



# RESEARCH ON CHINA'S INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE: CURRENT STATUS, HOT TOPICS, CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

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## Abstract

Intangible cultural heritage is the core carrier of China's outstanding traditional culture. Since the implementation of the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Intangible Cultural Heritage*, research on intangible cultural heritage in China has shifted from the early stage of "salvage recording" to a new stage emphasizing both "systematic protection" and "living inheritance", forming a diversified pattern led by the government, supported by academia and participated by the whole society. Current research hotspots focus on living inheritance, digital and intelligent empowerment, integrated development of culture and tourism, and international communication. However, the field still faces core challenges such as insufficient research depth, theories lagging behind practice, backward disciplinary construction, unbalanced research distribution and insufficient inheritance vitality.

This paper systematically sorts out the current situation of China's intangible cultural heritage research and its core progress in the past six years (2020–2025), and deeply analyzes the current research hotspots and prominent dilemmas. On this basis, combined with national strategies and contemporary needs, this paper puts forward future development paths from the dimensions of theoretical construction, technological application, disciplinary construction and international communication, aiming to provide theoretical reference and practical guidance for the systematic protection, living inheritance and the construction of an independent knowledge system of China's intangible cultural heritage.

## Keywords

China's Intangible Cultural Heritage; Research Status; Hot Topics; Core Challenges; Future Prospects

## I. Introduction

As globalization and modernization accelerate, Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) faces growing threats, including disrupted transmission, weakened cultural significance, and barriers to sustainable development. Since the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the ICH and its Representative Lists were established, global efforts have entered a more systematic phase. These mechanisms aim to preserve culturally significant ICH elements, foster international cultural exchange, and promote socio-economic coordination. Today, ICH safeguarding strategies are shifting from single-model protection to more diversified and integrated approaches, emphasizing living inheritance and sustainability. ICH holds cultural, scientific, historical, and socio-economic value, making its preservation essential to cultural confidence and sustainable development.

China has made notable progress through policies focusing on ICH surveys, list systems, and inheritor support. However, ICH safeguarding remains a complex project requiring collaboration among governments, institutions, inheritors, and local communities to build a management system that aligns with ICH's developmental needs. Over the past two decades, Chinese scholars have extensively explored ICH resource preservation, management innovation, and sustainable development pathways, generating significant research outcomes<sup>[1-6]</sup>.

According to the latest statistics from UNESCO, its Lists and Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage include a total of 849 heritage items, covering 5 major regions and 157 countries worldwide<sup>[7]</sup>. The global study of intangible cultural heritage has formed an overall pattern characterized by distinct regional developmental differences, the deep integration of theory and practice, and the parallel progress of global governance and local implementation.

Since China joined the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* in 2004, the cause of intangible cultural heritage has witnessed leapfrog development from concept introduction to in-depth practice. The implementation of the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Intangible Cultural Heritage* in 2011 marked that China's intangible cultural heritage protection has stepped into a legalized and standardized track<sup>[7]</sup>. By December 2025, China has 45 items inscribed on the relevant lists of UNESCO<sup>[8]</sup>, ranking first in the world. According to the achievements in intangible cultural heritage protection during the "14th Five-Year Plan" period released by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism at the "2025 Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Work Conference" in November 2025, China has established a comprehensive four-tiered listing system for intangible cultural heritage at the national, provincial, municipal, and county levels. It has recognized over 90,000 representative inheritors at various levels and designated 276 cultural ecological protection zones at both the national and provincial levels.

These achievements have provided rich practical samples for China's research on intangible cultural heritage, and promoted a fundamental transformation of the research paradigm from "static protection" to "living inheritance" and from "single discipline" to "interdisciplinary integration". At present, China's intangible cultural heritage research has formed a three-in-one achievement system of policy, practice and theory, and formed experience with Chinese characteristics in digital protection and productive protection, contributing Chinese wisdom to global intangible cultural heritage governance.

After more than 20 years of development, China's research on intangible cultural heritage has gradually grown into an academic field with multi-disciplinary participation and a high integration of theory and practice. At this stage, China's intangible cultural heritage research has shifted from the early stage of salvage recording to a new stage emphasizing systematic protection, digital empowerment, living inheritance and innovative transformation, initially forming a theoretical framework and practical path with Chinese characteristics.

