

Research on the Protection and Tourism Development of Folk Customs and Heritage in Villages of the Tibet-Qiang-Yi Cultural Industry Corridor

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Abstract: As an important ethnic cultural region in China, the Tibet-Qiang-Yi cultural industry corridor contains rich and diverse folk heritage with unique characteristics in its villages. These heritages are treasures of ethnic culture, carrying profound historical memory. This article focuses on the folk heritage of villages in the Tibet-Qiang-Yi cultural industry corridor, and explores in depth the related issues of its protection and tourism development. Through field research, literature review, and other methods, the types and current status of folk cultural heritage in the Tibet-Qiang-Yi cultural industry corridor villages were sorted out. The challenges faced in the current protection and tourism development process, such as weak awareness of heritage protection, single development models, and lack of professional talents, were analyzed. From the perspective of cultural inheritance and protection, scientific and reasonable strategies have been proposed.

Keywords: Cultural industry corridor; Folk customs; Protection status quo; Tourism development

DOI: 10.62639/ssperi06.20250102

The Tibet-Qiang-Yi cultural industry corridor is located in the heartland of western China, covering parts of seven provinces (regions) including Sichuan Province, Guizhou Province, Yunnan Province, Shaanxi Province, Gansu Province and Qinghai Province, covering an area of more than 680000 square kilometers, and the population of Tibetan, Qiang, Yi and other ethnic minorities exceeds 7.6 million. The area directly radiates a wider range, involving ethnic minority settlements in multiple provinces. This area has been an important corridor for numerous ethnic groups to travel, reproduce, migrate, and communicate since ancient times. In the long historical process, ethnic groups such as Tibet, Qiang, and Yi have left behind rich cultural heritage and formed unique cultural forms here.^[1]

1. The Tibet-Qiang-Yi Cultural Industry Corridor Village Folk Customs Heritage

(1) Material cultural heritage

In terms of folk handicrafts, Tibetan thangka is renowned for its unique artistic style and rich cultural connotations. Its subject matter covers various fields such as Tibetan history, politics, culture, and social life, and is known as the "encyclopedia" of the Tibetan people. The drawing process of thangka is extremely complex, requiring a complete set of strict procedures such as pre painting ceremony, canvas making, composition drafting, coloring and dyeing, line drawing and shaping, gold and silver painting, eye opening, stitching and framing, etc. Traditionally, pigments have been made from precious mineral gems such as gold, silver, pearls, agate, coral, turquoise, malachite, cinnabar, as well as plants such as saffron, rhubarb, indigo, etc., making thangka bright and dazzling, and still shining brightly after hundreds of years. The different Tangka painting schools such as Miantang School, Qinze School, and

(Manuscript NO.: ERI-25-2-LL001)

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Li,Yahui (1991-), female, Han nationality, master degree candidate, research direction: physical education teaching.

Funding

The school's self funded scientific research project: "Research on the Protection and Tourism Development of Folk Cultural Heritage in Villages along the Tibet-Qiang-Yi Cultural Industry Corridor" (project number: XYZB2319SB).

Gama Gazi School each have their own characteristics, adding rich colors to Tangka art.^[2]

The embroidery of the Qiang ethnic group is the crystallization of the wisdom of Qiang women and has strong ethnic characteristics. Qiang embroidery has a variety of needlework techniques, including picking, embroidering, receiving, arranging, and embroidering. The themes mostly come from natural scenery in real life, such as flowers, grass, fruits, animals, and characters. The patterns are vivid and the colors are bright. Qiang embroidery works are not only used for clothing decoration, but also made into handicrafts such as sachets, handkerchiefs, and wall hanging, which are deeply loved by people. In some Qiang ethnic areas, Qiang embroidery skills have been passed down from generation to generation, becoming an important carrier of Qiang cultural inheritance. Many Qiang women start learning embroidery from a young age, integrating their love for life and pursuit of beauty into every stitch and thread.^[3]

