

# *Research on the Value and Practical Path of Cultivating High-Quality Rural Talents in "Intangible Cultural Heritage" in Guangdong Province under the Background of the "Hundred-Thousand-Million Project"*

Qi Huifang<sup>1</sup>, Jiang Hao<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Guangzhou Vocational College of Technology & Business, Guangzhou, China

<sup>2</sup>Zhanjiang Preschool Education College, Zhanjiang, China

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**Abstract:** Education is a crucial foundation for national rejuvenation and social progress, bearing the dual mission of cultural inheritance and innovative development. The protection of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is a cultural practice that ensures the continuation of historical and cultural threads and the perpetuation of national spirit. The "High-Quality Development Project for 100 Counties, 1,000 Towns, and 10,000 Villages" in Guangdong Province (hereinafter referred to as the "100-1000-10000 Project") is a strategic deployment aimed at promoting coordinated development between urban and rural areas. It takes the cultivation of high-quality ICH talents in rural areas as a deep integration and value reconstruction of traditional cultural inheritance and rural education functions in the context of the new era. The core essence is to use education as a medium to promote the creative transformation of ICH and the systematic optimization of the rural education ecosystem. However, the current practice of ICH talent cultivation in rural areas in Guangdong Province still faces multiple structural predicaments such as superficial cultural inheritance, distorted industrial integration, and the absence of educational subjects. Therefore, the cultivation of ICH talents in rural areas in Guangdong Province needs to explore innovative paths of system embedding, field reconstruction, and multi-collaboration in the educational practice that connects tradition and modernity, as well as urban and rural areas, to stimulate the cultural awareness of rural talents, achieve the coordinated development of cultural inheritance and talent revitalization, and demonstrate Guangdong's mission and responsibility in cultural inheritance and innovation and rural revitalization.

## 1. Introduction

"Intangible cultural heritage" is a significant element of China's excellent traditional culture, and the national spirit and historical connotations it embodies are precisely the essential content of rural education in the new era. The 2022 "Decision of the Guangdong Provincial Committee of the Communist of China on Implementing the 'High-Quality Development Project for Counties, Towns,

and Villages' to Promote Coordinated Urban and Rural Development" states that through county-level talent cultivation and rural skills training, the transmission of representative intangible cultural heritage works should be ensured by future generations [1]. Article 34 of the "Regulations of Guangdong Province on the 'High-Quality Development Project for Counties, Towns, and Villages' to Promote Coordinated Urban and Rural Development" promulgated in 2023 [2] stipulates that counties should, in accordance with the regulations of the provincial education authorities, carry out relevant intangible cultural heritage education to solidify the foundation for the inheritance and development of China's excellent traditional culture. In November 2022, UNESCO released the "Operational Directives for the Implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2022 Revision)" [3], which explicitly states that efforts should be made to integrate intangible cultural heritage as fully as possible into the content of educational programs in all relevant disciplines, allowing it to play its own role while also demonstrating the roles of other disciplines from disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and extracurricular perspectives. This shows that intangible cultural heritage education has been deeply embedded in the cultural development strategy of Guangdong Province. Therefore, from the perspective of county-level education in Guangdong, this paper attempts to explore how to carry out intangible cultural heritage education with stronger cultural conceptualization, inherent knowledge, and diverse aesthetics, relying on counties as a foundation. The goal is to achieve the educational objectives under Guangdong's "rural talent revitalization" concept, promote the creative transformation and innovative development of intangible cultural heritage, and reshape the logic of county governance and educational management. Of course, the cultivation of rural intangible cultural heritage talents in Guangdong Province also faces numerous problems and challenges. In response, this paper will clarify these issues and propose targeted and feasible implementation pathways.

## **2. The Value and Connotation of Cultivating High-Quality Rural Talents in Intangible Cultural Heritage in Guangdong Province**

In April 2023, Chairman XI made important instructions during his inspection in Guangdong, putting forward the key requirement of "taking the lead in advancing Chinese-style modernization" and emphasizing the need to "continuously preserve the Chinese cultural heritage and promote the creative transformation and innovative development of China's excellent traditional culture." These instructions have charted the course for Guangdong to inherit and promote traditional culture, while also prompting us to re-examine the pathways for transmitting intangible cultural heritage. Based on the classification of rural talent cultivation in intangible cultural heritage in Guangdong Province, the "intangible cultural heritage education" discussed in this paper focuses on general education and skills training aimed at fostering cultural confidence among all rural talents and promoting the excellent traditional culture of Lingnan.