With the rapid development of digital technology, 3D scanning, artificial intelligence, metaverse, big data, blockchain and other technologies have been widely used in intangible cultural heritage recording, inheritance, communication and intellectual property protection. Digital archives, virtual exhibitions and online inheritance platforms have effectively broken through time and space restrictions and enhanced the communication power and influence of intangible cultural heritage.

Intangible cultural heritage has become an important cultural resource for promoting sustainable development. China's experience in the protection and research of intangible cultural heritage can be summarized into three points: first, adhere to the core of living inheritance and integrate intangible cultural heritage into daily life and cultural identity; second, build a collaborative mechanism of government, folk and academia; third, pay attention to innovation and communication, and expand carriers and enrich forms on the basis of adhering to the core connotation.

At present, China's research on intangible cultural heritage is characterized by multi-disciplinary coordination and close integration of theory and practice, with focuses on the following aspects: diversified exploration of protection modes; in-depth intervention of digital technology; and systematic construction of archives and "intangible cultural heritage annals".

## II. Core Problems: Research Depth, System Connection and Disciplinary Construction

With the rapid accumulation of achievements, China's intangible cultural heritage research still faces several bottlenecks to be solved in the process of in-depth development.

First, insufficient research depth and theories lagging behind practice. A large number of studies still remain at the level of phenomenon description and countermeasure proposal, and there are few theoretically innovative achievements based on solid field investigations. How to move from experience summary to scientific governance and build an independent knowledge system is still a prominent bottleneck in theoretical research.

Second, unbalanced distribution of research fields. Existing studies mostly focus on "dominant intangible cultural heritage" such as traditional crafts and performing arts, while paying insufficient attention to "knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe" such as oral traditions, traditional calendars, medical knowledge and folk beliefs.

Third, backward disciplinary construction and incomplete talent training system. Although "intangible cultural heritage protection" has been included in the undergraduate professional catalogue, as an independent discipline, its knowledge system, research methods and academic paradigm are still in the exploratory stage, which restricts the systematic training of professionals.

Fourth, disconnection between research and practice. Some theoretical studies lack targeted empirical research and feasible solutions to practical dilemmas such as the aging of inheritors, low youth participation and intergenerational inheritance faults.

### III. Future Prospects: Systemic Safeguarding and the Construction of an Independent Knowledge System

Looking ahead, research on China's intangible cultural heritage will focus on achieving breakthroughs in the following directions, in line with major national strategies and the requirements of the "Opinions on Further Strengthening the Work of Protecting Intangible Cultural Heritage":

#### 1. Strengthening Systemic Thinking and Promoting Integrated Safeguarding

Research will move beyond a single-item perspective, paying greater attention to cultural ecological reserves and regional integrated safeguarding. It will explore the internal logic of the coordinated development of ICH with the natural environment, economy, and society. The roles and pathways of ICH in national strategies such as rural revitalization, coordinated regional development, ecological civilization construction, and common prosperity will become important research topics.

#### 2. Refining Theoretical Systems and Building an Independent Chinese Knowledge System

Academia will further clarify the basic framework of ICH theory, introducing perspectives from critical heritage studies to conduct in-depth reflection on safeguarding concepts, systems, and practices. It will promote the localization, transformation, and innovative development of the spirit of international conventions, ultimately forming an academic system and discourse system with Chinese characteristics, Chinese style, and Chinese manner.

#### 3. Defining Boundaries for Digital and Intelligent Application and Ethical Norms

With the deep integration of digital technology, future research will focus not only on "how to use technology" but also on "using it appropriately and ethically." Key academic topics will include safeguarding the core knowledge and cultural authenticity of ICH during high-precision recording and generative innovation, respecting the cultural rights of heritage bearers, and avoiding the erosion of cultural cores by technology.

#### 4. Accelerating the Development of ICH as an Academic Discipline and the Cultivation of Professional Talents

Discipline development and talent cultivation are regarded as top priorities for future progress. Academia will conduct systematic research on the independent disciplinary paradigm of ICH studies, multidisciplinary coordination mechanisms, and talent cultivation models. This aims to promote the establishment of cultural heritage as a discipline category or first-level discipline, cultivate interdisciplinary talents with theoretical knowledge, management skills, and innovative awareness, and provide a fundamental guarantee for the sustainable development of the ICH enterprise.

