the third lunar month. This tradition has deep historical roots and rich cultural significance. To commemorate their national heroes and remind future generations of how hard-earned the black rice is, the She people have designated March 3rd as the “birthday of grain rice.” Every year on March 3rd, the She family steams black rice together and shares a meal as a family. Black rice is one of the “Three Treasures of the She,” made by squeezing juice or simmering broth from the tender leaves of the wild blackberry bushes that the She people gather from the mountains. Next, glutinous rice is soaked in this broth for several hours, then removed and steamed in a wooden steamer until cooked through. The black rice boasts a dark bluish-black hue with a glossy sheen; it’s not only visually appealing but also fragrant, sweet, and delicious—possessing a distinctively She flavor. Beyond its exquisite taste, black rice also nourishes essence and strengthens the bone marrow, cools the blood, tonifies the spleen, enhances complexion, and promotes longevity.

Big data helps promote and popularize the She ethnic group’s language and folk songs.

The She language and She folk songs are closely related—in other words, She folk songs can serve both as a medium for the She language and as a valuable resource for practicing it. Thus, by using the form of

singing She folk songs, we can achieve an in-depth study of the She language. The She people refer to themselves as “Shanha.” In traditional settings, they used songs as their primary means of communication, employing their voices to sing about daily life and pass down their culture. Therefore, She folk songs can also be called “song-speech.” From this perspective, She folk songs and the She language are mutually interactive in terms of their expressive forms.

Lin Weizeng (2024) From an academic perspective, the study of She songs has undergone a gradual evolution since the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China—moving from the initial collection, compilation, and documentation of She songs toward increasingly specialized approaches encompassing musicology, literary studies, linguistics, folklore, and anthropology.[10]Today, in the age of big data, the presentation of She language and She songs is no longer confined to oral transmission alone. In the Shanha Reception Hall in Muchen She Ethnic Township, Longyou, for instance, a touch-screen voice assistant helps visitors learn the She language. The categories include everyday expressions, local customs, and festive celebrations. Visitors can tap on the She words or phrases they wish to learn, and the electronic screen will provide immediate feedback—simple words or sentences such as “Muchen is a wonderful place,” “Muchen welcomes you,” and “Hello.” In addition, the interactive touch-screen games at the Shanha Reception Hall enable visitors to gain a deeper understanding of the ancient She language and its original sounds through listening and repeating exercises. Among these is the “Gao Huang Ge,” a song revered by the She people as their “epic of creation.” When visitors click on “Gao Huang Ge,” the lyrics—“From Pangu's creation of the heavens until today, one mountain range after another, each bearing its own people”—immediately fill their ears. The She people’s courageous spirit of resilience and indomitable perseverance, along with their stirring national epic, resonate deeply within visitors’ hearts. Moreover, She folk songs such as “Gao Huang Ge” and “Flying Together with the Phoenix” are now being disseminated via new media platforms, thus expanding their reach and enhancing their visibility.

IV. The Dilemmas And Countermeasures For The Living Inheritance And Innovative Development Of The She Ethnic Group’s Traditional Culture

Common challenges faced by the inheritance and innovation of She ethnic group’s traditional culture

The She ethnic group harbors rich historical and cultural information as well as a profound ethnic culture. She culture is one of the treasures of traditional Chinese culture. At present, She traditional culture faces the following challenges: its cultural genes are influenced by linguistic transmission; intangible cultural heritage skills are threatened by a lack of successors; the cultural essence is affected by insufficient brand innovation; and the cultural industry suffers from inadequate financial and technological support.

Based on “Culture +Platform+Technical” inheritance and development strategy recommendations

The sustainable and prosperous development of culture requires the support of distinctive national cultures. Diligently implementing the spirit of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China and promoting and developing outstanding traditional national cultures from multiple perspectives is both an immediate necessity and a long-term strategic plan. In terms of organizational structure, Longyou Muchen She Ethnic Township has strengthened its workforce dedicated to ethnic affairs. To ensure that ethnic work is carried out effectively, the township has specially established a United Front Work Committee member as well as a full-time United Front Work officer—a configuration that is generally rare in other townships.

From the perspective of innovative approaches to cultural heritage preservation, the living transmission of intangible cultural heritage involves integrating traditional elements with modern life while preserving the essence of the culture.[11]Living heritage preservation refers to the dynamic protection of intangible cultural heritage. Unlike the “museum-style” static preservation that relies on methods such as text and imagery to document intangible cultural heritage items, living heritage preservation is tailored to meet the needs of safeguarding living cultural assets. As rapidly advancing digital technologies increasingly penetrate the field of communication, they are breaking down traditional communication barriers, enabling the efficient circulation of information and its precise delivery. This shift is transforming the landscape of information dissemination—from a unidirectional, linear model toward a multifaceted, interactive one, thereby triggering profound changes in the field of communication.[12]Therefore, the No. 1 Central Document of 2018 first proposed “implementing a Digital Village Strategy,” using digital technologies as a new engine for achieving modernization in the new era. Through digital governance, we aim to enhance the governance capacity of townships and towns, build digital platform projects to collect feedback and suggestions from residents, facilitate easy access to information, and strengthen communication channels between township governments and She ethnic minority residents. By leveraging the digital economy, we will develop distinctive industrial chains unique to Mucun, integrating Mucun’s tourism and the unique cultural heritage of the She ethnic group through internet platforms, thereby merging the traditional She ethnic clothing industry and bamboo weaving handicrafts with emerging internet-based industries.

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by the following projects:

Quzhou University 2025 National College Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship Training Program Project “Between Mountains and Sea, the Rhythm of She Ethnicity—— Exploring a New Path to Common Prosperity in Zhejiang’s She Ethnic Township: A Dual Empowerment of Industry and Culture”, Project No.202511488059.

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