

# ON THE INHERITANCE AND INNOVATION IN CHINESE FASHION TREND: A CASE STUDY OF THE RURAL FOLK DESIGN OF THE OVERLORD TEMPLE, HEXIAN COUNTY OF ANHUI PROVINCE, CHINA

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**Abstract:** The rising tide of China-chic provides a new presentation mode for the excellent traditional culture, allowing people to re-witness the innovative vitality of the local culture and providing a new path to creation for the rural folk culture. In this context, the design with the theme of rural folk culture confronts both new opportunities and challenges. In this paper, based on the case study of the rural folk design of the Overlord Temple in Hexian County of Anhui Province, the dialectical relationship and practice of inheritance and innovation in design work under the background of China-chic were briefly discussed. Innovative design strategies were put forward to reinvigorate people's emphasis on traditional culture, rekindle people's attention to traditional culture and expand the innovative design path of a traditional culture communication path to promote the creative transformation and innovative development of Chinese traditional culture.

**Keywords:** China-chic. Rural folk design. Overlord Temple. Inherit. Innovate.

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**Resumen:** La ola creciente de la China-chic proporciona un nuevo modo de presentación para la excelente cultura tradicional, permitiendo a la gente volver a ser testigo de la vitalidad innovadora de la cultura local y brindando una nueva vía de creación para la cultura popular rural. En este contexto, el diseño con el tema de la cultura popular rural se enfrenta tanto a nuevas oportunidades como a nuevos retos. En este artículo, basado en el estudio de caso del diseño folclórico rural del Templo señorial del condado de Hexian, en la provincia de Anhui, se analizan brevemente la relación dialéctica y la práctica de la herencia y la innovación en el trabajo de diseño bajo el trasfondo del China-chic. Se propusieron estrategias de diseño innovador para revitalizar el énfasis de la gente en la cultura tradicional, reavivar la atención de la gente hacia la cultura tradicional y ampliar la vía de diseño innovador de una vía de comunicación de la cultura tradicional para promover la transformación creativa y el desarrollo innovador de la cultura tradicional china.

**Palabras clave:** China chic. Diseño popular rural. Templo señorial. Heredar. Innovar.

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# ON THE INHERITANCE AND INNOVATION IN CHINESE FASHION TREND: A CASE STUDY OF THE RURAL FOLK DESIGN OF THE OVERLORD TEMPLE, HEXIAN COUNTY OF ANHUI PROVINCE, CHINA<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** The rising tide of China-chic provides a new presentation mode for the excellent traditional culture, allowing people to re-witness the innovative vitality of the local culture and providing a new path to creation for the rural folk culture. In this context, the design with the theme of rural folk culture confronts both new opportunities and challenges. In this paper, based on the case study of the rural folk design of the Overlord Temple in Hexian County of Anhui Province, the dialectical relationship and practice of inheritance and innovation in design work under the background of China-chic were briefly discussed. Innovative design strategies were put forward to reinvigorate people's emphasis on traditional culture, rekindle people's attention to traditional culture and expand the innovative design path of a traditional culture communication path to promote the creative transformation and innovative development of Chinese traditional culture.

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## INTRODUCTION

China-chic has risen in recent years as a fashion brand and product inspired by traditional Chinese culture and combined with modern fashion elements (AN, 2022, p. 188). Rural folk customs and urban folk ones are called folk culture, which, in simple terms, is the culture of the people's way of life. As the general public's thoughts and ideas gradually evolve and cultural confidence grows, folk culture has become an important cultural phenomenon that significantly impacts today. Additionally, the public, as both the creators and inheritors of folk culture, also play a vital role in the development of folk culture (Zhang; Zhu, 2021, p. 6). However, the inheritance and development of folk culture are gradually shifting from the

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countryside to the city in the process of modernization, which makes the inheritance subject of traditional folk activities gradually lose its vitality in urbanization.