Overall, research on intangible cultural heritage in China stands at a new historical starting point. Building on past experience, and only by directly confronting practical challenges such as insufficient theoretical depth and an incomplete system, while strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration, systemic thinking, and critical reflection, can we ultimately build a knowledge system that not only explains Chinese practice but also contributes to global cultural governance.

Table 1 Current Status and Progress of Research on Intangible Cultural Heritage in China<sup>[9-18]</sup>

Research Dimension	Current Research Status	Core Progress (2020–2025)	Supporting References
Protection System & Institutional Construction	A four-level ICH list system has been established, with 276 cultural ecological protection zones and 3,998 national-level inheritors recognized; a sound legal system has been formed.	Upgrading of lists and protection zones, optimized inheritor management; policies focus on systematic protection and digitalization.	ICH Law, 14th Five-Year Plan, local regulations, reports of China ICH Protection Center
Disciplinary Development & Research Team	More than 100 universities offer related majors; 2,397 protection institutions with over 17,000 practitioners.	Interdisciplinarity highlighted; 10-year implementation of the ICH Training Program, with over 100,000 people trained.	Undergraduate Professional Catalog, achievements of ICH Training Program
Digital Protection	Digitalization has become a research hotspot; partial records of national-level inheritors completed and basic databases established.	Records of 2,290 national-level inheritors completed; multimodal databases and gene maps constructed; AI, VR/AR widely applied.	National ICH Digitalization Project, technical specifications, achievements of digital museums

Living Inheritance	Diversified inheritance modes; ICH entering campuses and communities has become regular.	Formation of a “family–community–institution” model; deepened training and improved youth participation.	Guidelines for “ICH into Campuses”, achievement collections of training programs, youth inheritor training projects
Value Assessment & Theoretical Construction	Value assessment as a core issue; four major protection concepts initially formed.	Release of value assessment blue book; establishment of a three-dimensional assessment system; improvement of theories with Chinese characteristics.	Value assessment blue book, national standard GB/T 42544-2023, theoretical research reports
Integration of Culture & Tourism and Industrial Development	Integration of ICH with culture, tourism and industry promoted; a number of ICH workshops and integrated tourism sites built.	Development of integrated scenarios; establishment of more than 12,900 ICH workshops; promotion of cross-border integration.	Documents on ICH-tourism integration, workshop construction reports, industrial economic reports, demonstration zones
International Communication	45 items inscribed on UNESCO lists; international influence gradually enhanced.	Promotion of inscription and “list transfer”; export of Chinese models; expansion of communication connotations.	UNESCO ICH Lists, International Communication Action Plan, Sino-foreign ICH forums and exchanges

**Note: The core content and data in Table 1 are compiled based on references [9] to [18].**

This paper systematically reviews the current status and recent progress of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) research in China from seven core dimensions, providing authoritative supporting evidence. Overall, China has established a relatively comprehensive institutional framework and disciplinary structure for ICH. Key focus areas include digital preservation, living inheritance, and the integration of culture and tourism. The theoretical understanding of ICH value continues to deepen, and its international influence is steadily growing. The research landscape is characterized by a clear understanding of the current situation, well-defined progress, and robust support.

#### IV. Current Research Hotspots

Closely aligned with the trends of the times and practical demands, current research on intangible cultural heritage in China has formed several core hotspots:

1. Living Inheritance and "Creative Transformation & Innovative Development" : A central research focus is how to sustain the contemporary vitality of ICH and achieve its creative transformation and innovative development.
2. Digital Technology and Standardized Application : This area focuses on technological practices and their ethical norms, including the application of VR/AR, digital collection and storage, and digital copyright protection.
3. Cross-Border Integration and Value Exploration : Research delves into the mechanisms and pathways of integrated development models such as "ICH + Cultural Tourism," "ICH + Rural Revitalization," and "ICH + Design."
4. Discipline Development and Talent Cultivation : Systematic research is being conducted on the independent disciplinary paradigm of ICH studies, multidisciplinary coordination mechanisms, and the dual-track talent cultivation model combining "academic education + master-apprentice inheritance."
5. International Communication and Discourse Construction : Studies examine how to innovate communication pathways to enhance the international influence of Chinese ICH and participate in rule-setting and dialogue concerning global ICH governance.

