

# Exploring the Path of Inheritance, Innovation, and IP Development for Midu Lantern

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**Abstract:** Midu Lantern, an important genre of Yunnan lanterns, has a national-level intangible cultural heritage and possesses profound historical and cultural significance along with unique artistic charm. Through analyzing the historical origins, artistic characteristics, and current inheritance status of Midu Lantern, this paper explores strategies for its preservation, innovation, and IP-based development path. The study suggests that Midu Lantern should innovate and develop while preserving its traditional characteristics, based on inheriting traditional skills and combining modern technology with market demands. By creating an IP image, developing cultural and creative products, and organizing cultural activities, the popularity and influence of Midu Lantern can be enhanced, realizing its sustainable development in contemporary society.

**Keywords:** Midu Lantern; Inheritance and innovation; IP-based development; Cultural inheritance

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## 1. Introduction

Midu Lantern, a significant representative of Yunnan lanterns, boasts a long history, rich cultural connotations, and distinctive artistic appeal <sup>[1]</sup>. Originating in the Tang Dynasty and forming during the Ming and Qing Dynasties, it has evolved into a cultural treasure in the Midu region and even the entire Yunnan area <sup>[2]</sup>. Beloved by the masses for its elegant melodies, exquisite performances, diverse dance forms, and unique folk cultural connotations, Midu Lantern faces challenges of inheritance and market competition in the rapidly developing modern society. Therefore, how to preserve, innovate, and promote the IP-based development of Midu Lantern has become an urgent issue to address.

## 2. Overview of Midu Lantern

### 2.1. Historical origins

The origins of Midu Lantern can be traced back to the Tang Dynasty <sup>[3]</sup>. Historical records indicate lantern performances

in the Midu region during that period. In the Ming and Qing Dynasties, Midu Lantern gradually developed into a unique style of local opera, absorbing musical, dance, and folk cultural elements from local ethnic groups like the Yi and Bai, forming a rich and colorful artistic form<sup>[4]</sup>. In 2008, Midu Lantern was listed in the second batch of national intangible cultural heritage protection lists by the State Council, becoming an essential component of traditional Chinese culture<sup>[5]</sup>.

## **2.2. Artistic characteristics**

### **2.2.1. Diversified performance forms**

Midu Lantern performances mainly include small singing, big singing, and excerpted plays. Small singing focuses on singing, with a bright rhythm and beautiful melody; big singing incorporates dance and performance elements based on small singing, making the form more diverse and colorful; excerpted plays are theatrical performances with complete storylines, vividly showcasing the characters and emotional worlds through the exquisite performances of actors.

### **2.2.2. Unique musical singing style**

The musical singing style of Midu Lanterns is dominated by Zheng and Yu modes, with a beautiful melody, bright rhythm, and strong local characteristics<sup>[6]</sup>. Its singing style integrates elements of Central Plains music, Jiangnan tunes, and local ethnic music, forming a unique musical genre. Simultaneously, Midu Lantern singing emphasizes rhythm variations and melody fluctuations, expressing different emotions and artistic conceptions through changes in sound pitch, strength, and speed.

### **2.2.3. Graceful dance moves**

The dance moves of Midu Lanterns possess unique artistic charm. These moves integrate dance elements from the Han, Yi, and Bai ethnic groups, resulting in a rich and varied dance form. Midu Lantern dance moves emphasize bodily coordination and rhythmic sense, expressing different emotions and artistic conceptions through variations in body posture, gestures, and steps. Additionally, these dance moves involve certain technical skills, such as walking on stilts, playing with dragon lanterns, and lion dancing, which not only enhance the performance's visual appeal but also reflect the folk art characteristics of Midu Lanterns.

