

Research on the Innovative Design of Tibetan Ethnic Clothing via the Kano Model

Jingtong Zhang^{1*}

¹Art Theory of the School of Fine Arts, Qinghai Normal University, 810000, Qinghai, CHINA

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Corresponding Author

Jingtong Zhang

Abstract

This study conducted an in-depth exploration of the innovative design of Tibetan ethnic costumes on the basis of the Kano model. Through the comprehensive use of various research methods, such as literature research, fieldwork, case analysis and questionnaire surveys, we have gained a comprehensive understanding of the historical origin, developmental changes, style characteristics and cultural connotations of Tibetan clothing. Focusing on the balance between inheritance and innovation of Tibetan costumes, this study analyses user needs and divides them into four levels—basic function, aesthetic design, cultural inheritance and innovation and integration—and classifies and quantitatively evaluates these needs by using the relevant calculation methods of the Kano model. This study aims to provide a theoretical basis and practical guidance for the design of Tibetan national costumes through scientific market research and user demand analysis and to promote the modernization, inheritance and development of Tibetan costume culture.

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1. The Current Situation of the Innovative Design of Tibetan National Costumes

1.1 Characteristics of the Tibetan National Costume

Clothing is the window of civilization, and clothes are the image of thoughts. Tibetan clothing, as a bright pearl in China's colorful minority cultures, profoundly reflects the unique history and cultural heritage of the Tibetan people in the plateau living environment. The costumes of Tibetan people living on the roof of the world include not only the necessities of daily life but also artistic creation to adapt to extreme climatic conditions and show their national flavour. Owing to living at high altitudes for a long time and facing natural challenges such as low temperatures, large temperature differences and strong sunshine, Tibetan costumes have gradually evolved into unique designs, such as wide and easy-to-take off, long-sleeved heat preservation and so on, to adapt to the

needs of nomadic and agricultural life.

There are many kinds of Tibetan costumes, with more than 200 known types, each of which contains deep cultural connotations and regional characteristics. In addition to the specificity of style, the design of decorative patterns and the use of colors also convey the pious feelings of Tibetan people, as well as the desire for good fortune and the reincarnation of life as a beautiful symbol. These costumes are not only the crystallization of Tibetan people's wisdom but also the visual expression of their aesthetic concepts and religious beliefs, which have very high value for the study of Tibetan studies, sociology, ethnology, folklore, minority clothing history and history and culture. Through Tibetan costumes, we can observe the change and development of this ancient nation in the long river of history and feel its unique cultural charm.

1.2 Research on Tibetan National Costumes

As an invaluable treasure in the treasure house of Chinese culture, the Tibetan national costume holds profound significance in the dissemination and display of its unique charm in the digital age. These costumes are not only a visual extravaganza but also a profound manifestation of the rich history, profound spiritual beliefs, and distinctive lifestyle of the Tibetan people.

In the realm of major social media platforms, particularly in highly active applications like WeChat and Tiktok, although some costumes with elements of Tibetan costumes can be observed, the existing offerings are still woefully inadequate when compared to their profound cultural heritage and extensive visual expression potential. The allure and grandeur of traditional Tibetan costumes, with their intricate embroidery, vivid colors, and symbolic ornaments, possess the power to captivate audiences around the globe. However, in the digital landscape, they have not received the extensive exposure and recognition they truly merit. (Figure 1.1)



Figure 1.1 Tibetan National Costume

Although a certain number of Tibetan clothing brands have been introduced, there is still significant room for improvement in their visual design. Firstly, there is a dearth of sufficient creativity and visual impact in terms of expression. Many of the garments remain mere simple copies of the costume patterns, merely imitating the surface appearance without delving deeper into the

essence and spirit of Tibetan costumes. This fails to fully showcase the complex craftsmanship and unique beauty that lies within. The true charm of Tibetan costumes stems from the meticulous handiwork of generations of artisans, who pour their hearts and souls into creating masterpieces that narrate stories of tradition and culture. Secondly, in the extraction and application of elements, the excavation of regional characteristics and cultural connotations is not profound enough. There is a lack of iconic symbols or patterns that can immediately identify Tibetan characteristics, making it difficult for viewers to establish an immediate connection with Tibetan costumes. As noted in “In the process of creating costumes, human beings integrate their perception and understanding of beauty into costumes .”

