

# Ethnic Culture Preservation in the Context of Tourism Economy Development

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**Abstract:** China is a large country with thousands of years of culture. Its ethnic culture has a certain richness and diversity but also is a major part of the tourism industry. There is an extremely high value in tourism development. In the current background of rapid development of the tourism economy, not only do we need to integrate and develop the national culture, but also need to put more effort to promote the inheritance of our national culture.

**Keywords:** Tourism Economy; Development of Ethnic Culture; Protection Measures

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## Introduction

Ethnic culture is an important ethnic cultural resource that has been preserved and passed down through history. Influenced by the continuous development of tourism, the integration and protection of ethnic cultural resources have become the main tasks of the relevant departments, based on which, this paper analyzes the importance of ethnic culture inheritance and protection in different aspects and proposes relevant protection measures.

## 1. Current state

As the ethnic culture and tourism economy features a high degree of integration and interpenetration, it has become a key part of the current development of China's tourism industry. Most of China's ethnic minorities are mainly concentrated in the central and western regions. For thousands of years, ethnic groups live in harmony, while still maintaining their original unique culture, or ethnic temperament, etc. in development which provides local tourism with rich and valuable resource.

In recent years, China's tourism industry has slowly shifted from the east to the west, and the cultural resources of ethnic groups have become a major part of economic development for different regions. According to the statistics, in 2005, the overall revenue of tourism in Tibet was 1.935 billion yuan, especially after the official operation of the Qinghai-Tibet Railway. Ethnic culture and tourism in such areas are mainly related to "food, accommodation, tourism and entertainment", forming a complete industrial chain, which drives the development of tourism-related products while promoting the protection of ethnic culture in a comprehensive way.

## 2. Impact of the tourism economy on the ethnic-cultural inheritance

### 2.1 Content of ethnic-cultural inheritance

In the studies on the impact of tourism development on heritage content, scholars have mainly explored how tourism affects the authenticity of culture and how to ensure that culture maintains its authenticity in tourism development so that ethnic cultural heritage can avoid heterogeneity. These studies mainly focus on the authenticity of souvenirs and stage performances. According to Zhang Ying and Gao Yun, commercial development distorts the originality of intangible cultural heritage, thus distorting the culture. Wu Xingqi and Luo Qinyi advocate that the protection and inheritance of handicraft heritage in tourism development should be guided by the classification of handicrafts by their originality and the four levels of "manual, craft, art and product", so as to realize the protection and inheritance of handicraft heritage in a living state and in authenticity. Liu Yanying extracted the cultural genes of Gannan( southern

Jiangxi province) culture and injected them into the design of souvenirs based on Gannan(southern Jiangxi province) regional culture, which is conducive to the development of tourism activities and the continuation of cultural inheritance. Sun Haiyang argues that: product design that combines culture with regional features, diversified modern culture and souvenirs should be carried out, emphasizing the shape, color, material, and function of souvenirs with ethnic characteristics, so that the national culture is inherited in a fashionable way. On the authenticity of stage performance culture, Xu Ganli argues that in tourism development, the content displayed will be greatly different from the original culture by "catering to tourists", but due to the imperceptibility of the "backstage", the impact of local stage performances on the inheritance of their daily lives is limited. If the relations between "frontstage" and "backstage" can be handled properly, the development of tourism can, to a certain extent, not only provide financial support for the continuation of local traditional culture but also enhance the cultural pride of local people as well as their confidence and sense of mission to pass on their local culture.

## **2.2 Inheritance approach**

Tourism is an important carrier of cultural inheritance and innovation . Under the role of mass media, the market's repeated exploitation and commercialization of ethnic culture expanded the way of national cultural inheritance to a way of "tourism" inheritance. The concept of "tourism production inheritance" is proposed, and the tourism production inheritance of intangible cultural heritage is defined as: all or the main elements of intangible cultural heritage overlap with tourism elements. Many scholars are also exploring possibilities of integrating multiple inheritance approaches. They advocate the establishment of "intangible cultural inheritance teaching bases" in vocational schools which promotes in-depth cooperation between schools and enterprises and advanced talent development model which stresses the involvement of masters of intangible cultural heritage in school teaching and skills training for students. In terms of the exploration of inheritance methods, it is necessary to further construct the idea of "tourism as a way of cultural inheritance". In addition, the issue of how to integrate multiple inheritance approaches in tourism development for the effective inheritance of ethnic culture needs to be explored more widely and in greater depth.

