

Shenyang Intangible Cultural Heritage Tourism Development Analysis

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Abstract

Based on a detailed study of the intangible cultural heritage in Shenyang this article analyzes the historical, artistic, recreational and social values of the heritage. It also discusses the relationship and interaction between cultural heritage protection and tourism development in Shenyang, and provides a reference point beneficial to them both.

Key words: Shenyang; Intangible cultural heritage; Tourism; Value

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1. INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

According to the definition of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the “Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural heritage”: “Intangible cultural heritage means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in

response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.” In the 2005 issue of “Statement of People’s Republic China State Council General Office on Supporting Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection”, the General Office defines intangible cultural heritage as: traditional cultural representations (e.g. folk activities, performing arts, traditional knowledge and skills and associated containers, instruments, objects and artifacts) and cultural spaces transmitted from generation to generation of people of all ethnicities and closely related to everyday life activities. The definition of intangible cultural heritage has a broad coverage and rich implications; it is a unique cultural build embodied in people and individuals.

2. VALUE ANALYSIS OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN SHENYANG

Shenyang is rich in intangible cultural heritage. At present it has eight (8) national-level intangible cultural heritage projects: that is, the eight projects of Tan-Zhenshan folk tales, Tang-style Peking Opera, Han-Huaxiao Ping Opera, Dongbei Drum Singing, Laolongkou Chinese Spirits brewing techniques, He-Junyou Xibo ethnic group folk tales, traditional crafting techniques (wood coating) in northeastern antique buildings and traditional local opera Fengtian Laozi Singing. The intangible cultural heritage in Shenyang represents the unique cultural and historical development and has special values and significance for the cultural and social developments of Shenyang. Its multi-dimensioned, multi-layered value system is embodied in the following aspects:

2.1 Historical Value

The intangible cultural heritage in Shenyang rose from particular historical conditions and its transmission and

preservation in its long developments has endured the vicissitudes of time. It embodies rich history, reflects change and transmission in culture and history, and bears witness to the exchange between modernity and tradition. We can understand different historical development in production, social organization, lifestyle and social conventions, customs and moral standards. For example, many folk tales concern ethnicity and social history and provide invaluable historical data that reveal the spirits of Shenyang in the past and compensate for the lacking in historical archives. The academic and historical values of He-Junyou Boxi ethnic group folk tales will fill in the blanks in the historical research of Boxi ethnic group development. The Hui drum and stilt walk is an ethnic dance characteristic of Shenyang region and Hui tradition. It was brought in to Shenyang, and then developed its roots, during the years of Guangxu, Qing Dynasty, through the Hui migrants originating in Hebei and the surrounding area; it carries historical values in cultural change and transmission and reflects the historical development of arts in Shenyang and the cultural exchange between the middle and northeastern region.

2.2 Artistic Value

Intangible cultural heritage includes performance arts, oral history, customs, costumes, and traditional crafts, all of which are the wisdom of working-class individuals of different eras and different ethnicities; they reveal the spiritual life, creativity in arts and aesthetics of people or communities; they are of high artistic and aesthetic values. Further, intangible cultural heritage hosts a large quantity of raw materials and prototypes for artistic creation; it is also inexhaustible resources for arts and creations.

Among the intangible cultural heritage in Shenyang, local crafts have a great diversity and unique features that have mostly developed out of convenience or aesthetic interests. Many local art forms such as paper cutting and embroidery have a long and marvelous tradition. Local performing arts also have important artistic values. Saman Singing, also called Han-Soldier Singing, as an example, was a ritual among the Han soldiers, who burned incense for ancestral worship; this local artistic form that integrates lyric, music, dance and ethnic cultural beliefs has a wide spread and long history in the north of Shenyang region; it articulates the regional feature and has a high artistic value. The drum-and-stilt-walk of Hui ethnic group is developed through several generations of artists and integrates Han and Hui dance vocabulary, entertains to the audiences of both the high and popular arts in costume and face painting, representation form, dance style and body movement. The folk tales of Man ethnic group are a development through a long period of creation and transmission embedded in daily work and life; the storytelling reflects an organic unison of

fantasy and realism; the characters thus created are industrious, courageous, optimistic and wise, featuring the characteristics and style of Man ethnic group.

2.3 Recreational Value

Recreation entertains the mind. It is a spiritual transcendence of human beings from pursuing material gratification to immaterial pleasure. Recreation is a state of life of modern individuals; it emphasizes initiative, voluntary, self-expression, and relaxation. Intangible cultural heritage is a pillar in the realm of cultural recreational activities. The protection and transmission of Shenyang's intangible cultural heritage become truly effective only when the heritage enters the everyday life of modern individuals; it acquires a perpetual life power when it turns into a major ingredient in recreations. Only so, the protection, transmission and proper use can give rise to a virtuous circle, and also generate great economic and social benefits and become a spiritual support for the various needs and pursuits in cultural recreations.