To better inherit and promote the culture of Tibetan national costumes and revitalize them in the digital era, it is essential to analyze and address these issues. Through innovative design techniques, we can combine traditional craftsmanship with modern aesthetics, crafting costumes that are both timeless and on-trend. Strengthening the integration of regional characteristics will infuse the costumes with a stronger sense of place and identity, enabling them to stand out on the global fashion stage. By creating a series of Tibetan national costumes with visual aesthetics and rich cultural connotations, this national cultural treasure can be displayed and spread in a broader cyberspace, reaching audiences far and wide and inspiring a new generation to appreciate and cherish the beauty of Tibetan culture.

2. Research Methods

The research methods for Tibetan national costumes are diverse and multifaceted, aiming to achieve a comprehensive and profound understanding of this unique and captivating cultural phenomenon. The following are some of the main research methods employed:

Fieldwork Method: Extensive fieldwork is carried out in Tibetan settlements, such as the villages in Tibet Autonomous Region, Qinghai Province, and Sichuan Province. By closely observing the costumes worn by Tibetan people in their daily lives, during festivals, and at religious ceremonies, researchers can gain a deep understanding of the practical applications of these costumes and the distinct regional characteristics they exhibit. Additionally, conducting interviews with local craftsmen, cultural inheritors, and ordinary people provides invaluable first-hand information and oral history. This approach allows researchers to immerse themselves in the living traditions and cultural context, enabling a more vivid and accurate understanding of the significance of costumes in the daily lives of the Tibetan people.

Iconology Research Method: A vast collection of pictures, photos, and video materials of Tibetan costumes is meticulously gathered and analyzed. Through the interpretation of dress patterns and motifs, researchers can explore the symbolic and cultural meanings embedded within. For example, certain patterns may represent specific deities, auspicious symbols, or historical events. By examining the dress colors and materials, one can also understand the aesthetic concepts and values of the Tibetan people. Different colors may hold symbolic meanings related to different aspects of life, such as spirituality, prosperity, or purity. The materials used can reflect the availability of resources in the region as well as the level of craftsmanship and artistry.

Data Analysis Method: The collected data is systematically organized and analyzed using statistical methods. This helps reveal the distribution laws and change trends of Tibetan costumes in terms of style, color, material, and other aspects. By quantifying the data, researchers can provide

objective and reliable support for their research, making the research conclusions more convincing. For instance, analyzing data on the prevalence of certain colors or patterns across different regions can help identify regional variations and cultural influences.

Historical Research Method: Thorough research is conducted on historical documents, ancient texts, and records related to Tibetan national costumes. By analyzing descriptions and illustrations in these materials, researchers can trace the evolution and historical background of Tibetan costumes over time. This method provides insights into the cultural exchanges and historical events that have shaped the development of these costumes. For example, studying historical records can reveal how trade routes and cultural interactions have influenced the design and materials of Tibetan costumes.

Comparative Research Method: Tibetan national costumes are compared with the costumes of other ethnic groups in neighboring regions or with similar cultural backgrounds. By examining similarities and differences in design, materials, and symbolic meanings, researchers can identify the unique characteristics of Tibetan costumes and understand their place within the broader cultural context. This method also helps to highlight the cultural exchanges and influences that have occurred over time. For instance, comparing Tibetan costumes with those of Mongolian or Nepalese ethnic groups can provide valuable insights into the shared cultural heritage and unique features of each.

Cultural Anthropology Method: Researchers employ cultural anthropology techniques to study the social and cultural significance of Tibetan national costumes. This includes observing social interactions, rituals, and ceremonies where costumes play a significant role. By understanding the cultural context and social functions of costumes, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the values and beliefs of the Tibetan people. For example, studying the role of costumes in weddings, funerals, and religious ceremonies can reveal the importance of these events in Tibetan culture and the symbolic meanings attached to the costumes worn.

In summary, the research methods for Tibetan national costumes cover a wide range of disciplines and approaches, including fieldwork, iconology, data analysis, historical research, comparative research, and cultural anthropology. The comprehensive utilization of these methods ensures the comprehensiveness, depth, and accuracy of the research, providing powerful support for a deeper understanding of the rich and complex Tibetan dress culture.