The research question is based on the inheritance and innovation in Chinese fashion industry, with a reference to the rural folk design. The research question for the study is “[...] how rural folk design affects the inheritance and innovation of Chinese fashion trends?” Understanding the elements that contribute to Chinese fashion trends, which have their roots in rural folk design, is the main goal of this research question. It enables an investigation of the dynamics, influences and procedures involved in maintaining traditional components while infusing cutting-edge components into current fashion trends (Xi; Zhu, 2021, p. 3).

The current study will be divided into various sections. There will be four major ones. Each of the major sections apart from section 2 will be further divided into subsections. The first section, which is the introduction, comprises the research question and background of the study of China-chic culture and rural folk customs. Section two will be about the Inheritance and Innovation Status of Rural Folk Customs under the Background of Chinese Fashion Trend. Section three will discuss the design strategies for inheritance and innovation of rural folk customs under the background of China-chic. Section four is the conclusion.

The term “China-chic” first appeared in 2017, referring mainly to fashionable products with Chinese elements, such as cultural and creative products from the Palace Museum series, and Hunan Embroidery products (Zhang; Nurul, 2023, p. 1082; Harvey, 2013, p. 215). The term “China-chic” actually combines the words “China” and “chic,” among which the word “China” mainly refers to Chinese culture, promoting the nation’s excellent traditional culture to the public. In contrast, “chic” refers to fashionable and distinctive styles, including some relative niche products and brands with unique characteristics. Moreover, the term “China-chic” primarily refers to a trend featuring Chinese elements and characteristics (Fu, 2023, p. 1). The emergence of China-chic culture is a new era of cultural development that has evolved along with China-chic products and brands, and has a certain impact on social development. The main reasons for the emergence of China-chic culture are twofold: first, the rapid development of the local industry in the current environment. The presentation of culture requires a carrier to bring it to life, which is embodied in specific products for the China-chic culture. Since implementing the reform and opening-up policy, various types of industries in China have developed differently, giving rise to a series of national brands that have gradually entered the international market as the market develops, thus allowing China’s localized products to enter the international market. The spread and exchange of China-chic culture must be distinct from the product carrier that meets the market expectation (Xi; Zhu, 2021, p. 3). Secondly, China’s national cultural confidence has gradually improved in cultural exchanges and collisions between the East and the West. National products and national brands are the main media of national culture to the world. They are of great significance to

the inheritance and development of China's excellent traditional national culture. As China's status improves, the influence of Chinese culture has gradually increased, and the Chinese people's national cultural confidence has also improved, which to some extent, has also driven the development of the China-chic culture (Gao; Qi, 2021, p. 9).

There is a close relationship between national tide culture and rural folk customs, so it is necessary to clarify their relationship. With the development of the times, some traditional cultures need to catch up with it, leading to many traditional cultures being labeled as backward and gradually abandoned or eliminated in development. Especially in economic globalization, the erosion of Western culture has caused a great cultural impact on China's traditional culture, facing more challenges than the background of cultural impact. In recent years, the creative transformation and innovative development of traditional culture have been attached importance, and relevant government departments and non-governmental organizations have taken active actions to inherit and carry forward China's excellent traditional culture, which has also become the most important folk culture protection project in the 21st century (Zhang, 2021, p. 3). In the process of inheritance and development of traditional culture, rural folk culture comes into being along with the changes in people's production and life, beliefs and emotions. It mainly refers to the regional cultural customs formed through conventional customs, such as the Overlord Temple Fair mentioned in this paper, which is a rural folk custom formed through long-term cultural development. The emergence of rural folk customs, based on the local, rooted in the local, not only with a strong history and culture but also highlighting the regional culture, has a strong national appeal. Under the background of China-chic, the traditional culture highly praised by people is also closely related to the rural folk culture. In this sense, China-chic can promote both the inheritance and promotion of traditional culture and the development of rural folk customs, which means that the use of traditional cultural elements, innovation of traditional cultural transmission forms and the opportunity brought by Chinese fashion trend will be more conducive to the inheritance of traditional culture (Gong, 2016, p. 13).