Current ICH research in China presents a landscape characterized by a "strong practice orientation, enhanced disciplinary support, and diverse research outcomes." However, it also exhibits significant shortcomings, presenting an overall situation where "achievements coexist with deficiencies."

First, the research foundation is continuously being strengthened. Since joining the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2004, China has established a classification and safeguarding system suited to its national conditions. The 45 UNESCO-listed ICH items and over 270 cultural ecological reserves provide a wealth of practical cases for study. An interdisciplinary academic community for ICH is gradually taking shape, with over a hundred universities offering related programs, thereby solidifying the disciplinary foundation.

Second, research hotspots closely align with the contemporary needs of the times. Research priorities are concentrated in areas such as living inheritance, "creative transformation & innovative development," ICH training workshops, ICH study tours, and the re-categorization of ICH items. These efforts are centered on practical issues like the cultivation of inheritors, the integration of culture and tourism, and using ICH to enrich local communities, demonstrating a high degree of alignment between theoretical research and practical demands.

Third, research outcomes are diverse and prominently applied. Achievements are not limited to academic papers and monographs but are also evident in the practical implementation of tens of thousands of ICH workshops, their contribution to employment and income growth, and rural revitalization. The social and economic value of this research is increasingly prominent.

Fourth, significant shortcomings persist in the research: The depth of research is insufficient, with more descriptive accounts than in-depth analyses, and theoretical innovation and scholarly construction require strengthening. The distribution of research focus is uneven, with mainstream ICH items receiving considerable attention while studies on niche, marginalized, or ethnic minority ICH remain weak. Research on key issues is not systematic, with a lack of forward-looking results concerning inheritor mechanisms, digitalization policies, and long-term mechanisms for living inheritance. The connection between research and practice is inadequate. There is still a notable deficiency in targeted empirical research and proposed solutions for practical challenges, such as bridging the gap between the master-apprentice system and modern education, the lack of youth participation, and difficulties in value transformation.

Within the landscape of global ICH governance, Chinese ICH research is rooted in local practice, highlights Chinese characteristics, and engages in international dialogue with an open vision, offering Chinese experience and Chinese solutions for the global safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.

**Table 2 Hot Issues in Current Research on Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage**

Category	Core Research Content	Typical Research Directions
Core Orientation	Sustain contemporary vitality, balance inheritance and development	Pathways for living inheritance; strategies for creative transformation and innovative development
Practical Issues	Focus on specific scenarios to solve practical inheritance problems	Optimization of training modes; research and education development; mechanism for ICH item list transfer
Integrated Development	Promote cross-border integration of ICH with multiple fields and explore diverse values	ICH + tourism, + rural revitalization, + technology, + daily life
Basic Support	Improve the supporting system and strengthen inheritance vitality	Selection and management of inheritors; echelon construction; "academic degree + master-apprentice" dual-track system
Theoretical System	Construct theories with Chinese characteristics and improve disciplinary development	Independent knowledge system; optimization of the disciplinary system of ICH studies
Digitalization	Application and norms of digital technologies in ICH protection and communication	VR/AR application; digital collection and storage; digital copyright protection
International Communication	Enhance international influence and promote intercultural mutual learning	Cross-cultural communication; international dialogue; international promotion of Chinese ICH

Current research on Chinese intangible cultural heritage has evolved into a multi-dimensional framework centered on living inheritance, supported by digitalization and cross-sector integration as dual engines, and oriented towards theoretical system construction and international outreach. Research foci have shifted from single-item preservation to systematic governance, addressing practical challenges such as inheritor cultivation and ICH item list transfer, while actively exploring value transformation through "ICH+" models. Concurrently, efforts are being made to construct an independent knowledge system with Chinese characteristics. Digitalization research is progressing from technological application toward ethical norms and value reconstruction, while international

communication aims to share Chinese ICH experiences globally, demonstrating the contemporary significance of Chinese culture through cross-civilization dialogue.

## V. Core Challenges

Amidst the rapid accumulation of achievements, Chinese ICH research, as it advances in depth, still faces several bottleneck issues that urgently need to be resolved.