3. The Design of the Research Questionnaire

Tibetan clothing has a broad consumer market in the Tibet Autonomous Region and its surrounding areas, and both Tibetan compatriots and Han Chinese and other ethnic groups wear Tibetan robes on occasions such as festivals and religious ceremonies. Currently, the specific types of clothing consumption cover collection and display costumes, festival costumes, stage performance costumes, work image costumes and daily life costumes.

This hot consumer market has benefited from the government's great attention and active promotion, such as the Tibetan Costume and Garment Cultural Festival, regional embroidery art competitions, selection of excellent embroidery artists, and non-genetic inheritance training programmes. In the annual work reports of governments at all levels, the Tibetan clothing and apparel industry is also taken as an important reporting content and future development plan. So far, the government level has successfully held a number of sessions of the Tibetan Clothing and Garment Cultural Festival, creating a huge Tibetan clothing and garment consumption environment. According to statistics, there are more than thousands of enterprises focusing on Tibetan ethnic

clothing and apparel throughout the region, while various private design studios have also sprung up.

According to the above situation and in view of the characteristics of the project research, combined with the lecture content and research background of the lecturing experts, at the same time, the author has repeatedly penetrated into the cultural industry park, Tibetan film and television production centre, Tibetan style city and commercial street with Tibetan characteristics, etc., to carry out on-the-spot interviews, and in-depth exchanges with non-genetic inheritors and entrepreneurs, and ultimately formed the first draft of the questionnaire. After the first draft was formed, it was discussed, adjusted and modified with experts for many times, and finally the questionnaire on the protection and inheritance status of Tibetan traditional costumes was designed.

The questionnaire is divided into two forms: paper version and electronic version, the paper version is designed to take care of some participants who are not familiar with modern electronic technology, and is completed through the author's interviews and records; while the electronic version is preferred by most of the participants because of its convenience, and the process of issuance and retrieval is more efficient. The paper version of the questionnaire showed unique advantages in the interview process, as the interviewees often shared their unique grassroots experiences due to their interest in a certain topic, and these valuable contents often inspired the author to think about the issue at a deeper level. However, the paper version of the questionnaire also has the disadvantage of being time-consuming.

The questionnaire design combines both closed and open-ended approaches. The closed-ended questions started with the respondent's ethnic identity, followed by a series of objective multiple-choice questions, including: Do you wear traditional Tibetan clothing? Do you prefer traditional Tibetan dress, modern Tibetan dress or innovative dress with Tibetan elements? What occasions do you wear it? Do you own any Tibetan clothing? How many pieces do you own? What do you think is the beauty of Tibetan traditional costumes? What is the status of protection and inheritance of Tibetan traditional costumes? What are the main departments and channels for protection and inheritance?

In addition, the questionnaire also set open-ended subjective questions, such as: 'What are the characteristics of the Tibetan costumes on the market that you observe in your daily life?' These questions were set based on an in-depth understanding of the identity of the trainees and their work areas, aiming at researching a group of trainees who are widely distributed in the field of clothing and apparel design, which is a new attempt, and it is expected that the results of the research will be more persuasive and of value for promotion.

4. Analysis of Tibetan Ethnic Clothing via the Kano Model

Definition and Analysis of the User Population: This research focuses on groups of different age classes, and the research perspective becomes broader, covering groups at different life stages from children, teenagers, and middle-aged to elderly individuals. The purpose of this research is to explore the preferences, usage scenarios and needs of different age groups for Tibetan ethnic clothing and then design clothing products that cross age boundaries, conform to diverse aesthetics, and profoundly reflect the cultural heritage of Tibetan people.

Demand screening and hierarchical classification: Through market research, user interviews and literature research, the user demand for Tibetan ethnic clothing can be summarized into the following four levels. Basic function level (A) includes the basic physical attributes of clothing, such as

warmth, comfort, and ease of wearing, which are the basic demands of the users when choosing clothing. Aesthetic design level (B): Emphasizes the appearance design of the apparel, including patterns, colors, and cuts, reflecting the users' pursuit of aesthetics and personality expression. Cultural heritage level (C): This level focuses on how apparel reflects the uniqueness and depth of Tibetan culture, such as traditional craftsmanship, totem symbols, festivals and customs, etc., to enhance the user's sense of cultural identity and sense of belonging. Innovation and Integration Level (D): Examines how clothing can be combined with modern fashion elements while maintaining traditional characteristics to satisfy young users' pursuit of novel and unique designs. (Figure 2.1)