### **2.2.4. Rich folk cultural connotation**

Midu Lantern is an essential component of the folk culture in the Midu region, containing rich folklore connotations<sup>[7]</sup>. Midu Lantern performances are often combined with local festivals, temple gatherings, and other folklore activities, becoming an important way for people to express blessings and pray for peace. Simultaneously, the lyrics and performance content of Midu Lanterns reflects the local people's lifestyle, emotions, and values, exhibiting strong local flavor and cultural heritage.

## **2.3. Current inheritance status**

Despite its profound historical and cultural heritage and unique artistic charm, the inheritance of Midu Lanterns faces challenges and difficulties in the rapidly developing modern society. The specific manifestations are as follows.

### **2.3.1. Limited Inheritance Subjects**

The inheritance of Midu Lanterns mainly relies on a few professional actors and folk artists, resulting in limited inheritance subjects<sup>[8]</sup>. Simultaneously, due to the limited number of professional actors and folk artists, their inheritance capabilities and levels vary, making it difficult to meet the needs of Midu Lantern inheritance, wider promotion, and dissemination.

### **2.3.2. Traditional inheritance methods**

Midu Lantern inheritance is primarily transmitted through apprenticeship and oral tradition<sup>[9]</sup>. Although this inheritance method ensures the traditional skills and cultural connotations of Midu Lanterns are passed down, it also suffers from issues such as low inheritance efficiency and narrow inheritance scope. Meanwhile, due to the fast-paced development of modern society, this traditional inheritance method has become difficult to adapt to the diverse needs of the times, requiring innovation and reform.

### **2.3.3. Weak market competitiveness**

In the modern cultural market competition, Midu Lanterns face competition from various cultural forms such as movies, television, and the internet, resulting in weak market competitiveness. Simultaneously, due to limited funds for external promotion, the popularity and influence of Midu Lanterns are relatively limited nationwide, making it difficult to attract more external audiences and investors' attention.

## **3. Strategies for the inheritance and innovation of Midu Lanterns**

### **3.1. Strengthening the cultivation of inheritance subjects**

#### **3.1.1. Enhancing school education**

Schools are important fronts for inheriting Midu Lanterns, and educational work related to Midu Lanterns should be strengthened. In school education, especially in basic education, courses related to Midu Lanterns should be offered to allow students to understand and become familiar with the historical origins, artistic characteristics, and cultural connotations of Midu Lanterns. This will cultivate their interest and love for Midu Lanterns, thereby enhancing cultural confidence. Simultaneously, students should be organized to participate in Midu Lantern performances and practical activities at fixed locations and times to improve their performance skills and practical abilities.

#### **3.1.2. Cultivating folk artists**

Folk artists are a crucial force in the inheritance of Midu Lanterns, and their cultivation and support should be strengthened. Annual training sessions, seminars, and other activities should be organized to enhance the performance skills and creative abilities of folk artists. Additionally, a digital archive of folk artists should be established to record and preserve their skills and representative works, providing sustainable talent support for the inheritance and development of Midu Lanterns.

#### **3.1.3. Encouraging young people to participate**

Young people are the future and hope of Midu Lantern inheritance. Local governments and relevant academic associations should encourage young people to participate in the inheritance and innovation of Midu Lanterns. By organizing diverse cultural activities that appeal to young people at fixed times every year, more local and external young people can be attracted to focus on Midu Lanterns. Simultaneously, more performance opportunities and development spaces should be provided for young people, allowing them to leverage their advantages and expertise in the process of inheriting and innovating Midu Lanterns.

### **3.2. Innovating inheritance methods**

#### **3.2.1. Utilizing modern technological means**

Modern technological means provide new opportunities and platforms for the inheritance and innovation of Midu

Lanterns. Technologies such as Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) can be utilized to enrich the experience and effects of Midu Lantern performances and displays. For instance, VR technology can immerse audiences in the performance scene of Midu Lanterns, enhancing their sense of participation and experience.

