

# The Inheritance and Cultural Innovation and Development of Shanxi Lihou Hu

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## Abstract:

Through an in-depth analysis of the contemporary historical art circulation, cultural value connotation, artistic value characteristics and the current situation of art development trend of Lihouhu in Shanxi, the author of this article deeply explores how Li Hu's folk fabric art Li Hu re-inherits and innovates in today's art information age, so as to conduct more artistic exploration on the aesthetic innovation and artistic development status of Li Houhu's image. Let the Chinese folk craft Li Houhu return to the art stage of today's world with a new artistic appearance.

## Keywords:

Li Houhu, Inheritance, Innovative Development

## 1. Introduction

The word Lihou Tiger originated in Licheng County, Shanxi Province, also known as "cloth tiger", has the reputation of China's first tiger, from ancient times to the present, the tiger has been crowned by people as the honorary name of the king of China's hundred beasts, often used as a symbol of strength and bravery. Therefore, the people of Licheng regarded the auspiciousness of Ruihu as a spiritual sustenance, and placed the meanings of exorcising evil spirits and avoiding disasters, peace, longevity and auspiciousness, and many sons and blessings to Lihou Hu. According to historical records, the Lihou tiger originated from the Shang Zhou period in China, and the prototype came from the totem of the tiger in the Shang and Zhou period. The Han people use the tiger image as a totem, so a variety of tiger images have been formed in the areas where Han Chinese people gather. [1] In 2006, a jade tiger was unearthed from the Western Zhou tomb in Xiguan Village, Licheng County. According to research, the jade tiger is the funerary product of the ancient Li monarch. This proves that the "tiger" shaped instrument was the spiritual belief and totem worship of the ancient Li Kingdom, which occupied an important position in daily life, sacrifice and military activities at that time. The introduction of your article is organized as a funnel that begins with a definition of why the experiment is being performed and ends with a specific statement of your research approach. And it highlights controversial and diverging hypotheses when necessary. There are many kinds of cloth tiger images in Shanxi alone, and the Lihou tiger in Licheng, Shanxi is

one of the more unique and stable inheritance of many cloth tiger images in the country. In 1998, the image of the cloth tiger made by the elderly Gao Qiuying was selected by the State Post and Telecommunications Administration to become the stamp image of the Year of the Tiger after layers of screening. In 2006, Lihou Hu was listed as an intangible cultural heritage of Shanxi Province. In 2008, Li Houhu was officially identified as a folk craft exhibit at the Beijing Olympic Games and was included in the second batch of national intangible cultural heritage list. At present, the Lihou Hu referred to is generally the Lihou Hu handmade by Gao Qiuying's inheritors. After continuous development and evolution, it has become a unique "cloth tiger" so far. Later, with the increase of popularity, Li Houhu also occupied a place in the market. This also brings new opportunities for the inheritance of Lihou Hu and the development of its derivative products.

## **2. A Brief Description of Li Houhu**

This section should contain sufficient details so that methods can be appropriately cited and readers can assess whether the materials and methods justify the conclusions or not. It can be divided into subsections if several other methods need to be described. You need explain how you studied the topic, identify the procedures you followed, and structure this information as logically as possible.

### **2.1. Folklore of the Cloth Tiger**

The legend of "Xi Bo Shu Li" "Ci Hai" explains the Qi Zhi: Qi, Old, Strong. The large population and strength of the State of Li formed a great deterrent to King Wen of Zhou. King Wen of Zhou attacked the state of Lihou, but he could not attack it for a long time, suffered heavy casualties, and a strategist offered a plan, but he could not win the victory because the Lihou kingdom had a heavenly jade tiger, which had a very high aura and could ensure the peace of the party. So King Wen selected a master, disguised himself as a citizen of Li, and mixed into the city to steal the jade tiger. Sure enough, the army soon conquered the state of Lihou. Later, King Wu of Zhou not only invited the fleeing monarch back, but also returned the jade tiger to the Marquis of Li. After the death of the king of the state of Lihou, he buried the treasure jade of the Zhenguo with him. Therefore, in order to commemorate the Jade Tiger and the Lihou Guojun, the people have made a cloth tiger, named Lihou Hu or Li Guohu. [2]