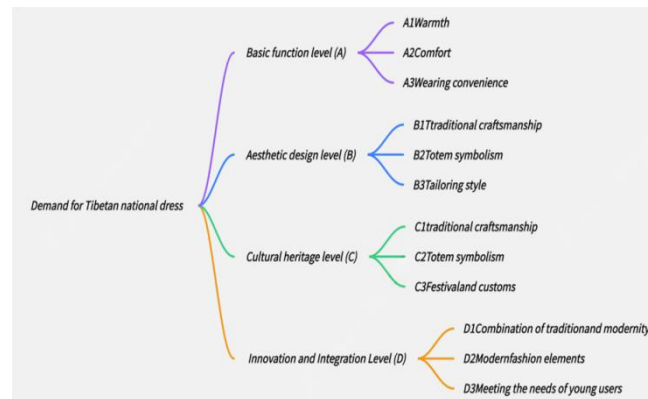


Figure 2.1 Demand for Tibetan National Dress

Kano Questionnaire Design and Data Collection: The Kano questionnaire is designed to refine the needs of the above four levels and collect the specific needs and expectations of users of different age groups for Tibetan ethnic clothing through a questionnaire survey. The questionnaire design should contain positive and negative two-way questions to distinguish the attributes of different demand types. Moreover, the questionnaire data are analysed for reliability and validity to ensure the reliability and validity of the data.

Demand analysis and quantification: The relevant calculation methods of the Kano model (e.g., the better-worse coefficient method and four-quadrant analysis method) are utilized to classify and quantitatively assess the collected demands. The results clarify which requirements are users' basic requirements (must be satisfied to avoid dissatisfaction), desired requirements (satisfaction can be significantly improved after satisfaction) or charismatic requirements (exceeding users' expectations and bringing surprises).

Design principles and practices: On the basis of the results of the needs analysis, design principles for Tibetan ethnic clothing, such as balancing tradition and modernity, focusing on details and craftsmanship, and strengthening cultural symbolism and emotional resonance, are proposed. On this basis, design practices are carried out to ensure that the apparel products not only meet the actual needs of "Generation Z" users but also fully demonstrate the unique charm of Tibetan culture. Moreover, the series design and sustainable development of apparel are considered to meet the diverse needs of the market and the requirements of long-term development.

The Kano model is a quantitative analysis method proposed by Noriaki Kano et al. in 1984 [4] for assessing users' needs and satisfaction, which divides users' needs into necessary needs (M), expected needs (O), attractive needs (A), undifferentiated needs (I) and reverse needs (R). In this study, the Kano questionnaire was used, and questions were designed to cover both positive and

negative directions, such as “the attitude of users when emoticons use dialects” and “the attitude of users when dialects are improperly used or missing altogether.” The answer options included liking it (5 points), taking it for granted (4 points), not matter (3 points), reluctantly accepting (2 points) and disliking (1 point). A total of 1071 Kano questionnaires were distributed [5], and 1000 valid questionnaires were collected. The questionnaire is divided into two parts: the first part collects the basic information of the participants, and the second part is a two-way question survey for the prescreened user demand indicators. The credibility of the data was tested via SPSS software, the questionnaire alpha coefficient was 0.733, and the KMO value was 0.871, indicating that the data had good reliability and validity. To analyse demand satisfaction more precisely, the weight of each demand was quantified in combination with better-worse analysis. The coefficients are calculated as follows: satisfaction coefficient SI: $\text{better} = (A+O)/(A+O+M+I)$; dissatisfaction coefficient DSI: $\text{worst} = -(O+M)/(A+O+M+I)$. (Figure 3.1)