### **3.2.2. Conducting cross-border cooperation**

Midu Lanterns should closely cooperate with other art forms and cultural industries to expand their inheritance and development space. For example, collaborations can be established with dance, music, and other art forms to create more diverse and enriching new artistic works. Simultaneously, cooperation can be sought with cultural industries such as tourism, film and television, and animation to develop a series of cultural products and tourism projects featuring Midu Lanterns.

### **3.2.3. Promoting cultural innovation**

Based on inheriting the traditional skills of Midu Lanterns, cultural innovation should be continuously promoted to inject new vitality and connotation into Midu Lanterns. While preserving traditional characteristics, innovations and reforms can be made to the performance forms, musical singing styles, dance moves, and other aspects of Midu Lanterns, taking into account the needs and aesthetic concepts of modern society. This will result in the creation of Midu Lantern works that better align with contemporary aesthetic characteristics. Simultaneously, Midu Lanterns can be combined with hot topics and cultural themes in contemporary society to produce a batch of Midu Lantern works with significant meaning for the times.

## **3.3. Strengthening brand building**

### **3.3.1. Creating a brand image**

The brand image is a crucial aspect of Midu Lantern brand building, and emphasis should be placed on creating a brand image that reflects the characteristics of Midu Lanterns. This can be achieved by designing unique brand logos, clothing, props, and other elements to create a visual effect that embodies the essence of Midu Lanterns. Simultaneously, brand activities and promotional materials can be organized to enhance the brand awareness and influence of Midu Lanterns.

### **3.3.2. Reinforcing brand promotion**

Brand promotion is a vital means of building the Midu Lantern brand, and efforts should be intensified in this regard. Television, newspapers, the internet, and other media platforms can be utilized for extensive promotional coverage of Midu Lanterns. Additionally, organizing Midu Lantern cultural festivals and participating in domestic and international traditional cultural exchange activities can expand the popularity and influence of Midu Lanterns.

### **3.3.3. Protecting brand intellectual property**

Protecting brand intellectual property is a critical aspect of Midu Lantern brand building, and efforts should be made to strengthen this protection. This can be achieved by applying for trademarks, patents, and other forms of intellectual property protection for Midu Lanterns. Simultaneously, it is essential to strengthen the management and supervision of the Midu Lantern brand to prevent brand infringement and counterfeiting.

## **4. Exploring the IP path of Midu Lantern**

### **4.1. Clear IP positioning**

#### **4.1.1. Cultural positioning**

As an art form with a profound historical and cultural heritage, the IP positioning of Midu Lantern should highlight its cultural characteristics. By combining the cultural connotations of Midu Lantern with the values of modern society, a cultural IP with contemporary characteristics can be created. For example, themes such as love, friendship, and family in Midu Lantern can be integrated with the emotional needs of modern society to create cultural works that evoke emotional resonance.

#### **4.1.2. Regional positioning**

Midu Lantern is a cultural treasure of the Midu region, and its IP positioning should emphasize regional characteristics. By combining the Midu Lantern with natural scenery, folk culture, and other elements of the Midu area, a cultural IP with regional features can be forged. For instance, elements like the rural scenery and the Ancient Tea Horse Road in Midu can be integrated with Midu Lantern to produce cultural works that reflect the region's uniqueness.

#### **4.1.3. Artistic positioning**

Midu Lantern, with its beautiful singing, exquisite performances, rich dance forms, and unique folk culture connotations, possesses high artistic value. Its IP positioning should accentuate these artistic qualities. By merging the artistic charm of Midu Lantern with modern artistic design concepts, a culturally valuable IP can be shaped. For example, elements of Midu Lantern's singing, acting, and dance can be combined with modern music, dance, theater, and other art forms to create culturally significant works.

## **4.2. Developing IP products**

### **4.2.1. Cultural and creative product development**

Cultural and creative products are crucial carriers for the IP development of Midu Lantern. A series of cultural and creative products featuring Midu Lantern can be developed, such as clothing, accessories, toys, stationery, and water bottles. These products not only satisfy consumers' aesthetic needs but also spread the cultural connotations of Midu Lantern to a broader audience.