## **3. Measures for the preservation of ethnic culture in the context of tourism economy development**

### **3.1 Based on differentiation to protect the ethnic culture**

In the development of tourism, at the same time it is necessary to focus on the understanding of the ethnic cultural differences, in order to promote the development of regional ethnic culture in combination of their advantage, which requires the corresponding tourism units not to tamper with ethnic culture and performance programs with ethnic cultural characteristics for the sake of economic interests. For example, Bai ethnic region features the divine parade ceremony. It is noticeable that the time of the ceremony is not necessarily the tourist's travel time due to the village difference and the time of the event , which makes many travel agencies, in order to cater to this tourism project, develop stage-type divine parade activities, and make certain changes of the content to adapt to tourists. Nonetheless by means of such tourism activities the ethnic culture is not tapped properly as a tourism resource and the travelers are not able to deeply experience the shock brought by the ethnic culture during the trip.

Therefore, the development of the tourism economy needs to be based on the ethnic cultural characteristics of the corresponding region and the characteristics of the cultural resources among and within ethnic groups for the rational deployment of tourism resources. And it is necessary to fully respect the ethnic culture of a region so that appropriate and reasonable tourist routes can be developed to ensure that the normal observation of ethnic culture festivals and tourists are able to experience the original and authentic activities with ethnic features, which is conducive to promote the utilization of ethnic cultural resources in the tourism economy to achieve the coordinated development of the tourism economy and the preservation of ethnic culture.

### **3.2 Give more support in policy and develop special tourism projects**

As protection work continues, the Tibetan intangible cultural heritage inheritance team is also growing. With the concern and support of the government, renowned artists of various traditional fields are passing on and developing the traditional culture of the

Tibetans. At present, Tibetan inheritance teams of all kinds have grown to more than 20,000 people, and some folk Tibetan opera groups on the verge of dissolution have been restored and rebuilt; Fifty three locals , including Gesar rapper Tstring Zhandui and thangka painter Danba Wandan, have been selected as representative inheritors of national intangible cultural heritage projects.

Lhasa's Maizhokunggar County is boosting the development of tourism and cultural industry, utilizing the county's financial budget and aid funds from Nanjing city(Jiangsu Province) to tourism development project of the Jia Ma Scenic Area, which includes Songzän Gambo Birthplace Memorial Hall, the ancient city wall, Songzän Sacred Spring and Songtsen Lhakhang. During the "Twelfth Five-Year Plan" period, the county will give full play to its geographical advantages and build a tourism brand with regional and cultural characteristics, relying on the historical and cultural background of Songzän Gambo.

### **3.3 Put emphasis on the protection of ethnic cultural tourism resources to achieve the harmony of development and protection**

The attraction of ethnic regions for tourists lies in the richness, diversity, and originality of cultural resources of ethnic minorities. The protection of ethnic cultural resources is not only the protection of tourism resources but also the protection of the classics of traditional ethnic culture, for which corresponding measures and countermeasures should be taken. First of all, we should attach great importance to education, and improve the overall quality of the masses. By means of various approaches, we need to help the mass in the tourist areas build correct tourism awareness which includes taking pride in the unique culture of their ethnic groups, participating in the tourism industry, and protecting tourism resources. Secondly, there is a need to classify and preserve national cultural resources of various regions and ethnic groups through text, audio, video, and material objects and to protect those that are about to disappear. Intangible cultural heritage has been effectively protected, passed on and developed. Since the 1970s, the Autonomous Region and local municipalities have set up special institutions for rescuing, sorting out and researching ethnic cultural heritage, conducted a comprehensive census of the region's folk cultural and artistic heritage, collected literary and artistic materials such as dramas, dances, music, operas, folk songs, proverbs and stories that have been passed down among the people, and conducted research related to these materials. They recorded and sorted out more than 30 million words of Tibetan and Chinese materials, published more than 1,000 academic papers on traditional Tibetan culture, and more than 30 monographs on literature and art. Since 2003, the Central Government and the government of the Tibet Autonomous Region have launched a program to protect intangible cultural heritage. Besides, the scientific and rational development and utilization of ethnic culture promote the development of ethnic cultural tourism in ethnic areas. Rescuing and protecting ethnic culture does not refer to putting it into museums and hiding it, but to developing and utilizing it. Transforming ethnic culture into tourism resources through various forms is the best way to develop the economy of ethnic areas, promote ethnic culture, and achieve poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

## **Conclusion**

As can be seen, the western regions of China, where ethnic minorities gather, are affected by historical and natural conditions and other factors, and the overall economic level is not high which requires an analysis of the economic development of different regions in the context of tourism economic development and an emphasis on the protection of ethnic culture. While giving full play to the value of ethnic culture, more efforts are made to the protection of ethnic cultural resources, so as to further promote the sustainable development of the economy of ethnic areas.

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