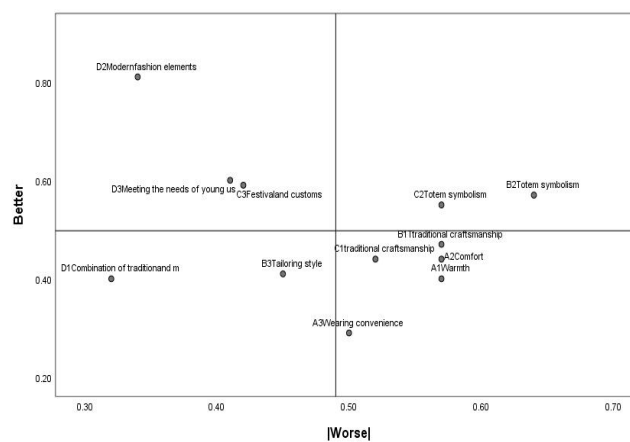


Figure 3.1 Scatter Plot of Demand for Tibetan Ethnic Costumes in Four Quadrants

5. Research Data Analysis

The questionnaire is based on the main sample of students from the School of Fine Arts of a university in the west china, and the results of the research are highly representative. A total of 1,000 questionnaires were distributed and 1,000 valid questionnaires were recovered, with an effective recovery rate of 100%. The survey showed that 53% of the respondents were female and 47% were male. The age group was mainly distributed between 18-24 years old (67%) and 25-34 years old (24%), of which 3.96% were under 18 years old. Among the participants who took part in this survey, Han Chinese accounted for 80.69%, while other ethnic minorities such as Tibetans, Hui, and Mongolians also participated, accounting for 19.31%. In the current statistics, the proportion of first-tier cities and new first-tier cities is as high as 44.55%, while the proportion of second-tier cities and third-tier cities is 18.81% and 36.63% respectively. Therefore, the research results are highly representative.

In terms of the degree of understanding of Tibetan national costumes, at present, although Tibetan national costumes have received more and more attention and research, it is undeniable that due to cultural differences, historical legacies and other factors, the public's understanding of Tibetan national costumes is still generally low, with an overall understanding rating of only 4.07 points, of

which 44 people have no understanding at all, accounting for 21.78%. This also reveals that there is still a great potential for improvement in the public's understanding of traditional Tibetan clothing. Therefore, in the process of promoting the development of Tibetan clothing culture, it is necessary to carry out in-depth research, inheritance and promotion of its cultural and spiritual connotations in order to enable more people to understand and accept Tibetan national clothing. (Figure 4.1)

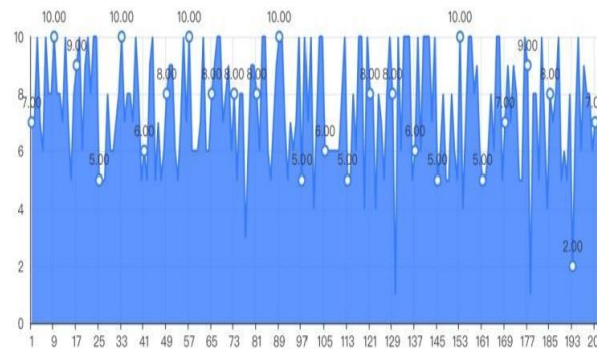


Figure 4.1 Level of Knowledge of Tibetan National Dress

Regarding the respondents' preference for innovative Tibetan ethnic clothing, the survey results show that they prefer to buy jackets (61.39%) and related accessories (65.35%) with Tibetan characteristics. This implies that the fusion of Tibetan cultural elements in the process of innovative design brings a unique charm to the garments. The survey further reveals that respondents generally believe that the price of traditional Tibetan clothing has a greater impact on its popularity and promotion, with 23.27 per cent of respondents viewing price as a key factor. This underscores the fact that in promoting the popularity of traditional Tibetan clothing, the price factor needs to be taken into full consideration in order to better meet the diverse needs of consumers.

When selecting clothing for the Tibetan ethnic group, respondents preferred to choose between travelling for photographs (90.60%) and social occasions (37.13%). This shows that the traditional clothing of the Tibetan ethnic group is not just an ancient attire, it reflects their identity and cultural traditions at a deeper level. When people wear Tibetan traditional costumes in travelling or social activities, it is not only a way of respecting and enjoying Tibetan culture, but also a way of attracting attention and compliments from others. 57.43% of the respondents tend to choose to wear Tibetan traditional costumes or innovative costumes related to them in their daily lives. This set of data reveals the inheritance of traditional cultural heritage as well as a deep preference for ethnic costumes. (Figure 5.1)