The traditional culture produced by rural folk customs has a strong cultural value waiting to be excavated. The profound value of traditional culture, generated in the accumulation of time, has become an irreplaceable spiritual wealth and a high cultural transmission value (An, 2022, p. 188). Different regions have different cultural expressions, such as the "Spring Begins Festival", "Qiang Calendar New Year", "She People Banquet" and other folk activities, which show the folk customs of different regions (Chen; Chen, 2020, p. 112). When the humanistic value of folk activities is combined with the China-chic design concept, excellent traditional culture can react chemically with the fashion of the times under the multicultural background, thus reversing the cultural inheritance status of "no one cares" under the influence of the Chinese fashion trend, and stimulating the transmission value of folk culture (Zhang, 2021, p. 3). At the same time, the further combination of traditional

culture and China-chic also helps to optimize the value of taste in the inheritance of rural folk customs (Chen; Chen, 2020, p. 112). Rural folk culture has varied types and great ornamental value and aesthetic value. It provides people with a good aesthetic experience and many innovative resources for the China-chic design (Janssen, 1992, p. 263). Domestic design, based on traditional culture, can further transform these elements into new cultural carriers with the help of rural folk elements in a traditional culture so that people can understand and inherit folk culture and realize the spread of traditional culture as inheritors and innovators of rural folk customs under the background of Chinese fashion trend (Chen, 2012, p. 3).

## **1 THE INHERITANCE AND INNOVATION STATUS OF RURAL FOLK CUSTOMS UNDER THE BACKGROUND OF CHINESE FASHION TREND**

Although traditional folk culture has received more attention in recent years, and the relevant state departments have taken measures to strengthen folk protection activities, many traditional folk customs still need to be included. Generations of old artists have gradually withdrawn from the historical stage. Most traditional crafts have been lost due to the imperfect social development environment, talent strength and other factors. Today, with the rapid development of the Internet plus, Beijing Opera, cross talk, shadow play and other characteristic folk cultures are gradually becoming active on the Internet platform and even “coming back to life” in the Internet era. However, generally speaking, traditional folk culture is still gradually fading out of the public’s vision (Chen; Guo, 2020, p. 3). There is need to attach importance to the spread of traditional folk culture and protect and develop it so that the influence of these excellent folk cultural activities will inevitably decline day by day (Chen; Guo, 2020, p. 3). Thus, as far as the loss of traditional folk culture is concerned, it is very important for people to pay more attention to traditional folk culture under the background of Chinese fashion trends. Make good use of the national tide, strengthen the design of traditional folk culture and take innovation as the auxiliary force for the transmission of excellent traditional culture, so that the traditional folk culture, that is fading away, will get attention again to realize its innovative development, are necessary to the development of our excellent traditional culture.

The Overlord Temple is a traditional residence in Hexian, Anhui Province, China, where the Temple Fair, on the third day of the third lunar month, is a traditional folk cultural activity (Pop, 2022, p. 161). The Temple Fair has existed for thousands of years (Chen; Wang; Zhang, 2015, p. 16). At first, people only went to worship on the third day of the third lunar month. With the development of the economy and trade, commodity trade gradually appeared there. Over time, the Temple Fair was formed and changed from a single sacrifice to a diversified folk activity. Petty commodities and agricultural and sideline products are mainly traded in the temple fair on that day, and the economy develops further with the increase

in the number of people participating in the Temple Fair, which, in turn, promotes the development of this folk cultural activity. Folk activities, during the temple fair, include lion dancing, dragon dancing and singing drama. The Hexian County Government also attaches more significance to the renovation and maintenance of the Overlord Temple, hoping to attract more foreign tourists to visit it after the renovation.

Most of those attending the fairs are middle-aged and older people, and the temple fairs still need more influence on the young generation. However, as the main force of folk culture, they are the ones who largely determine the direction of traditional folk culture. If the young lack understanding and interest in traditional folk cultural activities, the transmission of traditional folk culture is likely to be disrupted, which will be very detrimental to the inheritance and development of traditional folk culture in China. In the context of Chinese fashion trends, it is also necessary to make good use of China-chic culture to prepare for the inheritance of traditional folk culture.