### **2.1 From Leaving the Hometown to Returning: Safeguarding Cultural Roots and Cultivating Cultural Awareness**

The cultivation of rural talents in intangible cultural heritage in Guangdong Province embodies both socially oriented and individually oriented values. From an individual perspective, hands-on practice-based education in intangible cultural heritage fosters cultural awareness among rural talents. Education is no longer confined to the one-way transmission of knowledge; instead, it enables rural talents, through embodied participation, to develop a clearer understanding of their own cultural identity and, in turn, define their position within the cultural context of both urban and rural settings. From a social perspective, the cultivation of rural talents in intangible cultural

heritage in Guangdong takes cultural inheritance as its core. By constructing cross-urban-rural practice scenarios and rural communication platforms, it promotes the revitalization of Lingnan's excellent traditional culture.

First, the cultivation of rural talents in intangible cultural heritage in Guangdong transforms traditional classrooms into rural practice fields where the body is fully engaged, helping rural talents shift from passive acceptance to cultural awareness. "Cultural awareness" refers to the ability of people within a specific cultural and historical context to understand their own culture, comprehend its development process, and envision its future—in other words, it is the self-awakening, self-reflection, and self-creation of culture. The cultivation of rural talents in intangible cultural heritage in Guangdong reshapes the interactive model of "teaching and learning," transitioning rural talents from distant observers of intangible cultural heritage to active participants. In practice, embodiment is the means by which individuals engage with their environment or the "world." The rural field, where the body is fully present, provides an embodied foundation for cultural cognition, breaking through the limitations of symbolic cognition found in traditional training. Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the body suggests that the body serves as the medium through which we exist in the world. The body is not merely a physical entity but the subject of cognition, and the acquisition of knowledge is inseparable from the interaction between the body and the environment. The practice field constructed through the cultivation of rural talents in intangible cultural heritage in Guangdong creates a broader space for autonomous exploration for rural talents. When rural talents gain a sense of autonomy, competence, and belonging through participation, their intrinsic motivation is effectively stimulated. This promotes a cognitive shift from "being asked to learn" to "wanting to learn," facilitating rural talents' exploratory understanding of intangible cultural heritage. Ultimately, this process enables a profound transformation from embodied participation to cultural awareness and from physical practice to internalized perception [4].

Secondly, through educational platforms, the cultivation of rural talents in intangible cultural heritage in Guangdong constructs a space for cultural dialogue between urban and rural areas. By treating intangible cultural heritage as core cultural capital, it facilitates the transformation of rural talents from passive recipients to active transmitters. Intangible cultural heritage embodies the survival wisdom, spiritual core, and collective memory of the Lingnan region, accumulated over thousands of years. However, within the cultural fields of urban and rural areas, it often faces the risk of deconstruction by symbolic violence due to the dominance of urban-centric discourse. As a crucial vehicle for the "preservation" of culture, the cultivation of rural talents in intangible cultural heritage in Guangdong relies on intra-provincial cooperation to systematically construct a theoretical discourse system for intangible cultural heritage. This endows it with value connotations that align with contemporary contexts and facilitates its transformation into cultural capital capable of engaging with the market. For example, the Intangible Cultural Heritage Documentation and Dissemination Team in Conghua District, Guangzhou, has organized the "Lingnan Traditional Arts and Crafts Exhibition" in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, set up intangible cultural heritage lecture workshops, and provided on-site explanations of the craftsmanship and characteristics of intangible cultural heritage. On the one hand, compared to abstract theoretical knowledge, tangible and concrete feedback can more directly evoke a sense of pride among rural talents regarding their local culture, elevating emotional resonance into cultural awareness that integrates rational cognition and a sense of inheritance. On the other hand, rural talents break free from the binary thinking of urban versus rural, and based on a profound understanding of the unique value of their own culture, they consciously develop an awareness of engaging in cultural dialogue between urban and rural areas.

## **2.2 From Inheritance to Wealth Creation: Promoting Cultural Translation and Stimulating Industrial Vitality**

The safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in Guangdong Province has made significant progress, transitioning from "rescue-oriented preservation" to "holistic preservation" and from "static conservation" to "living inheritance." The core essence of the living inheritance of intangible cultural heritage lies in creative transformation and innovative development. As the primary hubs for knowledge dissemination and cultural innovation, counties are bound to become crucial engines driving the development of rural cultural industries.

