

The Theory and Practice of Building a "City of Museums" : A Case Study on Beijing

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Abstract: This paper discusses the theory and practice of building a "city of museums", taking Beijing, the capital of China, as an example, and analyzes the advantages and challenges of the mission. It puts forward the principles and paths of building "city of museums", such as overall planning, administrative coordination, diversity and uniqueness, humanistic care, localized education and international exchange.

Keywords: City of Museums; Beijing; Chinese Museums

Introduction

A "city of museums" is a city development model based on museums, a city cultural brand that integrates various elements of the city's history, culture, art, etc., And a cultural symbol that shows the city's spirit and style with museums as the carrier. Building a "city of museums" can not only enhance the city's cultural taste and image, but also enhance the city's innovating vitality, meet the peoples growing spiritual and cultural needs. China is the country with long history and splendid culture, with rich cultural resources. By the end of 2022, there are 56 world heritage sites in China, of which 38 are world cultural heritage sites. These world cultural heritage sites are mostly distributed in China's historical and cultural cities, such as Beijing, Xian, Nanjing, Luoyang, etc. The current "city of museums" construction in China is based on these cities. Beijing, as the capital and cultural center of China, is deemed as an ideal place to build a "city of museums".

1. The advantages of Beijing in building a "city of museums".

Beijing has 7 world cultural heritage sites, 3840 sites of immovable cultural heritage, 5.01 million (sets) of state-owned cultural objects, and 103 national intangible cultural heritage projects. These heritage sites and intangible cultural heritage not only construct the city's orderly texture, but also shape the city's profound and inclusive core value, with unique conditions and advantages for building a city of museums. According to the Chinese Museums Annual Report 2022, Beijing currently has 204 museums of various types, with an average of more than 600 exhibitions per year, and an annual average of more than 50 million visitors, forming a multi-dimensional "museum encyclopedia", with a breadth, density and depth that are isis in the country. In addition to the hard power, Beijing also has a soft environment and basic conditions for museum developing, such as an active cultural and art market, a large number of higher education institutions with museum studies, and highly-educated citizens. These factors provide a solid foundation and broad space for the city of museums construction in Beijing.

2. Challenges and problems in building Beijing a "city of museums"

Although Beijing has obvious advantages in building a city of museums, it cannot ignore the existing problems and challenges.

2.1 The imbalance between the quantity and quality of museums

At present, the distribution of various types of museums in Beijing urban area is uneven. There is a lack of museums in some

areas and fields, while some existing museums have problems such as The management of irregular collections, outdated exhibition design, and lack of service functions.

2.2 The inconsistency between museums and urban functions

Beijing, as the capital, has its special features and complexity in politics, economy, society and other aspects. There are problems to be solved such as how to protect its heritage while promoting the urban modernization construction; how to maintain the ecological environment while improving the urban core functions; and how to promote the national culture while strengthening the international communication, etc.

2.3 The in-adaptability between museums and social development.

With the improvement of peoples living and education standards, the public's demand for museums is not only for quantity and variety, but also for quality and service. How to enhance the marketization and internationalization of museums on the basis of adhering to the public welfare and professionalism of museums; how to improve the interactivity and visiting experience of museums on the basis of maintaining the authority and academic value of museums; how to achieve diversity and innovation on the basis of inheriting the tradition and original characteristics of museums are the problems that need to be explored and solved.

3. Principles and paths to follow in building Beijing a "city of museums"

Building a city of museums is a systematic project that requires following principles and paths.

3.1 There should be an overall development plan

At present, China does not have specific laws and regulations for the construction of a city of museums, nor does it have specific financial input and support mechanisms. This is unfavorable for the promotion and improvement of conducting the construction. Therefore, while formulating the construction plan, relevant local regulations should also be issued as soon as possible, clarifying the main responsibilities, rights and obligations, management mechanisms, supervision methods and other concerns of building the city of museums, as well as providing legal protection for the project.