## **2 DESIGN STRATEGIES FOR INHERITANCE AND INNOVATION OF RURAL FOLK CUSTOMS UNDER THE BACKGROUND OF CHINA-CHIC**

“Constancy” and “Change” are important categories in traditional Chinese philosophy (Wang; Bao; Guan, 2020). There have been related discussions in ancient China, such as “Uphold the constant to embrace change, and seek change to understand the constant” (Wang, 2019, p. 4; Wang; Bao; Guan, 2020). This means that when facing changes, people should understand and adhere to what is constant or “constancy.” From a philosophical perspective, the inheritance of cultural traditions and folk customs in concrete design is “constant,” while innovation is “change.” “Change” must be based on some persistence of “constant,” and “constant” is the basis for dealing with “change.” Engaging in design work, under the background of China-chic, deals with the relationship between the change and constancy of cultural traditions in the artistic practice of folk custom inheritance and innovation.

In the design with the theme of “Overlord Temple Fair,” the author emphasized “consistency” in the tradition by attaching importance to the refinement and integration of rural folk elements, emphasizing the use of traditional colors, highlighting the historical elements of “Farewell My Concubine”, and utilizing traditional folk elements, such as dragon and lion dances, to achieve the continuation of tradition. He also emphasized “constancy” by the use of illustrations to express folk culture, the use of traditional folk cultural elements in the design and production of cultural products with the theme of “Overlord Temple Fair,” and the use of design products in the packaging of products sold at temple fairs (Coatesworth, 2015, p. 21).

## 2.1 REFINING RURAL FOLK ELEMENTS FOR CREATIVE DESIGN

The charm and cultural significance, which are contained in traditional culture, also has a significant impact on traditional folk customs. Therefore, doing a good job of preserving and innovating rural folk culture under the Chinese fashion trend, it is necessary to focus on excavating the traditional elements contained in the rural folk customs (Tian; Fang, 2019, p. 998) and then combine them with the rise of the China-chic under the background of the young group's self-awareness of national culture confidence, and use a more straightforward and intuitive design to strengthen young people's memory of traditional elements, so that traditional elements can be quickly recognized. Therefore, it is the main way to realize the inheritance of rural ethnic culture to grasp the key points of traditional elements and highlight the advantages of rural folk culture in the rural ethnic groups' innovative design (Li, 2020, p. 2).

First, Chinese style design elements can be added to the color matching to make good use of the traditional colors in the rural folk activities. They can optimize the design with the combination of modern aesthetics so that consumers can experience China's taste in the national fashion products, which can change consumers' cognition and understanding of the traditional culture stereotypes through the visual effect of colors.

Additionally, as the traditional elements contained in the rural folk customs are extremely rich, they should be optimally designed in combination with the China-chic design concept to attract young people's attention to the traditional culture by extracting representative traditional characteristics from them. For example, traditional elements can be reinterpreted and embodied in China-chic products by using illustration or animation design. For another example, by designing an IP image, such as the design of Flying Apsaras in Dunhuang Murals, traditional elements can be transformed and refined to enhance the achievements in the design of traditional element products.

Hence, it is necessary to refine the traditional elements in the inheritance of Overlord Temple. It is necessary to refine the traditional elements, so as to combine the design concept of national tide products and realize the high-quality transmission of rural folk culture, based on retaining the traditional charm. Many China-chic elements, contained in the unique local characteristics of the traditional folk culture in the Temple Fair of the Overlord Temple on the third day of the third lunar month, such as lion and dragon dances, should be designed by breaking the routine in creative illustration design to be easily accepted by the public. Therefore, in the creative design, the temple fair and Overlord Temple are presented in combination with the landscape and buildings inside and outside the temple to complete the creation of traditional elements and promote the traditional folk cultural activities in Overlord Temple.

In the design of the lion dance illustration, the background is mainly the exterior of the Overlord Temple, the main design is the lion dance, the characteristic buildings of the Overlord Temple are drawn on both sides of the picture, and the characters in the illustration are also laughing and joyful, all of which highlight the folk cultural atmosphere of the Temple Fair of the Overlord Temple on the third day of the third lunar month. Besides, warm colors are mainly used in the design to highlight the cultural activities of the temple fair.