The cultivation of rural talents in intangible cultural heritage in Guangdong can effectively stimulate their innovative thinking, promoting the creative transformation and innovative development of intangible cultural heritage. On the one hand, embodied rural practices break cognitive constraints and activate innovative thinking in industries. In the process of cultivating intangible cultural heritage talents, rural talents are no longer passive recipients of knowledge but are integrated as participants and entrepreneurs into the revitalization of intangible cultural heritage industries. For example, Xiqiao Town in Nanhai District, Foshan City, focuses on "fully immersive intangible cultural heritage industry interaction," showcasing over thirty representative intangible cultural heritage projects from multiple perspectives, including the dyeing and finishing techniques of gambiered Guangdong gauze and Nanhai rattan weaving. Within industrial practice, there exists a rich "tactile imagination" and "market aesthetic judgment." As the main agents of practice, rural talents, through the dual interaction of hands-on work and cognitive engagement, generate innovative ideas that combine traditional craftsmanship with modern design. This transformation from passive reception to active creation is a quintessential example of how intangible cultural heritage talent cultivation stimulates innovative thinking in industries [5].

## **3. The Practical Predicament of Cultivating High-Quality Rural Talents for Intangible Cultural Heritage in Guangdong Province**

In recent years, county-level administrations have promoted intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in rural areas through initiatives such as "learning ICH, applying ICH, and showcasing ICH" to enhance the cultural literacy of rural talents. However, when short-term education is reduced to mere technical performances and observations, it tends to prioritize external forms over cultural substance. As key sites for cultural inheritance, counties still face multiple challenges in talent cultivation, including the superficial transmission of ICH, the alienation of industrial integration, and the absence of educational agents. These issues hinder the realization of rural talent revitalization goals. As Chairman Xi pointed out, "Problems are the voice of the times; answering and guiding the resolution of problems is the fundamental task of theory." Therefore, exploring the practical challenges of cultivating ICH rural talents in Guangdong is essential for the coordinated development of county-level cultural inheritance and talent revitalization. It also serves as both an academic response to and a practical reflection on provincial policies.

### **3.1 The Structural Contradiction between the Superficiality of Intangible Cultural Heritage Transmission and the Deficiency of Innovation Capability**

(1) The Superficiality of Craft Transmission and the Dissolution of Cultural Depth. The cultivation of rural talents in intangible cultural heritage in Guangdong Province often encounters the predicament of superficial craft transmission. This is essentially an external manifestation of the contradiction between the standardized paradigm of modern vocational training and the living inheritance of intangible cultural heritage. Standardized assessment systems, guided by quantitative

indicators, sever the intrinsic connection between intangible cultural heritage and its cultural matrix through decontextualized practices such as the formulation of unified teaching syllabi, operational specifications, and scoring criteria. This approach neglects the essential attribute of intangible cultural heritage as a carrier of cultural memory. Currently, in the practice of cultivating rural talents in intangible cultural heritage in Guangdong, rural talents, due to a lack of understanding of the value system of intangible cultural heritage, are unable to grasp the deeper logic of intangible cultural heritage as a cultural practice. When instruction focuses solely on the superficial forms of intangible cultural heritage, its core values—such as the spirit of striving for excellence in craftsmanship and the philosophy of creation emphasizing the unity of heaven and humanity—are difficult to transmit. Rural talents cannot comprehend the value embedded in intangible cultural heritage through mere observation.

(2) The Superficiality of Symbol Transplantation and the Stripping Away of Cultural Core. The practice of intangible cultural heritage is prone to falling into the predicament of symbol dislocation. In the process of inheritance and development, cultural symbols of intangible cultural heritage are often blindly extracted from their original contexts and simply transplanted into modern products or course content. The fragmentation and formalization of intangible cultural heritage narratives can undermine the integrity of collective memory. The intangible cultural heritage that rural talents encounter becomes objectified and intellectualized symbols. When instruction remains at the level of appropriating the outward appearance of symbols, while neglecting the semantic logic and value systems behind them, these symbols are reduced to meaningless visual decorations. The cultural core is stripped away from the external symbols, and innovative outcomes devolve into commodities with hollow cultural significance, failing to achieve the contemporary reinterpretation of intangible cultural heritage. Currently, a market-oriented utilitarian tendency is forming a vicious cycle. A large number of crudely manufactured intangible cultural heritage products lacking cultural connotation flood the rural cultural tourism market, lowering the public's cognitive level and aesthetic standards regarding intangible cultural heritage.