3.2 A smooth administrative coordination system should be established

The resource allocation and the interesting relationship between different levels and types of museums should be balanced. Among Beijing's museums, there are differences and conflicts in resource allocation, interest demands, development goals and other aspects. A special leading team or the working committee for the construction of city of museums should be established, taking responsibility for coordinating all aspects of work and solving problems in a timely manner.

3.3 Efforts should be made to highlight the diversity and uniqueness of the city, and avoid resemblance

The construction of city of museums is the unity of traditional cultural heritage and modern space. Through the creation of city of museums, not only the city's historical heritage, cultural connotation, and cultural aura should be displayed, but also the unique style and innovation vitality should be shaped. The differences and characteristics of regional cultures should be fully respected and reflected, so as a city with distinctive personalities and styles should be created. For example, China's ancient capitals throughout history such as Beijing, Xian, Luoyang, and coastal cities such as Shenzhen, Chaozhou, Dongguan, etc., Should have differentiated development in the content and style while building the city of museums. To be specific, Suzhou emphasizes the positioning of "Wu culture" (a regional traditional culture), while Yanan utilizes its established cultural heritage protection and promotion zone to focus on its modern historical culture, which is commendable. City administrators should find their own positioning and advantages according to the historical background, cultural tradition, social situation, and other factors of their regions, and create the city with local features and globalized standards.

3.4 Attention should be paid to the key element of people

The fundamental basis of the constructing city of museums is the recognition, love and appreciation of the city's history and cultural value by the citizens, and their generally high taste and enthusiasm for cultural development. Therefore, the construction of the city must focus on the key element of people. In addition to professional archaeologists and museum experts, there should also be a group of social celebrities who pay attention to museum undertakings and enthusiastically promote museum culture. Various media platforms and social networks should be fully utilized to strengthen the publicity and promotion of the city construction, and improve the public's awareness and participation. Various forms of public education and cultural activities should be carried out to enhance the public's cultural interest and aesthetic ability. The public should also be encouraged and supported to participate in the volunteer service and social donation of the city construction, and cultivate the public's sense of cultural responsibility and honor.

3.5 From the perspective of providing delivering exemplary public cultural services , improve localized education and communications

The construction of city of museums is to meet the peoples growing spiritual and cultural needs, and improve the peoples well-being and sense of gain. Therefore, during the construction of the city, we should not only pay attention to the hardware facilities, but also to the soft services. We should take museums as public cultural service platforms, and provide rich, high-quality and efficient cultural products and services for the general public. Museums should also be regarded as community cultural centers, keep close contact with local residents, institutions and organizations, and carry out specialized and attractive activities.

3.6 An international vision should be required, and the exchange and cooperation with international counterparts strengthening

Beijing and the major provincial capital cities in China should take the construction of domestic leading museums with international influence as a central task, strengthen the exchange and cooperation with international counterparts, display the features and style of Chinese museums, spread the spirit and value of Chinese culture, and promote the mutual understanding and respect of different civilizations. At the same time, we should also take the city as the main body, actively participate in the activities carried out by museums overseas, and international associations or organizations of museums, during which learn from incorporating cutting-edge international concepts and experiences. Also, the cities should actively carry out international cooperation projects and exchange exhibitions, promote the museum collaborations with countries and regions along the "Belt and Road" (the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road proposed by China), and jointly facilitate the formulation of international rules and standards in the field of cultural heritage protection and utilization.

Conclusion

"City of museums" is a city cultural development model, a city cultural brand that integrates museums and various aspects of the city's history, culture, art, economy, society, etc., And a city cultural symbol that shows the city's spirit and style with museums as the carrier. Building a city of museums can not only enhance the city's cultural taste and image, but also enhance the city's innovating vitality, meet the peoples growing spiritual and cultural needs, and promote the city's sustainable development. Beijing, as the capital and cultural center of China, has a rich culture and museum resources, with other advantages and conditions for building a city of museums. Also it faces certain challenges and difficulties. This paper, from the theoretical and practical perspectives, taking Beijing as an example, analyzes the current situation and problems in the construction of cities of museums in China. It further puts forward some principles and paths, aim at providing some references and inspiration for city administrators, with the goal of Beijing becoming an international city of museums, which showcases the charm and confidence of Chinese culture.

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