According to legend, there was a family of three living in Zhao Jiashan in Guli City, and later a mountain demon had a bad heart for the woman, mobilized the poisonous snake beast on the mountain to try to murder, was discovered by the traveling immortals, gave the golden tiger, the family was safe, and the neighbors imitated the golden tiger to make a cloth tiger and seek protection. Since then, Li Houhu has had the cultural meaning of calming the gods in the town house, praying for peace and blessings, and warding off evil spirits and disasters. [3] For thousands of years, the love of the people of Licheng for tigers has increased unabated, and Lihou Hu, as a folk culture, is deeply rooted in the lives of the people of Licheng, and embodies the good wishes of the people to pray for blessings and avoid evil.

### **2.2. Cloth tiger craft making**

Li Houhu's handicraft shape seems simple, but its process is more complex and very exquisite. In order to facilitate sewing and suitable for children, cotton cloth is used as the main material. The color of the cloth is mainly yellow and red; Yellow

represents wealth and nobility, and is used to make tiger body, tiger head and tiger foot; Red represents auspiciousness and is used to make its abdomen. Secondly, choose black, white and blue fabrics for backup. The model of the image of Lihou Hu is mostly made of cardboard, and the traditional Lihou Hu mostly uses wood chips as fillers, and now uses cotton instead of wood chips. Lihou tigers come in a variety of forms, including single-headed tigers, pillow tigers and female tigers. Lihou tiger has the gender of male and female, the pattern of the tiger's back is one of the elements that distinguish the gender of the Lihou tiger, the male tiger with a circular protruding branch, and the female tiger with a circular groove pattern. The two tiger back patterns are cut from the same piece of cloth and sewn to the tiger back of tigers of different genders, similar to the traditional Chinese Bagua yin and yang graphics, reflecting the Shanxi people's unified idea of the traditional yin and yang harmony and complementarity. Li Houhu's eyes have eyelashes, eyelids and eyebrow details, eyelid eyebrows have two layers of unfolded petal patterns, the upper eyelashes are embroidered on the eyelids by embroidery, the female tiger has 10 upper eyelashes, and the male tiger has 11 upper eyelashes. The lower eyelashes are also embroidered under the eyelids of the tiger's face by embroidery, the female tiger has 7 lower eyelashes, and the male tiger has 9 lower eyelashes, and the number and position of the embroidery in the process of production are made according to strict requirements. According to traditional Chinese customs, the tiger is the king of Baishou, so Li Houhu's forehead is also pasted with a king character pattern, which is slightly different from the stroke image of the traditional Chinese character "Wang", the first horizontal is slightly longer, and the second horizontal and third horizontal are slightly shorter. At the same time, the pattern is partially obscured by tiger eyelashes and ears, which has a looming feeling, and in some ways also shows the introverted and unassuming personality of the Shanxi people. Li Houhu's eyes have a total of four layers, which are combined with the tiger's face in a layered sewing. The bottom three layers are patterned in line with the traditional Chinese "Dan Phoenix Eye", while the top layer of the eyeball uses golden yellow round sequins to convey the aura in the tiger's eyes. At the same time, the sewing of the circular sequins also distinguishes the gender of the tiger, the female tiger's eyeball sewing process directly from the center of the eyeball to the surrounding area, and the male tiger's eyeball sewing in the center part of the left a small circle, there is a calming effect, the male tiger's heroism reflects the vigor. The tiger mouth of Lihou Hu is composed of three layers of cloth, the bottom layer is the shape of the mouth, the middle layer is the tiger tongue, and the top layer is the tiger teeth. There are eight tiger teeth, and there are thin silk whiskers on the left and right sides of the tiger's mouth.