A number of projects among the intangible cultural heritage in Shenyang have high recreational values. Folk tales and local legends themselves are products of recreational activities. Many stories for years have greatly entertained the audience. The performance site for Dongbei Drum Singing is a special entertainment venue; its state-of-art entertainment facilities have increasingly been drawing attention. Lantern Riddles is also a local entertaining activity that enhances mental activities and brings joys to life, as if a flavorful condiment in the life of leisure. The recreational value of folk crafts has an expression in the hands-on experience of participating in the process of creating them; people are always be eager to try it out themselves, to have a memorable experience, as try-it-out-yourself has been gaining popularity of the various recreational means. It can also be looked at as a unique manner for the transmission of folk crafts. Shenyang Guanshi Shadow Play, a branch of the Play in the north of China, has over a hundred years of history. It is mainly distributed in the north of Shenyang; as a compressive art form that integrates painting, singing and dancing, it entertains a wide-ranging audience. To date, Guanshi Shadow Play is performed by its fourth generation. Grabbing Galaha is a traditional game that has high recreational value; even now the original flavor of the instruments and rules has well been kept.

2.4 Social Value

The social value of Shenyang's intangible cultural heritage refers to the ones in addition to the historical, artistic and recreational values discussed above, especially its values in science and education. Intangible cultural heritage contains rich historical and scientific knowledge, traditional techniques and state-of-art collections; it is an important knowledge for education both in and outside school; its moral principles and behavioral standards are

great lessons for today's youth to learn: how to behave and treat others and build a good social environment. Teachings about intangible cultural heritage will help students better understand Chinese culture, enhance their sense of pride and love about their homeland. Therefore, intangible cultural heritage has the capacity for character building and improving education. It has a high educational value. For example, the "Hui Jia" ceremony among Chaoxian ethnic group is held by the offspring on the 60th birthday of their elders to express their gratitude for being brought up. During the birthday banquet, the elders, in traditional dress, accept greetings and toasting. Singing and dancing accompany the entire ceremony, which is not only rich in local traditions but also educational.

In contrast to material heritage, intangible cultural heritage is more interdisciplinary and comprehensive in regard to culture and knowledge. As a product of history, it reflects and records production, development of science and technology, and human creativity and knowledge at different historical times; it is a reservoir for future generations to attain technological information. Many intangible cultural heritages contain, to a certain level, factors and ingredients pertaining to science, and therefore, have a high scientific value. The brewing techniques of Laolongkou Chinese spirits and the unique stuffing techniques in making Laobian dumplings, for example, are of scientific research value; they serve as a base for future innovation.

3. INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN SHENYANG IS IMPORTANT RESOURCES FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Intangible cultural heritage has rich content; the ethnic and geographical information it contains have particular attractions: they convey cultural characteristics, but also provide inexhaustible resources for the development of cultural industry.

Tourism that features intangible cultural heritage focuses on vacationing and personal experience with the heritage; it is a higher form of tourism in regard to intangible cultural heritage. The goal of the travelers is to experience a different lifestyle or existence in the cultural atmosphere developed in the intangible heritage, while they seek to relax, to restore health and energy; it is a traveling experience more interesting and culturally more meaningful than the usual sightseeing. Given its recreational value, especially as a tourist attraction of cultural depth and salience, at present, many sites have oriented intangible cultural heritage to the development of tourism and generated notable economic profits. Cultural tourism has become an important part of the world's economy and tourism industry; tourism development is inevitable either in terms of the protection and

transmission of intangible cultural heritage or the demands of the tourist market.

3.1 The Diversity and Local Features of Shenyang's Intangible Cultural Heritage Will Increase the Attraction of Tourism Resources in Shenyang Region

Resources for tourism are the premise and foundation for tourism economy; for the development of tourism industry, resources are the foundation and attraction is the key. As a type of cultural resources, intangible cultural heritage has a very important role in tourism resources; to the tourists, it casts strong appeal; to the development of tourism economy, it will play an important part. The diversity and local features of intangible cultural heritage will increase the appeal of the tourism resources of the region. Proper use and development of these resources will certainly bring numerous attractions to the industry and generate great profits.

Based on domestic and overseas experiences in tourism development, traditional crafting techniques and folk cultural practices can be performed at sightseeing sites, museums, travel exhibitions and trade fairs; folk artists or artisans can have exclusive shows on sightseeing spots: at Shenyang International Horticulture Expo, for example, Caishi Cycling can be performed, the world's only cycling that takes places on the interior of a wooden barrel or a ball, a riveting performance that combines thrills and skills, sports and acrobatics. The development of tourist products can bring in local features and artistic contents such as the paper cutting of Man ethnic group, to enhance the cultural significance, memorability and practical use of souvenirs, to make livelier the traveling experience and increase the product quality.

3.2 The Cultural Significance of Shenyang's Intangible Cultural Heritage Makes It Possible for Deeper Development of Tourist Products

The intangible cultural heritage of Shenyang belongs to the higher-end tourism resources; it has great capacity for further development. The potentials of intangible cultural heritage for transmission and regeneration provide us an ample space for perfection, imagination and innovation. Its cultural significance in Shenyang, in this sense, can be put to proper use, to make possible for tourism development on a deeper level. For example, the Shenyang's winter tour can bring in Baiqingzhai's Suona playing and Dongling folk tales and other intangible cultural heritage projects; the Qipanshan tour can be integrated with Manchu Han Imperial Feast. Rural tours can also be added with heritage projects rich in regional or cultural traditions, such as Xinmin's Farmer's Delight, or Faku Singing-Dancing Duet. These tourist products, as results of a deeper development of tourism, enrich traveling experiences, keep travelers staying longer, and facilitate the transmission and innovation of intangible cultural heritage.

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