The lacquerware decoration skills of the Yi ethnic group are an important component of their traditional arts and crafts. Yi ethnic lacquerware is made of leather such as cattle, horses, and sheep, with cotton, linen, silk, satin, wood, and other materials as the base. It is made of high-quality raw lacquer from the local area, and goes through multiple processes such as molding, lacquering, and decoration. Generally, a single product requires more than 40 processes to be completed. Yi ethnic lacquerware has a simple shape, elegant patterns, bright colors, bright hues, solid texture, and high artistic and practical value. Its patterns often feature elements such as the sun, moon, stars, mountains, rivers, animals, and plants, reflecting the Yi people's worship of nature and love for life. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, Yi lacquerware was selected as a "tribute" to be presented to the emperor in Beijing. Nowadays, Yi lacquerware is not only favored domestically, but also has entered the international market, becoming a beautiful business card showcasing Yi culture.

(2) Intangible cultural heritage

In terms of traditional music, the Tibetan people have diverse music styles, including mountain songs, labor songs, love songs, Sanskrit music, rap, and singing. Among them, the epic rap of King Gesar is a treasure in Tibetan music. King Gesar is a heroic figure in Tibetan mythology, and his epic tells the story of his heroic deeds of defeating demons and bringing benefits to the people. Epic rap artists inherit this magnificent epic through their unique singing style and vivid performances. Their rap is often accompanied by the playing of instruments such as strings and Tibetan drums, with a fast-paced and infectious rhythm. In some Tibetan inhabited areas, people gather together during festivals or celebrations to listen to the epic rap of King Gesar and experience the charm of traditional culture.^[4]

The music of the Yi ethnic group is full of passionate and unrestrained atmosphere. The Torch Festival of the Yi ethnic group is the grandest traditional festival of the Yi ethnic group. During the Torch Festival, people sing cheerful Yi songs and dance enthusiastically. The melodies of Yi ethnic songs are beautiful, the rhythms are lively, and the lyrics often express love for life, longing for love, and reverence for ancestors. The Yi ethnic group's Yue Qin is a commonly used accompaniment instrument, with a smooth and soft tone that complements the style of Yi songs. At festive occasions such as weddings and harvest festivals of the Yi ethnic group, people also use music and dance to express their joy and demonstrate the optimistic and positive attitude of the Yi people towards life.^[5]

The sheepskin drum dance of the Qiang ethnic group is a traditional dance with a unique style. The dancer holds a sheepskin drum and dances while tapping, with strong and powerful movements and a lively rhythm. The dance movements imitate the production, life, and combat scenes of the Qiang people, such as farming, harvesting, hunting, and fighting, reflecting their hardworking, brave, and tenacious spirit. The drum beats of sheepskin drum dance vary greatly, and dancers make different movements according to the rhythm of the drum beats, forming a unique dance rhythm. In some Qiang ethnic areas, sheepskin drum dance is still one of the important cultural activities, inheriting the history and culture of the Qiang ethnic group.^[6]

2. The Current Situation of Protection and Tourism Development of Folk Cultural Heritage in Villages and Towns in the Tibet-Qiang-Yi Cultural Industry Corridor

(1) Achievements in the protection of folk customs and heritage in villages of the Tibet-Qiang-Yi cultural industry corridor

In recent years, the national and local governments have attached great importance to the protection of Tibet-Qiang-Yi cultural heritage, and have issued a series of policies and regulations, providing strong policy support and legal protection for the protection of cultural heritage. In March 2014, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Finance jointly formulated and promulgated the "Overall Plan for the Tibet-Qiang-Yi Cultural Industry Corridor", which is the first national level special plan for the development of regional cultural industries in China. It has important guiding significance for the construction of characteristic cultural industry belts with leading and demonstrative effects, with the protection, inheritance, and rational development and utilization of excellent local and ethnic cultural resources as the core. Subsequently, in August 2014, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Finance jointly issued the "Guiding Opinions on Promoting the Development of Characteristic Cultural Industries", which clearly stated that "we will continue to promote the construction of the Tibet-Qiang-Yi Cultural Industry Corridor, reasonably plan and guide the implementation of a number of characteristic cultural industry projects, highlight ethnic cultural characteristics, promote the integration of culture, ecology, and tourism, and build internationally renowned cultural tourism destinations and demonstration effect characteristic cultural industry belts". The introduction of these policies has pointed out the direction for the protection and utilization of Tibet-Qiang-Yi cultural heritage.^[7]

