

The Contemporary Value and Practical Path of Traditional Chinese Folk Culture in the Construction of a Strong Cultural Country: A Case Study of the Tushan Yuwang Temple Fair

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ABSTRACT

As a traditional folk activity that has been passed down for a thousand years, temple fairs are important carriers and living inheritance forms of the nation's excellent traditional culture. This article takes the Yugong Temple Fair in Fengjie, Anhui as an example to explore its value and path of a strong socialist cultural country in the new era. The Yugong Temple Fair, with the worship of Dayu as its core, integrates multiple functions such as faith, trade and literature and art, forming a unique cultural space. Through analyzing its historical origins, cultural connotations, and contemporary values, this article proposes practical paths of adhering to the innovation, regional synergy, living inheritance, and integrated dissemination, providing a reference for the modern transformation of traditional folkways.

KEYWORDS

Temple Fair Culture; Spirit of Dayu; Cultural Space; Intangible Cultural Heritage; Cultural and Tourism Integration.

1. INTRODUCTION

The temple fair culture has been inherited for thousands of years in China. It originated from ancient sacrifices, experienced dynastic changes, and integrated functions such as religious beliefs, trade exchanges, and literary and artistic entertainment, forming a unique cultural space. Against the backdrop of building a strong socialist cultural country with Chinese characteristics, temples not only carry historical memories and cultural genes but have also become an important platform to enhance cultural confidence, promote cultural innovation, and promote economic and social development. General Secretary Xi Jin pointed out: "Chinese culture has a long history, and Chinese civilization is broad and profound. Only by fully and deeply understanding the history of Chinese civilization can we more effectively promote creative transformation and innovative development of Chinese excellent traditional culture, and more effectively promote the construction of socialist culture with Chinese characteristics, and build a modern civilization of the Chinese nation." This position has pointed out the direction for the protection and innovation of traditional folk customs. This article takes the example of the Tu Shan Yi Wang Temple Fair in Bengbu, Anhu, and explores the value and practice path of temple fair culture in the new era in the context of the current cultural strong country construction policy [1].

The Tu Shan Yu Wang Temple Fair dates back to the Han Dynasty, with a history of more than 2,200 years, it one of the largest and most influential folk activities in the Huaihe River Basin. Every year on the 28th day of the third lunar month, hundreds of thousands people from all directions flock to Tu Shan to worship Dayu, participate in sacrificial rituals, music and dance performances, and trade activities, forming a grand scene of "all nations homage". The temple fair integrates memorial festivals, traditional festivals, and religious festivals, inheriting the culture of Dayu and the Huaihe River, promoting the prosperity of traditional such as Huagu Deng, and enhancing national cohesion and centripetal force. As an intangible cultural heritage in Anhui Province, the Tu Shan Temple Fair not only a local cultural card but also a typical example for the combination of traditional folk culture and the construction of a strong cultural country. This paper will discuss from four aspects: historical, contemporary value, practice path, and challenge countermeasures, in order to provide a reference for the modern transformation of traditional folkways [2].

2. HISTORICAL ORIGINS AND CULTURAL CONNOTATIONS OF THE TUSHAN TEMPLE FAIR

According to the "Records of the Grand Historian", "the rise of the Xia Dynasty began with Tu Shan", and Tu Shan became a sacred because of Dayu's flood control, marriage to the Tu Shan family, and the meeting of the feudal lords. The formation and development of temple fairs reflect the understanding of the Chinese nation for the worship of heroes, the belief in nature, and the cultural heritage.

2.1. Historical Evolution: From Sacrificial Activities to Comprehensive Folk Gatherings

The Tu Shan Yu Wang Temple Fair originated from the sacrificial activities of Dayu. In the 12th year of Emperor Gaozu of Han Dynasty (195 BC), Liu Bang passed through Tu Shan and ordered the construction of the Yu Wang Temple to commemorate Dayu's achievements in flood control. temple fair began to take shape. During the Song Dynasty, Su Shi, who traveled to Tu Shan, recorded: "The people of Huainan believe that Yu was born June 6th. On that day, tens of thousands of people gather on the mountain." During the Wanli period of the Ming Dynasty, the temple fair to three times: June 6th of the lunar calendar (Dayu's birthday), March 28th (the day of successful flood control), and September 9th (the Double Ninth Festival), among which the "Tribute to Yu Temple Fair" on March 28th was the most prosperous. In 197, due to war, the official temple fair was interrupted, but the folk temple fair has continued to this day, becoming a cultural event in the Huaihe River Basin [3].