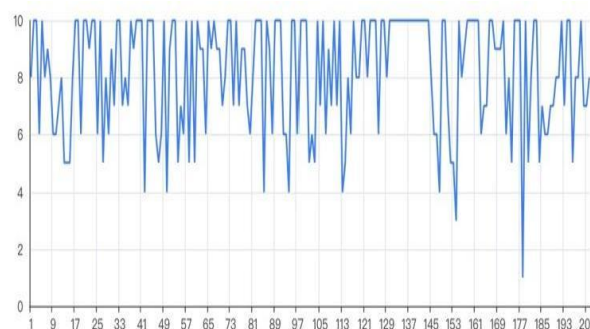


Figure 5.1 Attitudes Towards Wearing Traditional Tibetan Clothing

The survey reveals that 69.31% of respondents believe traditional Tibetan clothing should adapt to modern fast-paced lifestyles, highlighting the need to strike a balance between cultural preservation and contemporary practicality. This suggests that while Tibetans value their sartorial heritage, they also recognize the importance of functional innovation—such as simplified designs, lighter fabrics, or modular elements—to ensure its relevance in daily life.

Regarding color preferences, red dominates at 53.96%, underscoring its deep-rooted significance in Tibetan culture. Beyond symbolizing celebration and harmony, red carries religious connotations, often associated with the robes of Buddhist monks and the vibrancy of Tibetan festivals (e.g., Losar, the Tibetan New Year). Meanwhile, white (33.17%) reflects not only purity but also spiritual symbolism—linked to sacred mountains (like Mount Kailash) and the white scarves (khata) offered in rituals. The interplay of these colors mirrors Tibetan cosmology, where red embodies life force and protection, while white signifies transcendence and peace.

These findings collectively illustrate how tradition and modernity intersect in Tibetan attire. To sustain cultural heritage, designers must prioritize adaptive innovation—retaining symbolic elements (e.g., color, motifs) while enhancing wearability. Additionally, further research into consumer preferences (price sensitivity, material comfort) could guide market-driven strategies, ensuring Tibetan clothing evolves without losing its ethnocultural identity.

6. Conclusion

In exploring the market acceptance of innovative Tibetan ethnic clothing and its current status of preservation and inheritance, this study found that respondents generally preferred jackets and accessories with distinctive Tibetan characteristics, highlighting the unique charm of the integration of cultural elements in clothing design. At the same time, price is one of the key factors affecting the popularity and promotion of traditional Tibetan clothing, emphasising the need to strike a balance between affordability and quality assurance when formulating marketing strategies. Respondents tend to wear traditional Tibetan clothing in travelling photo shoots and social occasions, which not only reflects its identity function as a cultural symbol, but also points out the importance of integrating traditional clothing into daily life. In addition, interviewees generally agreed that traditional Tibetan clothing needs to adapt to modern fast-paced life, emphasising the importance of innovative design, but also the need to preserve classic styles, cuts and patterns and decorations passed down from generation to generation, in order to safeguard their uniqueness and inheritance value. Faced with the challenges of preservation and inheritance, interviewees expressed concern about the loss of skills and changes in the marketplace, and called for enhanced education on inheritance and innovation, as well as the establishment of an effective mechanism for preservation and development, to ensure the sustainable development and widespread inheritance of Tibetan national costumes.

To summarize, this research reveals the current status of public awareness, preference trends, protection concerns and innovation expectations of Tibetan national costumes. Enhancing public understanding, balancing tradition and modernity, strengthening protection and inheritance, and promoting cultural innovation are the keys to promoting the sustainable development of Tibetan national costumes. Through in-depth research, reasonable pricing, adapting to modern needs, preserving core features and incorporating rich colors, traditional Tibetan clothing is expected to take

on new life and vitality in modern society.

Therefore, in the development of traditional Tibetan costumes, protection and inheritance should be carried out in the following ways. First, designers should deeply grasp the cultural heritage behind the costumes, i.e., the “soul” of Tibetan culture, and recreate them on the basis of this “soul”, resolutely avoiding the “decorative imitation” that floats on the surface. Second, government departments need to increase correct publicity and guidance and popularize the public's knowledge of traditional Tibetan costumes in diverse ways to increase their aesthetic appreciation. Third, scientific research institutions should conduct in-depth explorations to provide a constant impetus for the sustainable development of Tibetan costumes. Fourth, social inheritors and folk artists should uphold “craftsmanship” and pass on the exquisite craftsmanship and cultural connotations of Tibetan costumes. Fifth, entrepreneurs should actively participate in grassroots costumes and cultural activities and positively guide the consumer market of Tibetan costumes. Only in this way can greater progress be made in the protection and inheritance of traditional Tibetan costumes.

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