Depicting the Temple Fair of the Overlord Temple on the third day of the third lunar month through illustrations, not only can traditional folk culture elements be extracted, but also the traditional folk culture activity can be combined with illustration design, which can improve people's awareness of the temple fair. Moreover, it can inspire people to inherit and pass on traditional folk culture and establish confidence in it. In illustration design, the Chinese flavor can be appreciated, making the inheritance of the Overlord Temple folk and cultural heritage reach the same level of quality transmission as that of traditional cultural heritages, such as the Palace Museum, achieving the effect of high-quality transmission of the Chinese fashion trends (Chen, 2014, p. 24).

**Fig. 1** – Dragon Dancing (Student work)



Source: painted by Lei Li

**Fig. 2** – Lion Dancing (Student work)



Source: painted by Lei Li

The “Shangsi Festival,” on the third day of the third lunar month, is many ethnic groups’ traditional festival in China, such as Han, Miao, Zhuang, Yao, etc. On this day, they hold great activities, such as singing, dancing and ancestor worship. Similar to the traditions mentioned above, Hexian County, in Anhui, also has a temple fair on the third day of the third lunar month, but the difference is that, in Hexian County, this important event is associated with the Overlord in the West Chu Period, and various activities are held at the temple fair to commemorate Xiang Yu.

Unlike Liu Bang, who achieved great success, Xiang Yu is still respected by later generations even though his great undertaking was not completed. Sima Qian listed Xiang Yu’s story in the Biographic Sketches of Emperors, indicating that Sima Qian did not judge

heroes by success or failure and highly acknowledged Xiang Yu's achievements (Yang; Wang, Cheng, 2013, p. 2; Luo, 2022, p. 955). The Overlord Temple Fair, in Hexian County, is also a generous expression of praise for this historical hero, eulogizing the sincere love between him and Concubine Yu and praising his brave and noble character, which is completely contrary to the long-standing view of "winner takes all" in Chinese history. It also indicates that the people, in Hexian County, attach great importance to Xiang Yu's non-secular and super-utilitarian quality at the spiritual level, and even regard it as an important part of the traditional festival on the third day of the third lunar month. The praise of Xiang Yu's spirit, demonstrated through the Overlord Temple Fair, shows that the people of Hexian County have inherited Sima Qian's belief that success or failure should not be the sole criterion for evaluating historical figures. The spirit of detachment, manifested in the folk activities of the temple fair, is an important content of Chinese traditional culture and an indispensable part of Chinese folk culture.

Under the background of the current China-chic, it is a perfect fit to choose "Farewell My Concubine" (Yang, 2022, p. 971) as the historical theme for promoting traditional folk culture activities, as it allows us to have a deeper understanding of traditional culture and better inherit its essence on the one hand, and helps to increase the recognition of the Overlord Temple Fair on the third day of the third lunar month on the other hand. The background of the Chinese fashion trend is a brand-new platform for traditional culture and excellent designers to promote economic and cultural construction.

## 2.2 INTEGRATING RURAL FOLK ELEMENTS TO OPTIMIZE PRODUCT DESIGN

The direct application of traditional elements in rural folk customs, to the design of China-chic products and brands, can strengthen the design effect of folk culture (Gerth, 2022, p. 31). This can make it easier for people to accept rural folk culture, under the background of weakening rural folk culture, to realize the inheritance of rural folk culture, grasp the cultural enthusiasm of Chinese fashion trend and actively tap the potential value of local excellent traditional culture. For example, traditional elements, such as traditional Chinese painting, paper-cutting and calligraphy, can be designed in cooperation with some popular products in China to enhance the publicity effect of traditional elements (Ke, 2022, p. 5; Mcilwraith, 1957, p. 286). For example, ERKE, a national sports brand, has borrowed many traditional Chinese elements and merged them into a sports shoe brand with China's characteristics in its packaging design. When consumers see the product, they can extend its story to resonate spiritually, making the product a carrier of transmission and effectively transmitting the essence of Chinese culture (Fang; Jian; Pei *et al.* 2023, p. 120). This is another way of transmitting Chinese culture. Therefore, it is the most important way to

effectively preserve and pass down rural folk culture by combining traditional elements with the Chinese fashion trend.