### **3.2 The Alienation of ICH Industry Integration and the Dilemma of Disembedded Community Engagement**

(1) Excessive Intervention in Industrial Integration Leads to the Dissolution of Embodied Cognition in ICH Skills. In the cultivation of rural ICH talents in Guangdong, industrial integration has evolved from an auxiliary tool into a dominant force. While originally intended to transcend spatial and temporal limitations and diversify transmission methods, it now risks causing industrial alienation. The essence of ICH requires embodied practice, with its transmission relying on learners' tactile, kinesthetic, and other bodily perceptions. Although virtual simulation technology can precisely replicate skill procedures, it replaces authentic bodily practice with standardized simulations. More alarmingly, algorithmic calculations and data biases can subtly distort the diverse values of ICH, homogenizing and fragmenting the content rural talents are exposed to. This places the cultivation of ICH rural talents in Guangdong in a dilemma between industry empowerment and cultural distortion.

(2) The Rupture of Cultural Symbiosis Between Counties, Towns, and Villages, and the Absence of a Two-Way Empowerment Mechanism. Towns and villages are typically regarded as communities with locality, agency, and internal cohesion. They are not only the subjects, actors, and beneficiaries of ICH safeguarding but also the driving force behind ICH's role in rural revitalization and cultural tourism development. However, the logic of disciplinary knowledge production at the county level and the logic of practical knowledge transmission in towns and villages have failed to achieve two-way empowerment. Counties often appropriate and transform ICH from an outsider's

perspective, neglecting the agency and discourse power of towns and villages. Over time, this not only undermines the cultural symbiotic relationship that should exist between counties and their constituent towns and villages but also deprives the cultivation of ICH rural talents in Guangdong of its roots in folk culture and its impetus for continuous innovation. Furthermore, when county-level students conduct short-term fieldwork in ICH-rich villages—rapidly collecting materials by shooting videos and recording oral histories, only to later extract these materials from their original contexts and incorporate them into their own knowledge production systems—this unidirectional extraction severs the organic connection between ICH culture and its native context, reducing villages to passive providers of raw materials.

#### **4. Practical Pathways for Cultivating High-Quality Rural Talents in Intangible Cultural Heritage in Guangdong Province**

The core essence of cultivating rural talents in intangible cultural heritage in Guangdong Province lies in using education as a medium to promote the creative transformation and innovative development of Lingnan's excellent traditional culture. Its fundamental nature is to cultivate rural talents with far-reaching vision, refined scholarship, and aesthetic sensibility. Therefore, in the practice of cultivating rural talents in intangible cultural heritage in Guangdong, it is necessary to adopt practical pathways involving systemic integration, field reconstruction, and multi-stakeholder collaboration. This approach can effectively stimulate rural talents' cultural awareness, cultivate their cultural confidence, strengthen their cultural identity, and promote both the creative transformation of intangible cultural heritage and the systemic optimization of the county-level educational ecosystem.

##### **4.1 Systemic Integration: Multidimensional Coordination and Strategic Integration of Intangible Cultural Heritage Education into County-Level Planning**

Integrating top-level planning to establish a long-term mechanism for ICH education at the county level. Incorporating ICH education into county-level teaching plans requires systematic promotion across three dimensions: strategic positioning, curriculum development, and practical systems. Firstly, ICH education should be deeply embedded in county-level development strategies. The "Regulations of Guangdong Province on the 'High-Quality Development Project for Counties, Towns, and Villages' to Promote Coordinated Urban and Rural Development" explicitly calls for integrating ICH into the national education system, providing a fundamental guideline for counties. When formulating medium- and long-term plans, counties should clarify the strategic position of ICH education and define development directions based on their educational traditions, disciplinary strengths, and regional cultural resources. Given common resource constraints such as budget and space, counties can explore lightweight, localized, and collaborative development models. For example, they can form ICH education resource-sharing alliances with other counties in the region, breaking through resource bottlenecks by co-developing course libraries, sharing practice bases, and jointly organizing exhibitions and performances. Secondly, the ICH curriculum system should be embedded in county-level curriculum development plans. The Ministry of Education's "Opinions on Deepening the Reform of Undergraduate Education and Teaching to Comprehensively Improve the Quality of Talent Cultivation" emphasizes strengthening the overall design of the curriculum system. Counties should integrate ICH curriculum development into their overall curriculum planning, constructing an ICH curriculum system that is deeply integrated with existing courses. This ensures mutual coordination and reinforcement between ICH courses and other courses, preventing ICH education from becoming an isolated module or an add-on to the teaching system. On the one hand, they should increase hardware investment by