Under the guidance of policies, cultural heritage protection institutions have been established in various regions, responsible for the protection, management, and research of cultural heritage. For example, Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture has established an Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Center, responsible for organizing and implementing the protection of intangible cultural heritage throughout the prefecture. The center has established long-term mechanisms such as expert annual meetings, expert consultations, expert evaluations, and expert forums, with 66 members divided into 10 expert groups based on majors such as folk literature, traditional music, and traditional dance. It has played an active role in the application, consultation, research, recognition, preservation, and dissemination of intangible cultural heritage. In addition, some places have established professional institutions such as Qiang Culture Research Association and Tibetan Culture Research Center to deeply explore and study local cultural heritage, providing professional intellectual support for protection work.^[8]

Significant achievements have also been made in cultural heritage conservation projects in various regions. Taking Liangshan Prefecture as an example, in terms of the construction of the intangible cultural heritage list system, the four level list system of Liangshan Prefecture has been basically sound.^[9] Among the first five batches of national intangible cultural heritage projects currently announced, projects from Liangshan have been selected in each batch. Currently, there are 20 national intangible cultural heritage projects, including the Yi Torch Festival, Yi Lacquerware Painting Techniques, Jia Rubbing, and Lisu Fire Grass Weaving Techniques; Among the first five batches of provincial-level intangible cultural heritage list projects that have been announced, Liangshan Prefecture has a total of 114 items, including the Yi people's wool shearing festival, green glazed ceramic production techniques, and the Ayanya; At present, Liangshan Prefecture has successively reviewed and announced 7 batches of state-level intangible cultural heritage list projects, totaling 341 items; In the results of the 2020 provincial intangible cultural heritage census, there were a total of 576 items on the county-level intangible cultural heritage list in Liangshan Prefecture. The protection and inheritance of these projects not only enrich the cultural connotation of Liangshan Prefecture, but also provide important cultural resources for the construction of the Tibetan Qiang Yi cultural industry corridor.^[10]

(2) There are problems in the protection of folk cultural heritage and tourism development in the Tibet-Qiang-Yi cultural industry corridor villages

With the rapid development of urbanization, a large number of rural populations have flooded into cities, and traditional villages in the Tibetan, Qiang, and Yi regions have gradually become hollowed out. Many young people leave their hometowns and seek better development opportunities in cities, leading to significant changes in the population structure of traditional villages. In some Yi ethnic villages, due to the departure of young people, many earthen palm houses are unoccupied and in disrepair, facing the danger of collapse. Meanwhile, the large-scale construction in the process of urbanization has also caused certain damage to cultural heritage. Some ancient buildings have been demolished in urban construction and replaced by modern high-rise buildings, causing the cultural characteristics of the Tibetan Qiang Yi region to gradually disappear. In the renovation process of some cities, some Tibetan style watchtowers and Qiang style stone houses with historical value have been demolished to make space for commercial development, which is undoubtedly a huge loss to cultural heritage.

The influence of foreign cultures has also brought challenges to the inheritance and development of Tibetan, Qiang, and Yi cultures. With the deepening development of globalization, various foreign cultures continue to flood into the Tibetan, Qiang, and Yi regions, causing certain impacts on the local traditional culture. Some young people blindly pursue foreign cultures and have developed an attitude of neglect and exclusion towards their own traditional culture. For example, in some areas where the Yi ethnic group resides, Western festivals such as Christmas and Valentine's Day are warmly sought after by young people, while the celebration atmosphere of traditional Yi festivals such as Torch Festival is gradually fading. This crisis of cultural identity has seriously affected the inheritance and development of Tibetan, Qiang, and Yi cultures.

In terms of cultural heritage protection, there are still problems such as insufficient protection funds and outdated protection technologies. Many cultural heritage sites are at risk of damage and disappearance due to a lack of sufficient funds for maintenance and repair. Some cultural heritage protection institutions in remote areas are unable to effectively protect and manage cultural heritage due to a lack of advanced protection technologies and equipment. In some Tibetan areas, due to a shortage of funds, some ancient temples and murals cannot be repaired and protected in a timely manner, resulting in the gradual damage of these precious cultural heritages.