**Fig. 3** – Painting and calligraphy exhibition (Student work)



Source: painted by Lei Li

**Fig. 4** – Kite flying (Student work)



Source: painted by Lei Li

For Overlord Temple, it is important to use the traditional style and cultural elements to make innovative designs for petty goods or agricultural products in the temple fair to inherit the traditional folk culture and attract the young groups' participation. By combining the temple fair with the cultural creation products, the traditional folk culture can be creatively designed, by imitating the series of cultural creation products of the Forbidden City, to improve the market value of the traditional folk culture and, effectively, combine the cultural elements with the products and, finally, form the cultural creation products with the

characteristics of the Temple Fair of the Overlord Temple on the third day of the third lunar month.

Since Overlord Temple was built to commemorate Xiang Yu's suicide on the Wujiang River, which has a strong historical and cultural flavor, the traditional element of "Farewell My Concubine" can be further combined in the creative design to excavate elements with distinct cultural characteristics, such as Wujiang River Pavilion, Xiang Yu, concubine Yu, and so on, to creatively design the folk calendar. So the folk culture can be integrated into the participants' lives and the calendar can have other cultural functions. Integrating the folk culture of the Temple Fair of the Overlord Temple on the third day of the third lunar month into the design of the desk calendar is to apply a series of related folk elements, which can also better reflect the interest of the temple fair, and allow the audience to remember the temple fair while looking at it. In this way, more people can be attracted to visit the temple fair and become the inheritors of traditional folk culture.

### **2.3 EMPHASIZING THE ELEMENTS OF RURAL FOLK CUSTOMS IN THE CHARACTERISTIC DESIGN**

To effectively carry out innovation design for rural folk customs in the new era, it is crucial to recognize the importance of innovation and cleverly conceive the forms of inheritance for rural folk culture to cater to the pursuit of traditional Chinese elements in the context of the Chinese fashion trend (Zhang; Li, 2021, p. 3). Therefore, China's traditional elements, covered in rural folk culture, can be restructured to innovate the presentation form of rural folk traditional culture (Xu; Yu, 2022, p. 26). In the process of the innovative design of rural folk customs, due to the diversity of rural folk culture, not all traditional elements are generally incorporated, but a specific traditional element is selected and refined instead. Overall, the Overlord Temple and the Temple Fair on the third of the third lunar month can be integrated to optimize traditional elements. Then the characteristics of national cultural symbols can be effectively explored. The national symbols with superior characteristics can be selected for innovative design, which will help to meet the development needs of traditional culture and further expand the influence of rural folk culture.

Additionally, through the combination design of traditional elements, various elements, contained in folk activities, can be combined and rearranged, transformed and divided, etc., so as to present distinctive rural folk elements and help people to fully understand rural folk customs and complete the inheritance work under the background of China-chic. China-chic has become a new consumption choice for young people, and more and more people regard it as a new form to show their style and attitude towards life (Cui; Tang, 2020, p. 3). The China-chic design of traditional folk culture, in a contemporary style, combines Chinese culture with fashion trends, making it unique and expressive, perfectly fitting the young consumers' spiritual needs and self-expression and meeting their needs.

The illustration design of “Temple Fair of the Overlord Temple on the third day of the third lunar month” adopts horizontal composition to make the scene of the picture more natural and help enhance the rhythm of it (Han; Duo; Zheng, 2022, p. 2499). The flat processing of the picture makes it livelier and accords with the atmosphere of the temple fair. The warm color system highlights the thriving atmosphere of the temple fair and strives to restore the grand occasion of the “Temple Fair of the Overlord Temple on the third day of the third lunar month”. Since the temple fair, as a traditional folk custom, has many folk activities that have been passed down for a long time, the perfect combination of the temple fair and Overlord Temple can achieve the effect of publicity.