### **1. Insufficient Research Depth, with Theory Lagging Behind Practice**

A significant portion of research remains at the level of phenomenological description and policy suggestion, with a scarcity of outcomes based on solid fieldwork that offer original theoretical contributions. Some studies tend to equate administratively assigned value directly with academic conclusions, lacking critical reflection on ICH as a complex cultural and social phenomenon. How to move from summarizing experience to constructing theory, thereby forming an independent Chinese knowledge system, stands as the greatest challenge currently facing theoretical research.

### **2. Uneven Distribution of Research Fields**

Existing research is overly concentrated on "tangible ICH" such as traditional crafts and performing arts, while paying insufficient attention to domains like oral traditions, traditional calendars, medical knowledge, and folk beliefs—areas categorized by UNESCO as "knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe." This bias, which prioritizes "technical skills over underlying principles," stems both from long-standing cultural cognitive habits and from the imperfect alignment between China's domestic ICH classification system and UNESCO's five domains. This has resulted in certain areas remaining under-researched or neglected for extended periods.

### **3. Lagging Discipline Development and an Imperfect Talent Cultivation System**

Although "Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding" has been included in the undergraduate program directory, its core knowledge system, research methodology, and academic paradigm as an independent discipline are still in an exploratory phase. The boundaries between ICH studies and adjacent disciplines like folklore and anthropology remain unclear. The integrated bachelor's-master's-doctoral talent cultivation chain has not been fully established, hindering the systematic development of interdisciplinary talents equipped with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

### **4. Partial Disconnect Between Research and Practice**

Some theoretical research fails to respond precisely and deeply to practical dilemmas such as the "aging of inheritors," "low youth participation," and "gaps in intergenerational transmission." The lack of targeted empirical studies and actionable solutions makes it difficult to effectively translate research findings into endogenous drivers for safeguarding practices.

## VI. Future Prospects

Standing at a new historical starting point, China's ICH endeavor is in a critical phase of transitioning from quantitative accumulation to qualitative enhancement, and from single-faceted protection to systemic governance. Future ICH research and development will present an overall trend characterized by "theoretical deepening, practical implementation, technological empowerment, and international integration."

### **(A) Research Level: Constructing an Independent Knowledge System and Leading Interdisciplinary Integration**

1. Theoretical Systematization and Localized Construction: Future research will place greater emphasis on scholarly depth, striving to build an independent Chinese knowledge system for ICH. By strengthening fieldwork and comparative studies, it aims to refine the Chinese principles of ICH transmission and development. Concurrently, it will introduce perspectives from critical heritage studies to reflectively reconstruct existing protection concepts and practices, thereby forming an academic paradigm with Chinese characteristics.

2. Balancing and Refining Research Fields: The current imbalance in research fields will be gradually addressed by increasing investment in neglected areas such as oral traditions, ICH of ethnic minorities, and traditional knowledge. In-depth empirical research will be conducted on key issues like the gap in inheritor generations and youth participation, providing a scientific basis for optimizing transmission models.

3. Bidirectional Empowerment through Digitalization: "Technology + Connotation": Digital research will shift from being "technology-driven" to "value-driven." Key priorities will include advancing the standardized construction of a national digital resource repository and conducting in-depth discussions on technological ethics and copyright protection in high-precision recording and intelligent restoration. This ensures that technology truly serves the translation and living transmission of cultural connotations.

**(B) Practice Level: Upholding Fundamentals and Innovating, Integrated Symbiosis, and Sustainable Transmission**

1. Rule of Law Guarantee and Modernization of Governance: Efforts will be accelerated to perfect the legal and regulatory system centered on the *Intangible Cultural Heritage Law* and to improve the four-tier protection mechanism, particularly by strengthening the weak links in grassroots protection. By reinforcing financial, personnel, and institutional guarantees, structural contradictions such as the aging of inheritors will be fundamentally alleviated.

2. A New Ecosystem for Living Inheritance Empowered by Digital Intelligence: Digitalization will be promoted throughout the entire process of protection, transmission, and dissemination, achieving full digital archiving of all national-level ICH items. Technologies like AI, VR/AR, and the metaverse will be utilized to create immersive experience scenarios and digital resource repositories, forming a closed-loop digital protection system encompassing "collection-storage-restoration-display-dissemination."

3. Value Transformation Pathways through Integrated Development: The "ICH+" model will be continuously deepened to cultivate influential ICH IP and industrial clusters. Efforts will focus on enhancing the scale and standardized operation of ICH workshops, exploring long-term mechanisms for the synergistic enhancement of ICH's cultural, economic, and social values.