### **4.2.2. Digital product development**

Digital products represent a significant trend in the IP development of Midu Lantern. Digital products featuring Midu Lantern, such as mobile games, anime, movies, and other digital content, can be created. These not only cater to consumers' entertainment needs but also promote and disseminate the cultural essence of Midu Lantern more widely.

### **4.2.3. Tourism product development**

Tourism products are vital for the IP advancement of Midu Lantern. Tourism products that highlight Midu Lantern, such as cultural tourism routes, attractions, and performances (both online and offline), can be developed. These not only meet tourists' needs but also spread the cultural message of Midu Lantern to the outside world.

## **4.3. Forging the IP industry chain**

### **4.3.1. Creation and production**

The creation and production phase is the foundation for the IP development of Midu Lantern. Efforts should be

intensified in creating and producing Midu Lantern works. Professional creative teams can be invited and organized to conduct field research, deeply exploring more cultural and artistic features of Midu Lantern, and creating works that reflect contemporary characteristics and artistic value. Simultaneously, copyright protection for Midu Lantern works should be strengthened to prevent theft and infringement.

#### **4.3.2. Brand promotion**

Brand promotion is a critical aspect of Midu Lantern's IP advancement. Multi-channel brand promotion efforts should be intensified. Television, newspapers, the internet, and other media platforms can be utilized for publicity and reporting on Midu Lantern. Additionally, organizing Midu Lantern cultural festivals and participating in domestic and international cultural exchange activities can expand the popularity and influence of Midu Lantern both domestically and internationally.

#### **4.3.3. Market sales**

The market sales segment is a vital aspect of Midu Lantern's IP progress. Market sales efforts for Midu Lantern should be bolstered. A comprehensive marketing system can be established, enhancing sales channel development for Midu Lantern products. Simultaneously, consumer demand analysis should be strengthened to develop Midu Lantern products that cater to different age groups, improving the products' market competitiveness.

### **4.4. Enhancing IP operation and management**

#### **4.4.1. Talent cultivation**

Talent is a crucial pillar for the IP advancement of Midu Lantern. Efforts should be made to cultivate talents in IP operation and management. Training courses, seminars, and advanced studies can be organized to enhance the professional quality and business capabilities of IP operation and management talents. Simultaneously, efforts should be made to attract and cultivate more outstanding talents to join the team for the IP development of Midu Lantern.

#### **4.4.2. Brand management**

Brand management is a vital aspect of Midu Lantern's IP progress. Management efforts for the brand should be intensified. A comprehensive brand management system can be established, strengthening the management of trademarks, patents, copyrights, and other aspects of the brand. Additionally, brand image building, promotion, and publicity should be enhanced to increase brand awareness and influence.

#### **4.4.3. Risk management**

Risk management is a crucial part of Midu Lantern's IP advancement. Risk assessment and management during the IP development process should be strengthened. A comprehensive risk assessment system can be established to conduct periodic evaluations and continuous analysis of potential risks during the IP development process. Simultaneously, risk warning and response measures should be strengthened to timely adopt effective measures to address risks and minimize risk losses.

## **5. Conclusion**

As an integral part of traditional Chinese culture, the Midu Lantern possesses a profound historical and cultural heritage and unique artistic charm. In the rapidly developing modern society, Midu Lantern faces challenges such as

inheritance difficulties and market competition. Therefore, it is imperative to strengthen the inheritance, innovation, and IP development of Midu Lantern. Measures such as enhancing the cultivation of inheritance subjects, innovating inheritance methods, strengthening brand building, clarifying IP positioning, developing IP products, forging the IP industry chain, and reinforcing IP operation and management should be taken to promote the sustainable development of Midu Lantern in contemporary society. Simultaneously, continuous protection and inheritance of the Midu Lantern should be strengthened, allowing this unique traditional culture to continue to radiate new vitality and dynamism in the new era.

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