**Fig. 5** – Traditional craftsmanship (Student work)



Source: painted by Lei Li

The Temple Fair of the Overlord Temple on the third day of the third lunar month provides a platform for inheriting traditional folk culture. At the temple fair, many craftspeople who show their traditional handicraft skills will make traditional commodities, such as sugar figures and popcorn, through their flexible techniques. To expand the influence of petty commodities by veteran artists and inherit folk culture, the packaging design of craft products can be optimized to attract the participation of foreign tourists on the basis of appropriate integration of product background, enhance tourists' identification with Overlord Temple folk culture and drive its growth of economic benefits. For example, tourists can experience the fun of sugar-figure blowing, making popcorn, and other old crafts to strengthen the sense of user experience. For the finished product packaging, the illustration of “traditional craftsmanship” with Overlord Temple characteristics can be used as the cover of the packaging design to enable tourists to experience the traditional folk culture from the creative packaging design with local characteristics and to inherit the folk culture through good experience. In this way, it can lay a foundation for the inheritance of

traditional culture in the optimal and innovative design of the Overlord Temple and avoid design deviation and serious problems such as content homogenization. In a word, the distinctive local design of the Overlord Temple can be used to avoid affecting the effect of the inheritance of rural folk customs.

**Fig. 6** – Yangko dancing (Student work)



Source: painted by Lei Li

## **2.4 DESIGN PRACTICE ANALYSIS OF THE COMBINATION OF CHINESE FASHION TRENDS AND RURAL FOLK CUSTOMS**

To combine the Chinese fashion trend with rural folk culture in the design, with the theme of “Temple Fair of the Overlord Temple on the third day of the third lunar month,” visual design can be employed, and the elements presented in the Overlord Temple Fair can be refined, based on the above design strategies. Based on the flat processing, the fair temple culture and visual illustration design can be combined to promote the grand festival on the third day of the third lunar month.

### **2.4.1 DESIGN CONCEPT**

Based on illustration design, the design layout is framed by horizontal composition and warm tones to create a lively atmosphere and highlight the festival, thus bringing the festival feast into the illustrations and promoting traditional folk cultural activities in this way. The design elements are extracted from observing fair temple activities and include many traditional folk cultural elements such as farewell to my concubine, land boat dancing, offering sacrifices, old artisans and calligraphy (Yang, 2017, p. 24; Byrne, 2013, p. 358). The combination of the temple fair and Overlord Temple is realized based on integration into the architectural landscape. In illustration design, creative illustration is used as the basis for

innovative designs on traditional folk crafts, folk arts, old crafts and other activities combined with different element scenes to promote traditional folk culture. The creative direction of China's culture and innovative design not only emphasizes rural folk customs but also pays attention to the combination of science and technology, culture and fashion trends to make products more innovative and creative in style (Zhang; Ren, 2022, p. 1392), thus enhancing the competitiveness of products. In addition, sticking to its unique Chinese style to create its products, with a difficult-to-replicate design style and a distinctive brand personality, can enhance the brand's influence among young consumers.

#### 2.4.2 A DESIGN EXAMPLE

The annual Temple Fair of the Overlord Temple on the third day of the third lunar month features traditional entertainment, such as singing opera and land boat dancing, and brings together food and amusement based on the integration of folk crafts, creating a lively and festive atmosphere that reflects the cultural characteristics of the Overlord Temple fair. To promote traditional folk culture and spread the influence of the Temple Fair of the Overlord Temple on the third day of the third lunar month through illustration design, it is necessary to truly restore the temple fair and present the activities in a simple and intuitive way, and make the picture full of vitality, so as to highlight the theme, so as to resonate with the public and awaken people's interest and love for traditional folk culture activities.

For example, when introducing the story behind the Overlord Temple, Xiang Yu and his beloved Concubine Yu's story can be incorporated into the illustrated story, combined with the unique architecture of the Overlord Temple, to present Xiang Yu and Concubine Yu's drama elements. This approach can not only showcase the historical background of the event but also promote the corresponding traditional culture of the region, achieving two goals with one stone.