Lihou Hu's tiger ears are also composed of three layers of cloth. The last two layers are pasted to connect the front layer, using a hardened hard cloth that uses the hardness of the cloth to form an inverted, hollow three-dimensional peach core. The center of the ear is also stitched with loose ear fluff using fine threads. The tail of the Lihou tiger is the last step in the whole production process, in addition to being a part of the tiger, it also plays the role of covering the seams of the tiger's body. The S-shaped shape was used to express the movement of the tail, while the hardened cloth was used to keep the tiger's tail straight. Tiger claw pattern. The tiger body tattoo is a traditional whirlwind pattern, which is divided into "three, six, nine", which means safe and smooth. The tiger stripe is mainly reflected by green and pink fine wool threads, and the blue and purple fine wool threads are used to make the beard of Lihou Hu, highlighting the layering and three-dimensional sense. [4]

### ***2.3. The meaning and cultural influence of the cloth tiger***

As a popular seasonal toy during the Dragon Boat Festival, according to the old customs, the folk during the Dragon Boat Festival are popular to make Lihou Hu for children, implying that they are brave, strong and healthy like tigers. Lihou tiger includes tiger pillow, tiger card and tiger head hat, etc., as children's toys, is the inheritance and continuation of the Chinese nation's tiger culture. In Licheng, people have the custom of "looking at the full moon" for newborns, and on the day of the full moon, the child's grandmother puts the cloth tiger into the child's arms, which means that the spirit tiger protects and grows strongly. At the same time, Lihou Hu is also a newlywed dowry in the Licheng area, symbolizing the early birth of a noble son and pinning on the lofty desire for life and reproduction. Since the Ming and Qing dynasties, whether it is a rich family or a poor family in the Licheng area, weddings, opening and housewarming, Lihou Hu are all necessary gifts, with folk effects such as dispelling evil in the town house, blessing and increasing longevity, and settling down the family and making money.

As the saying goes, one side of the water and soil nurtures the other side, and different ethnic groups and regions will have different cultures. Fabric Lihouhu is the artistic crystallization of Shanxi's history, culture, folk culture and folk skills. In terms of history and culture, Lihou Hu is mainly embodied in the totem worship, legends and stories of the excavated cultural relics "Jade Tiger" and the ancient Li culture. In folk culture, Li Houhu, as the guardian deity of children, is in good fortune and avoids evil and town alarm; As a marriage custom, male and female pairing, festive and auspicious; Dragon Boat Mid-Autumn Festival, rich in nostalgia, tigers and tigers are powerful. In terms of traditional folk crafts, as a national intangible cultural heritage, the cloth art Lihou Hu embodies local cultural characteristics and folk customs. It integrates art, literature, aesthetics, history and folklore, and has a rich cultural heritage.

## **3. The Artistic Characteristics of Li Houhu**

### ***3.1. Distinctive styling features***

Fabric Li Houhu unique shape, folk artists mainly use anthropomorphic and exaggerated techniques to constitute its overall image, exaggerated the ears and facial features, sharp corner shaped eyes, round eyeballs, curved eyebrows, oval mouth, triangular nose, and divergent beard, resulting in figurative and abstract, the whole and part of the composition relationship, so that the modeling elements both echo each other and moderate contrast, reflecting the contrast and harmony of the formal beauty. This method of expression and modeling greatly enhances the artistic charm of "Li Houhu". From the overall shape to feel the Lihou tiger, it mostly appears in the image of a large head and a small torso, which is actually based on the proportion of children's bodies, and the proportion of transplantation is created. This makes Li Houhu full of childlike fun, giving people a pleasant and relaxed feeling. It not only satisfies the aesthetic needs of the public, but also presents a simple and simple form of beauty.

### ***3.2. Figures and Tables***

The color of Lihou Hu comes from the ancient Chinese yin and yang and five elements view, which mainly constitutes the five colors of white, blue, black, red and yellow, corresponding to the five elements of gold, wood, water, fire and earth in the

five elements. Red symbolizes auspiciousness, festivities and passion among the colors of China. In the folk people, the people are attached to things, so red and yellow are the main colors of Lihou Hu. There are also colors including black, green, blue, rose red, orange and white. In Lihou Hu, red is mainly used in the second layer of tiger back, tiger tongue, tiger eye from bottom to top, tiger tail, and tiger ear; Yellow in China symbolizes splendor, hope and movement, in the body of the body color of the yellow Lihou tiger, red is mainly used in the tiger's belly, tiger mouth, tiger tongue, tiger eye at the bottom of the bottom and the tiger's tail pattern, eyelashes at the line; Black is a common color in daily life, symbolizing nobility, solemnity, stability and seriousness. On the Lihou tiger of the two colors, black is used in the pattern of the Lihou tiger's body, the pattern of the tiger's back, the pattern of the tiger's claw and the third layer of the tiger's eye from the bottom up; Green is a very affinity color, made of a mixture of yellow and blue, used in the nose, eyebrows and eyelashes and tail of the tiger's tail decorative line, which is a good role in modification.