In some tourist attractions, the phenomenon of excessive commercialization is quite serious. In order to pursue economic benefits, some scenic spots blindly develop and build a large number of commercial facilities, resulting in the cultural atmosphere of the scenic spots being overshadowed by commercial atmosphere. In some ancient towns and villages, the once quaint streets are filled with various modern commercial shops, and the products sold are mostly generic tourist souvenirs, lacking local cultural characteristics. Some scenic spots, in order to attract tourists, excessively package culture and turn traditional culture into a tool for performance and display, losing its original connotation and value. In some Tibetan inhabited scenic spots, in order to meet the needs of tourists, traditional religious rituals and folk activities are commercialized and performed, making these activities formal and superficial, and unable to truly reflect the essence of Tibetan culture.

3. Protection and Tourism Development Strategies for Folk Cultural Heritage in Villages and Towns Along the Tibet-Qiang-Yi Cultural Industry Corridor

(1) Strengthen the protection of cultural heritage

Improving policies and regulations is the foundation for strengthening the protection of cultural heritage. The government should formulate and improve special laws and regulations for the protection of Tibetan, Qiang, and Yi cultural heritage, clarify the scope of protection, protection standards, and legal responsibilities for the destruction of cultural heritage. For example, the formulation of the "Regulations on the Protection of Tibetan, Qiang and Yi

Cultural Heritage" provides detailed regulations on the protection of tangible cultural heritage such as ancient buildings and villages, as well as the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage such as traditional skills and folk activities, ensuring that cultural heritage protection work has legal basis. At the same time, we will strengthen the promotion and enforcement of laws and regulations, enhance public legal awareness, and crack down severely on behaviors that damage cultural heritage.

In terms of protecting technological innovation, modern technological means should be actively introduced to enhance the level of cultural heritage protection. Utilize digital technology to comprehensively record and preserve cultural heritage, and establish a digital database of Tibetan, Qiang, and Yi cultural heritage. Through technologies such as 3D scanning, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), etc., digital modeling of ancient buildings such as watchtowers, stone houses, and earthen palm houses can be carried out. High definition digital collection of handicrafts such as thangka, Qiang embroidery, and Yi lacquerware can not only permanently preserve the information of these cultural heritages, but also provide convenience for subsequent research, restoration, and display. For example, by using 3D scanning technology to model the watchtowers and stone houses of Taoping Qiang Village, tourists can experience the architectural charm of the village in person through VR devices, while also providing accurate data support for the protection and restoration of the watchtowers and stone houses.

Talent cultivation is the key to the protection of cultural heritage. Establish a multi-level talent training system for cultural heritage protection, strengthen cooperation with universities and research institutions, offer relevant majors and courses, and cultivate a group of cultural heritage protection talents with professional knowledge and skills. For example, establishing majors in the protection of Tibetan, Qiang, and Yi cultural heritage in relevant universities, offering courses such as cultural heritage protection techniques, cultural heritage management, and ethnic cultural research, to cultivate composite talents who understand both professional knowledge and local culture. At the same time, strengthen the training of existing cultural heritage protection personnel, regularly organize them to participate in academic exchanges and training activities at home and abroad, and improve their professional level and innovation ability. In addition, traditional skills training courses and cultural heritage protection lectures can be held to cultivate a group of folk cultural heritage protection talents and encourage them to participate in the protection and inheritance of cultural heritage.