**Fig. 7** – Farewell to my concubine (student work)



Source: painted by Lei Li

The annual Temple Fair of the Overlord Temple on the third day of the third lunar month features traditional entertainment, such as singing opera and land boat dancing, and brings together food and amusement based on the integration of folk crafts, creating a lively and festive atmosphere that reflects the cultural characteristics of the Overlord Temple fair and a Chinese fashion trend. For example, when introducing and displaying the traditional cultural activity of land boat dancing during the temple fair, the overall design is based on warm colors, with Wujiang River Pavilion and Xiang Yu dressed in general's attire on the left of the picture and people racing land boats in the middle and right of the picture.

**Fig. 8** – Land boat dancing (student work)



Source: painted by Lei Li

Based on the design of the folk traditional cultural activities of Overlord Temple, the plans of more than ten kinds of different folk cultural activities are designed and, finally, applied to the cultural products, so that the China-chic creativity can be rooted in China's cultural soil, keeping pace with the times with continuous innovation and application, making it glow with new vitality and carry forward, and then, making it sold in the scenic spot of Overlord Temple.

**Fig. 9** – The final drawing of the cultural and creative product (student work)



Source: Lei Li

## CONCLUSIONS

Traditional folk culture is a foothold of China's excellent traditional culture. To design traditional folk culture under the background of Chinese fashion trends, we should fully recognize the value of local folk culture and deeply understand the cultural value embodied in folk activities. The popularity of Chinese fashion trends provides a brand-new design idea for the innovative design of traditional folk culture in the inheritance and innovation of rural folk culture. According to this idea, the combination of traditional cultural elements and innovative forms of China-chic products can innovate the inheritance channels of rural folk customs and, then, deepen the influence of the Temple Fair of the Overlord Temple on the third day of the third lunar month through the design and packaging of China-chic products, and help the inheritance and development of folk culture (Pan, 2022, p. 2). Nevertheless, special attention should be paid to properly handling the inheritance and innovation of cultural traditions in the innovative design of inheriting traditional folk culture. That is, how to preserve the essence of tradition in innovation and how to make the designed products popular, with more people in the preservation of tradition, are the problems that must be faced and dealt with in the design practice with the theme of traditional factor culture under the background of Chinese fashion trend. In the context of the Chinese fashion trend, the inheritance of traditional folk culture is mainly based on innovative design to cater to the needs of the audience and to gain the support of more consumer groups, build a trend culture with local characteristics, encourage the innovative inheritance of traditional folk culture, establish the self-confidence of distinctive local culture and demonstrate the self-confidence of China's excellent traditional culture.

The prevalence and development of the Chinese fashion trend is a new opportunity for developing traditional culture. It can help the public to re-discover and deeply understand the cultural connotation of rural folk customs by deeply excavating China's traditional culture, promoting the development of the China-chic culture through innovative design that conforms to the trend of the times and aesthetics, and further present China's trend with cultural connotation to the world, which can improve our cultural self-confidence and promote the inheritance and development of the fine traditional culture of the Chinese nation. The folk culture is the working people's wisdom and the Chinese nation's precious wealth (Yang, 2008). It is still shining after thousands of years of circulation, and it is also a witness to the Chinese nation's history and the inheritor of culture. In contrast, using traditional folk culture for innovative design is no longer a simple creation of works but a process of exploring the connotation of local culture.

Moreover, the current Chinese fashion trend is not only a cultural trend but also a business card representing China's image (Zhang, 2020, p. 3). Traditional auspicious patterns bear China's profound culture and are an important carrier for developing national culture.

Traditional cultural elements can be better used and disseminated only through in-depth research and understanding. Therefore, to go out of our style in Chinese design, it is necessary to reasonably inherit and innovate the culture that has been deposited for thousands of years in China, absorb and re-create it, express it with the contemporary people's trending language, and constantly try and collide, which is a new opportunity and a new mission to promote the development of traditional culture.

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