

Ethnic Exchanges, Exchanges and Blending in the Festival Cultural Space: A Case Study of the Yi Torch Festival in Liangshan, Sichuan

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Abstract: With the continuous development of the times and the integration of culture, the Yi Torch Festival has gradually been recognized and understood. In the tide of the development of the times, the Yi Torch Festival has undergone important changes in many aspects such as the number of participants, the content of the festival, and the festival rituals, and the cultural space of the festival has been expanded in a certain form. The Yi Torch Festival is not only the unique culture of the Yi nationality, but also the common cultural treasure of Chinese culture, which has a certain role in promoting cultural exchanges among all ethnic groups.

Keywords: Cultural space; Ethnic exchanges ; Exchanges and blending ; Torch Festival

Introduction:

The Yi Torch Festival is an important traditional cultural festival, which is the embodiment of China's traditional customs and is of great significance in carrying forward China's traditional culture. With the rapid development of the times, the expression of the Yi Torch Festival has also shown certain changes, from the limited village activities in the past to the regional group activities, which can expand the influence of the Yi Torch Festival to a certain extent while promoting the exchanges and exchanges of various ethnic groups. Therefore, it is necessary to further expand the influence of the Yi Torch Festival, so as to strengthen ethnic exchanges and exchanges.

1. The evolution of the Torch Festival

Before the liberation of Liangshan, based on the special geographical location and climatic factors of Liangshan, the scope of the Yi Torch Festival was relatively limited, and it was only held in a small range in the Yi villages. However, with the implementation of the policy of the ethnic autonomous region, the social function of the Yi Torch Festival is gradually changing and developing. Before 1993, the Yi Torch Festival was held in Yi villages, lacking a certain degree of organization, and most of the Yi people participated in it, and few outsiders participated. Nowadays, the torch festival of the Yi nationality has broken the limitations of the previous holding area, and the county government has called for the active participation of township organizations at all levels, showing a certain degree of official organization. Under the role of official organization and promotion, the torch festival of the Yi nationality has gradually been recognized by the Chinese people, and has gone abroad to enjoy overseas fame, and its influence has been significantly improved.

2. The festival cultural space of the Torch Festival

2.1 Time dimension

Compared with the timetable of traditional festivals, the timetable of the Torch Festival presents certain particularities. The timetable of traditional festivals is expressed in the form of Gregorian calendar dates, while the time of the torch festival is mostly fixed, usually occurring in the 24th of June of the lunar calendar, which has a more significant calendar attribute. With the passage of time, the timetable of the Torch Festival has changed to a certain extent, and its calendar properties have been gradually weakened. After the official intervention in the holding of the Yi Torch Festival, the time of the Torch Festival is no longer the 24th day of June in the lunar calendar, which was fixed in the past, but the time of the Torch Festival will be advanced or postponed accordingly according to the situation. In addition, the festival time of the Yi Torch Festival has also changed to a certain extent. The traditional Yi Torch Festival is

generally held for about three days, but the current Yi Torch Festival has been extended due to the integration of folk customs viewing, festival parades and other activities.^[1]

2.2 Spatial dimension

As an important ethnic cultural activity in southwest China, the Yi Torch Festival not only occupies a pivotal position in the cultural life of the Yi people, but also gradually becomes a major folk tourism highlight attracting domestic and foreign tourists. Traditionally, the Yi Torch Festival is mainly held in traditional Yi villages, and this form is closely integrated with the geographical distribution and living customs of the Yi people. The torch festival in the village usually has strong ethnic characteristics, and the festival activities include dance, music, and various traditional rituals related to the torch, which are all important parts of the Yi culture. This traditional way of holding the festival limits the scope of influence and the people participating in the festival to a certain extent, so that it remains more of a cultural celebration within the Yi nationality. With the passage of time, especially after Xichang became the main host site of the Torch Festival in 1994, the spatial dimension of the festival began to change significantly. As a multi-ethnic city, Xichang has a broader social and cultural background. The Torch Festival held here not only makes the festival activities be displayed on a larger scale, but also provides a platform for cultural exchanges between different ethnic groups, and enhances the radiation of Yi culture to the outside world. By 2017, the venue of the Torch Festival was further expanded to Sihe Township, Daqing Township, Gubo Township and Zhaojue County. This change not only reflects the spatial expansion of the Yi Torch Festival, but also reflects the new thinking on the protection and inheritance of traditional culture. By holding sub-venue activities in different locations, the cultural connotation and social impact of the Torch Festival can be spread in a wider region, and at the same time, it will also bring new vitality to the local economic development. The expansion of the spatial dimension of the Torch Festival is actually an innovation in the way of traditional cultural inheritance. It breaks the previous model of holding within a single village, making the Torch Festival a regional and even international platform for cultural exchange. This change not only increases the participation of the festival, but also makes the Yi culture more widely recognized and respected.^[2]