### **3.3. Figures and Tables**

The decorative style of fabric Li Houhu has a strong local color, the composition is concise, the ornamentation is full, which is reflected in the decorative pattern, and its decorative techniques are mostly embroidery, appliqué, painting, printing and dyeing, weaving and so on. The decorative texture of Lihou Huhu's body is a whirlwind pattern. Two on the left and right sides of the tiger's body, after the tiger's body is sewn and filled, it is pasted on the tiger's body by way of pattern paste. Embroidery is the most common decorative technique, through the change of needle movement to form a different sense of texture, showing a rich decorative effect and layering. "Lihou Hu" pays attention to the pairing of male and female, and the pattern of the tiger's ridge is cut into different ripple shapes of yin and yang through the cloth, which can distinguish between male and female, and express the traditional reproductive and breeding concept of the combination of yin and yang and the endless life. The facial expressions are decorated through green satin, using the composition rules of points, lines and surfaces, which have typical compositional beauty and formal beauty. The overall decoration of the fabric Lihou Hu is unified, simple and bright, with distinct national colors, and is a "living fossil" of the folk culture inheritance of Licheng in the hinterland of Taihang Mountain. [5]

## **4. The Inheritance and Development of Li Houhu**

### **4.1. The development status of Lihou Hu**

The elderly Gao Qiuying, the first generation of Li Houhu, was elderly and had emigrated elsewhere for other personal reasons. It has had a great impact on the production and inheritance of Lihou Hu. In 2008, Gao Qiuying's personal disciple Li Xiaomei was identified as the representative inheritor of Changzhi municipal level, and in 2010, he was identified as the representative inheritor of Shanxi provincial level. Therefore, Li Xiaomei became the second generation of Li Houhu heirs after Gao Qiuying. Li Xiaomei actively participated in the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, in order to expand the influence of Li Houhu. Li Xiaomei introduced commerce and established Licheng County Hongshi Folk Craft Co., Ltd. [6] At present, it is also possible to purchase Li Houhu supplied by people through the Internet. But despite this, the inheritance and development of Lihou Hu still faces

great difficulties. First of all, the group of inheritors is small, the production volume is small, it is difficult to meet the market demand by hand alone, and the use of mechanized production will lose the traditional meaning of pure handmade. Second, the traditional trading model is difficult to adapt to the development speed of modern society. [7] Although the corresponding company was established, the publicity for Lihouhu itself was very small, and there was no development of peripheral products, and there was no good establishment and dissemination of the Lihouhu brand.

#### ***4.2. The dilemma faced by Hou Hu of Yili***

##### ***a. Economic benefits are weakened, lack of brand and innovation awareness***

The traditional fabric Lihouhu production process is complex, and the labor cost is high, resulting in weakening economic benefits. [8] Some enterprises overly pursue economic benefits, making Lihouhu rough workmanship and poor quality; The product marketing model is single, and the brand efficiency is weakened. In addition, fabric Li Houhu's sense of innovation is shallow, the product is single and old, it is difficult to be loved by modern young fashion groups, and it needs to inherit and innovate in terms of handicraft and machinery, materials and craftsmanship.

##### ***b. The fault of the inheritors, the market is blocked***

Due to the reasons of marketization, the economic benefits of handmade fabric Lihou Hu have weakened, making the main force of inheritance prohibitive. In many of Licheng's tiger villages, the younger generation no longer learns this skill, leaving only a group of elderly people struggling to persevere. The strength of the main body of inheritance is not enough, it is difficult to maintain, and the labor cost of the product is high, resulting in the obstruction of the fabric Lihouhu market.

##### ***c. The government's attention and support are insufficient***

The government should play a leading role in the inheritance and development of fabric Lihou Hu, including publicity and promotion, financial investment, talent training, resource integration and scientific research and creation. Since the successful application of Lihou Hu for the legacy of fabric art, the local government has also paid attention to this folk art, but the strength and method are not perfect, resulting in narrow market space, thin production groups, and sales are difficult to break through, and it is necessary to establish a complete support system and support plan.