building physical platforms to showcase ICH skills and carry out teaching practice activities, providing rural talents with spaces to intuitively experience and engage with ICH. Conghua District in Guangzhou has leveraged its advantages in talent cultivation and social services to carry out ICH training programs in areas such as lychee honey and bamboo weaving. Through a "mentorship model pairing inheritors with returning youth," it has trained over 300 ICH inheritors and practitioners, offering a valuable practical reference. Counties should strengthen the development of rural talent associations focused on ICH. Based on regional characteristics, county history, and disciplinary features, they should prioritize supporting a number of representative ICH project associations and create signature activities and high-quality projects. Additionally, by utilizing platforms such as university student innovation and entrepreneurship training programs and rural revitalization entrepreneurship competitions, counties can organize and guide rural talents to conduct ICH-focused research and innovative practices. Through visits and investigations, rural talents can delve deeper into the cultural core of ICH. By employing diverse means such as project funding, assessment and evaluation, and recognition and incentives, counties can guide rural talents to actively participate in ICH inheritance and innovation, ultimately forming an immersive and sustainable ICH education ecosystem [6].

#### **4.2 Field Reconstruction: Embedding ICH Education in Rural Scenarios and Recreating Contextual Synergy across Counties and Towns**

(1) Reconstructing the subject structure of ICH education to form a multi-stakeholder collaborative teaching force. The construction of teaching faculty serves as the core pillar for implementing ICH education. It requires breaking away from the traditional paradigm of full-time, fixed-position staffing, and instead building a supply system adapted to county-level resource constraints. The key lies in revitalizing local resources and unlocking county-level potential. Firstly, returning youth serve as the new-generation subjects of ICH inheritance. Their cultural consciousness and practical innovation constitute the core driving force for the living inheritance of ICH. As digital natives, Generation Z has developed cross-cultural cognitive thinking through the collision of globalization and localization. Possessing both urban perspectives and rural sentiments, they bear the responsibility and obligation to inherit and promote ICH. Secondly, county-level teachers play a pivotal role as cultural intermediaries in the ICH education ecosystem. They need to accomplish the transformation from cultural resources to educational resources—vertically excavating the cultural genes of ICH projects in depth, and horizontally establishing meaningful connections between traditional crafts and modern life, thereby developing ICH teaching resource.

(2) Advancing a tiered integration model for ICH education curricula to prevent their marginalization as add-ons to the teaching system. First, constructing a tiered curriculum system based on disciplinary characteristics. Given the variations in knowledge systems and teaching objectives across disciplines, tailored ICH integration pathways should be designed: humanities and social sciences disciplines may approach from the cultural connotation level, integrating ICH as a research subject into curricula; science and engineering disciplines may approach from the technical application level, transforming technical problems in ICH inheritance into teaching cases; and arts disciplines may approach from the craft inheritance level, incorporating ICH techniques into professional skill training systems. Through deep integration with disciplinary characteristics, ICH becomes an organic component of subject teaching [7]. Second, designing tiered teaching content gradients according to learning stages. Aligning with the cognitive development patterns of rural talents, appropriately matched content should be set at different stages: beginning with general education courses to popularize basic knowledge and establish preliminary cognition; then embedding knowledge points through specialized foundation courses to achieve knowledge transfer

and application; finally focusing on in-depth research and innovative practice by offering specialized elective courses or organizing research projects, encouraging rural talents to explore ICH inheritance issues in depth. Third, establishing tiered evaluation and feedback mechanisms based on teaching objectives. The Ministry of Education's "Opinions on Comprehensively Deepening Curriculum Reform to Implement the Fundamental Task of Moral Education and Talent Cultivation" proposes improving scientific and diversified evaluation index systems to guide the establishment of scientific views on education quality. Corresponding evaluation systems should be constructed according to teaching objectives at different stages to ensure the effectiveness of ICH education.

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the cultivation of high-quality rural talent for ICH in Guangdong Province represents a critical pathway for safeguarding cultural roots, activating traditional innovation, and consolidating value identification. Its essence lies in the deep coupling and value isomorphism between the mission of cultural inheritance and the talent-cultivation function of counties within the context of the new era. This study approaches the issue from three dimensions: the value connotation, practical problems, and implementation pathways of ICH rural talent cultivation in Guangdong Province. By analyzing existing challenges and leveraging strategies such as systemic embedding, field reconstruction, and multi-stakeholder collaboration, we propose the formation of an ICH rural talent cultivation ecosystem characterized by resource sharing and complementary advantages. This aims to achieve the creative transformation of ICH cultural genes and the systematic optimization of county-level talent cultivation ecology, thereby constructing an ICH education system with distinctive Guangdong characteristics and promoting the coordinated development of cultural inheritance and talent revitalization.

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