(2) Promote the deep integration of culture and tourism

Transforming cultural heritage into tourism products is the key to achieving deep integration of culture and tourism. Deeply explore the connotation and characteristics of Tibetan, Qiang and Yi cultural heritage, and develop tourism products with cultural value and attractiveness. Folk handicrafts such as Tibetan thangka, Qiang embroidery, and Yi lacquerware can be developed into tourist souvenirs, and their market competitiveness can be enhanced through creative design and brand building. For example, collaborating with renowned designers to incorporate Thangka patterns and elements into modern daily necessities such as phone cases, laptops, scarves, etc. This not only meets tourists' demand for unique souvenirs, but also spreads Tibetan culture. At the same time, modern technology is being utilized to develop experiential tourism products with Tibetan, Qiang, and Yi culture as the main theme. For example, AR technology is being used to develop a Tibetan, Qiang, and Yi culture experience app. Tourists can scan the signs in the scenic area with their mobile phones to obtain relevant cultural information and historical stories, enhancing the fun and interactivity of tourism.

Creating tourism routes and projects with cultural characteristics can provide tourists with richer travel experiences. Design tourism routes such as "Exploration Tour of Tibetan, Qiang and Yi Culture" to connect important cultural attractions in the Tibetan, Qiang and Yi regions, allowing tourists to experience the cultural charm of different ethnic groups in one trip. For example, starting from Jiuzhaigou Valley Scenic and Historic Interest Area in Sichuan, you can enjoy Tibetan watchtowers and folk culture by passing Tibetan villages; Then go to Taoping Qiang Village to experience the stone house architecture and traditional skills of the Qiang ethnic group; Finally, arrive at

the area where the Yi ethnic group resides and experience the Yi people's Torch Festival and Tuzhangfang culture. In terms of tourism projects, develop folk culture experience projects, such as hosting Tibetan Guozhuang dance parties, Qiang sheepskin encouragement performances, Yi people's torch festival celebrations, etc., allowing tourists to personally participate in local cultural activities and gain a deeper understanding of the connotation of Tibetan, Qiang and Yi culture.

To achieve a positive interaction between culture and tourism, it is necessary to strengthen the construction of tourism infrastructure, improve the quality of tourism services, perfect transportation, accommodation, catering and other infrastructure, improve the tourism environment, and provide convenient travel conditions and comfortable tourism experiences for tourists. At the same time, strengthen the training of tourism practitioners, improve their cultural literacy and service level, so that they can better introduce Tibetan, Qiang and Yi culture to tourists and spread the charm of ethnic culture. In addition, cultural tourism festivals, ethnic cultural exhibitions, and other activities can be held to enhance the visibility and influence of Tibetan, Qiang, and Yi culture, attract more tourists to travel, and promote the common development of culture and tourism.

(3) Establish a community participation mechanism

Community participation is of great significance in the protection of cultural heritage and tourism development. The community residents in the Tibetan Qiang Yi region are creators and inheritors of cultural heritage, and they have a deep emotional connection and unique understanding of the local culture. The participation of community residents can enhance their awareness of protecting cultural heritage and stimulate their enthusiasm for inheriting and promoting their own ethnic culture. At the same time, community participation in tourism development can promote local economic development, improve residents' living standards, and achieve a win-win situation between cultural heritage protection and community development.

Establishing a reasonable mechanism for distributing benefits is the key to encouraging community residents to actively participate. In the process of tourism development, the interests of community residents should be fully considered to ensure that they can obtain tangible benefits from tourism development. Community residents can participate in the operation and management of tourism projects and share tourism benefits through the establishment of community tourism cooperatives and other forms. For example, in the tourism development of Zoumaqiang Village, a tourism cooperative composed of local residents was established. Residents invested in rural tourism projects such as homestays, homestays, and souvenir sales with assets such as houses and land, achieving joint operation and mutual benefit. At the same time, the government and enterprises should strengthen their support and guidance for community tourism cooperatives, help them improve their management level, and enhance the quality of tourism services.

In order to enhance the participation ability of community residents, it is also necessary to strengthen training for them. Carry out tourism service skills training, such as tour guide explanations, catering services, room management, etc., to improve residents' tourism service level; Carry out cultural heritage protection knowledge training to enhance residents' awareness and sense of responsibility for cultural heritage protection; Carry out marketing training to help residents understand the demand of the tourism market and improve the marketing ability of tourism products. Through training, community residents can better adapt to the needs of tourism development and actively participate in cultural heritage protection and tourism development. In addition, a supervision mechanism for community participation can be established to ensure fair and just distribution of benefits and safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of community residents.

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