#### ***4.3. The main channel of Lihou Hu inheritance***

##### ***a. Strengthen brand awareness and focus on product innovation***

Through the analysis of the image characteristics and symbolic characteristics of Li Houhu and the comprehensive design elements, we should design cultural and creative products, research and innovation and development of Li Houhu. Some select new materials such as ceramics, wood, new fabrics, and glass to design household items and cultural ornaments with the cultural characteristics of Lihouhu; It is also possible to choose dolls, dolls and cartoons in the form of dolls, dolls and cartoons in the case of retaining the shape and decoration of Lihou Hu, and design children's toys, car accessories, jewelry and electronic products, etc. [9] The other part can inherit the main body, local governments and cultural units to strengthen brand benefits, pay attention to cultural promotion, marketing models and craft innovation, highlight the

spread of national culture, increase the influence of intangible cultural heritage, and reflect the application value, artistic charm and national characteristics of Lihou Hu in modern life.

***b. Actively respond to the national policy of “going out” and “please come in”***

“Going out” requires products and skills to continuously participate in domestic and foreign arts and crafts exchange exhibitions, cultural fairs and folk craft displays. “Please come in” is to invite experts and scholars, scientific research institutions and outstanding enterprises to visit the field, innovation guidance and market promotion, so as to achieve the purpose of collaborative innovation and inheritance protection. [10] The National Arts Fund project now has a great degree of funding and support for regional folk crafts and intangible cultural heritage, and has strong publicity at home and abroad. Relevant departments can unite scientific research teams to actively apply for the National Art Fund Artistic Talent Training Project and domestic and foreign communication and exchange projects, so that Li Houhu can go abroad.

***c. Strengthen government support***

Local governments and relevant cultural institutions should use national policies as a platform to build a complete support and support system for Li Houhu; Set up a special institution to be responsible for talent training, team building and product promotion, set up scientific research institutions and academic platforms, etc., to study, innovate and promote fabric Lihouhu; Actively help the main body of inheritance and inject fresh blood into the fabric Lihou Hu; Build a cultural brand, drive each other through the surrounding industries, increase publicity and promotion, and let Lihou Hu go out of the Taihang Mountains.

## **5. Li Houhu’s Innovative Development**

“Lihou Hu” is loved by the public with its unique shape, strong color and simple style characteristics. “Lihou Hu” is a folk aesthetic model, a native folk art, derived from the hard work and wisdom of ordinary people. Scholar Mr. Chen Sihe believes that folk aesthetics are the group aesthetic expression in the ordinary consciousness of ordinary people.

With the continuous development of modern society and culture, pattern art as an important part of Chinese art has been greatly expanded and promoted, but there are some limitations in concrete objects and abstract expressions, mainly in the uniformity of patterns, no typicality and creative expression, lack of life-oriented themes and simple humanistic care. [11] On the contrary, the folk “Lihou Hu” abstractly summarizes the prototype of “Tiger”, which accumulates rich humanistic ideas and profound cultural heritage. The aesthetic style of “Li Houhu” is applied to the creation of modern pattern art, so that the created image can not only highlight the national style, but also reflect the characteristics of the times, and also lay a broad space for the development of modern pattern art.

## **6. Conclusions**

Lihou Hu is the totem worship and wisdom crystallization of the working people of China. It carries strong regional characteristics, cultural connotations and national customs, and has artistic characteristics such as unique shape, auspicious meaning and simple simplicity. It also symbolizes the local people’s yearning for a better life, and

also reflects the value orientation and aesthetic needs of the local people. At present, the inheritance and development of folk traditional handicraft art are hindered, the main reason is that the times continue to develop, people's thinking is moving forward, but most of the traditional handicrafts are still in a state of conformity; Because the products produced by the traditional processing methods can no longer meet the aesthetic needs of the public to keep pace with the times. Similarly, if Lihou Hu's handicraft skills want to be inherited and developed in the new era, they must combine new design techniques to design derivative products that cater to the aesthetic needs of the public under the premise of retaining the unique characteristics of their handicrafts. It is hoped that Li Houhu, China's intangible cultural heritage, will return to the lives of the public with a new attitude and make corresponding preparations for future related research.

### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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