2.3 Content dimension

Under the wave of reform and opening up, the festival content of the Yi Torch Festival has undergone great changes. In the late 70s of the 20th century, the Torch Festival was no longer limited to the participation of local villagers, but became a cultural exchange feast for urban and rural people, and its festival content and scale of activities have been expanded to a certain extent. In the 90s of the 20th century, the Yi Torch Festival broke through the limitations of the region, and in the form of basic traditional activities such as wrestling and bullfighting, it integrated and added cultural and artistic performances and ethnic snacks that conformed to the characteristics of the Yi nationality and the style of the festival. After 1997, in order to promote exchanges between various ethnic groups and increase the influence of the Yi Torch Festival, a number of festivals such as academic conversations and economic and trade negotiations were integrated into the Yi Torch Festival. It can be clearly seen that compared with the traditional Yi Torch Festival, not only the content and form have become richer, but also the entertainment of the Yi Torch Festival has also been enhanced.

2.4 Media dimension

In the traditional Yi Torch Festival, due to the restriction of the mode of transmission, it is usually carried out in the form of face-to-face conversation, which is not conducive to promoting the spread and exchange of the Yi Torch Festival. With the gradual development of the times and the progress of science and technology, the transmission methods of the Yi Torch Festival have become more diverse. In 2014, after the publication of the book “The Torch of the Torch Festival”, under the influence of the spread of written culture, the Yi Torch Festival was widely recognized and understood, effectively breaking through the limitations of time and space. With the rapid development of new media and with the help of film and television records, the media has produced documentaries about the Yi Torch Festival through film and television, so that the Yi Torch Festival can be intuitively and comprehensively known and understood by the public through film and television, and the cultural characteristics of the Yi Torch Festival have been widely disseminated. Today, with the rapid development of self-media, self-media workers are presenting the Yi Torch Festival in the public’s field of vision through their own understanding, and the scope of communication is gradually expanding while the forms of communication have become more diversified.^[3]

3. All ethnic groups shall communicate, exchange and blend the contents of the Torch Festival

3.1 Economic development promotes ethnic exchanges

Under the continuous development of rural revitalization, the economic function of the Yi Torch Festival is more prominent than

in the past. In the process of holding the International Torch Festival, the organizers have integrated the traditional programs of the Yi Torch Festival with tourism, which has further expanded the influence of the Yi Torch Festival. With the intervention of the government, the Yi Torch Festival integrates new elements of the development of the new era, continues to develop and innovate, attaches importance to the participation and experience of the participants, and is committed to making the participants get a more tourism experience. The holding of the Yi Torch Festival can not only promote the development of local tourism to a certain extent, but also strengthen the exchange and development between various ethnic groups to a certain extent.^[4]

3.2 Festival ceremonies promote ethnic exchanges

During the Yi Torch Festival, people gather together to enjoy the joy of singing and dancing. Through this method, we can not only effectively promote the feelings of various ethnic groups to a certain extent, but also handle social relations well, which will play a certain role in cultivating the unity of all ethnic groups. There are many main bodies of the Yi Torch Festival, which are not limited to the Yi people, but attract tourists from other places and tourists from other ethnic groups to participate, and promote the exchange and integration of various ethnic groups in the process of joint cooperation and exchange, which is conducive to cultivating a community of national unity.

3.3 Share the festival record of ethnic integration

Today, with the continuous development of the Yi Torch Festival, its content and form have also been expanded and enriched. In 2006, Xichang built the National Culture and Art Center and Torch Square, which became a typical symbol of national culture and international image. As a traditional ethnic festival, the Yi Torch Festival is an important embodiment of ethnic integration. On the one hand, the Yi Torch Festival provides a platform for exchanges and interactions among various ethnic groups. In the course of communication and interaction, it helps to promote the unity and integration of all ethnic groups. On the other hand, the Yi Torch Festival is also an important carrier for the inheritance and development of national culture, and the people of all ethnic groups can better maintain and inherit their own cultural characteristics in the process of participating in festival activities. As the carrier of national culture, strengthening the dissemination of national festivals can effectively enhance the exchange and integration of national culture and contribute to the construction of national community.

Conclusion:

To sum up, looking at the development process of the Yi Torch Festival, it has made a qualitative leap in the dimensions of time, space, content and media. The Yi Torch Festival has changed from a local limited ethnic festival to a regional group exchange activity, which provides an important carrier for the cultural exchange and integration of various ethnic groups, which has a certain helpful role in cultivating the consciousness of unity and cooperation of all ethnic groups, and helps to promote the formation of ethnic communities. In addition, the wide dissemination of festivals also helps to ensure the preservation of national culture and the inheritance and development of national culture.

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