4. New Patterns for Talent Echelons and International Communication: Support programs for young inheritors will be implemented to cultivate interdisciplinary talents proficient in skills, management, and innovation. Leveraging multi-level international exchange platforms and digital communication channels, the aim is to systematically tell China's ICH stories well, promote Chinese safeguarding experiences and academic paradigms globally, and highlight the unique charm of Chinese culture in the context of inter-civilization exchange and mutual learning.

In recent years, research on China's intangible cultural heritage has made significant progress across multiple dimensions, exhibiting distinct characteristics of "theoretical deepening, technological empowerment, and integrated innovation." Research focal points have mainly concentrated on the following areas:

Table 3 Current Status and Progress of Research on Intangible Cultural Heritage in China

Dimension	Core Direction	Specific Content & Objectives
I. Future Research Trends(Constructing Independent Knowledge System and Interdisciplinary Integration)	1. Systematic and Localized Theoretical Construction	Build an independent knowledge system; strengthen fieldwork and comparative research; introduce critical perspectives to reflect on protection practices.
	2. Two-Way Empowerment of Digital “Technology + Connotation”	Establish standardized digital databases; study technical ethics and copyright; translate cultural connotations through immersive experiences.
	3. Balanced and Refined Research Fields	Strengthen research in weak fields; focus on practical issues such as the inheritance gap and youth participation, and conduct empirical studies.
	4. Interdisciplinary Integration and Systematic Thinking	Promote interdisciplinary integration; emphasize holistic protection and coordination with national strategies.
	5. Participation in Global Governance and Enhancement of International Discourse Power	Participate in the formulation of international rules; innovate communication paths and upgrade ICH from symbols to brands.

II. Development & Practice Prospects(Integrity and Innovation, Symbiosis and Sustainable Inheritance)	1. Legal Protection and Modernized Governance	Improve regulations and the four-level protection mechanism; strengthen investment and talent support to solve the problem of inheritor shortage.
	2. Digital-Intelligent Empowered New Ecosystem for Living Inheritance	Achieve full coverage of digital archiving; use AI, VR/AR, and metaverse to build immersive scenarios and a closed-loop protection system.
	3. Value Transformation Path of Integrated Development	Deepen the “ICH +” model; cultivate IP and industrial clusters; improve the operation efficiency of ICH workshops to support rural revitalization.
	4. Talent Echelon and International Communication Pattern	Implement youth inheritor programs; build interdisciplinary talent teams; promote the overseas promotion of China’s ICH model and enhance international influence.

In summary, research on intangible cultural heritage in China is advancing towards the goals of theoretical systematization, interdisciplinary integration, and digital empowerment. Future efforts will focus on constructing a localized theoretical system, promoting digital preservation and ethical governance, balancing research fields, and enhancing international discourse power. At the practical level, priorities include strengthening legal guarantees, building a digital intelligence-driven inheritance ecosystem, exploring integrated development pathways, and cultivating professional talent teams—all aimed at achieving the living inheritance, innovative development, and international dissemination of ICH.

## VII. Conclusion

This paper provides a systematic review of the current state, research hotspots, challenges, and future directions of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) studies in China, leading to the following conclusions:

First, ICH research in China has completed a transformation from "salvage documentation" to "systemic safeguarding," developing a distinctive practical pathway and a comprehensive framework of achievements. This progress offers valuable insights for global ICH governance.

Second, while current research actively engages with contemporary priorities such as living inheritance and digital empowerment, it continues to grapple with critical challenges—including insufficient theoretical depth, uneven distribution across research domains, and lagging disciplinary development—that impede further advancement.

Third, looking ahead, the ICH field in China must be guided by the construction of an independent knowledge system, leveraged by digital intelligence technologies, supported by interdisciplinary integration and talent cultivation, and advanced through cross-sector synergy and international communication. These coordinated efforts are essential to systematically address transmission challenges. Ultimately, the goal is to achieve deep integration between research and practice while fostering mutual reinforcement between theory and application. By preserving core traditions while embracing innovation, China aims to ensure the sustainable transmission of ICH and contribute enduring Chinese wisdom and solutions to the safeguarding of global cultural diversity.

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