The content of temple fairs has expanded from single sacrifice to diversified activities. According to the Annals of Huayuan County during the Qing D, temple fairs include the sacrifice of Yu by officials and people, thanksgiving to the gods, hugging clay dolls, competing lanterns, and material exchange. As the place of temple fairs, the Yuwang Palace has been renovated and formed an architectural pattern of "five entries, ten palaces, and ten courtyards", becoming a space for cultural heritage. During the temple fair, folk arts such as Huagu, Sizhou Opera, and acrobatics are performed in turn, and merchants gather, the embryonic form of "culture as the stage, economy as the opera".

2.2. Cultural Connotations: The Spirit of Dayu and National Values

The core cultural connotation of the Tushan Temple Fair is the spirit of Dayu. Dayu's flood control, "three times by his own home without entering," embodies the innovative spirit of selflessness, hard work, and taking advantage of the situation, which is highly consistent with the core values of, such as "patriotism," "dedication," and "harmony." The temple fair internalizes the spirit of Dayu into people's lives sacrificial rituals, folk tales (such as the legend of Qimu Stone and Fangfeng Tomb), and artistic performances, becoming a carrier for educating the local and building consensus.

The temple fair is also a reflection of the integration of multicultural elements. It absorbs Taoist and Buddhist elements (such as the Taoist of the Yuwang Palace) and combines with Huaihe culture and farming culture, forming a unique regional feature. For example, Qimu Stone is revered as the "other of Sending Children," reflecting the folk belief in the worship of motherhood; the legend of Fangfeng Tomb contains the concept of the rule of law and. This cultural integration makes the temple fair a microcosm of the "unity of diversity" in Chinese civilization [4].

2.3. Cultural Space from the Perspective of Intangible Cultural Heritage

From the perspective of cultural space theory, Tu Shan Temple Fair is a typical intangible cultural heritage. UNESCO defines "cultural space" as place or time period where traditional cultural activities are concentrated. With Yǔwáng Gōng as its center, the temple fair is held at a fixed time (the twentyeighth day of the third lunar month), possessing natural, cultural, and social attributes. Scholar Xiang Yunju points out that cultural space is a combination of physical, cultural field, and human behavior. The temple fair not only includes material carriers such as architecture and steles but also encompasses ritual behaviors such as sacrifice and dance, as well as value concept of Dayu's spirit, constituting a complete cultural ecosystem.

As an intangible cultural heritage project, the protection and inheritance of temple fairs are included the policy framework. In 2006, Tu Shan Temple Fair was included in the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Anhui Province, reflecting the state' emphasis on traditional folk customs. The perspective of cultural space requires holistic protection, which is to maintain the material environment, behavioral norms, and spiritual connotation of temple fairs, providing practical basis for the construction of a strong cultural country.

3. THE CONTEMPORARY VALUE OF THE TUSHAN TEMPLE FAIR IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CULTURAL POWERHOUSE

In the construction of a culturally strong socialist China, temple fairs are no longer mere folk activities, but cultural carriers with multiple functions such as political, economic and social. The Tu Shan Temple Fair has injected vitality into cultural self-confidence and self-strengthening by enhancing cultural identity, promoting people-oriented services, promoting integration of culture and tourism, and innovating the ways of expression.

3.1. Enhancing Cultural Identity and National Cohesion

Temple fairs are an important bond to strengthen national identity. The Tu Shan temple fair, which worships Dayu, promotes the spirit of "public interest for all", and attracts the participation of Chinese people from all over the world. For example, during the temple fair, the descendants of Yu, such as those with surnames Yu and Si, often come to find their roots, forming a sense of belonging of "all the descendants of Yu are one family". This activity, which is on the worship of ancestors, enhances the cohesion of the Chinese nation and coincides with the emphasis of General Secretary Xi Jinping on "building a common spiritual home for the Chinese nation."

Temple fairs also shape cultural identity through collective memory. The public climb mountains to worship Dayu on the way to the Tu Shan, revisit the history of Dayu's flood control, and strengthen national pride. The temple fair has inherited the famous historical record of "the prosperity of the Xia Dynasty began in Tu Shan", making the of Dayu a part of the national spirit spectrum. Against the backdrop of globalization, such local cultural activities resist cultural homogenization and maintain cultural security [5].

3.2. Promoting Cultural Benefits for the Public and the Co-construction of Spiritual Civilization

Temple fairs are an important supplement to public services. The Tu Shan temple fair provides free or low-cost literary and artistic performances and folk experience activities, meeting the spiritual needs of the masses and embodying the "cultural for the public" policy. For example, the intangible cultural heritage performances such as Huagu and Puppet shows at the temple fair enable the public to receive traditional culture education entertainment, enhancing their civilized literacy.

Temple fairs also promote the construction of spiritual civilization. The "public and forget private" spirit of Dayu and the socialist values corroborate each other. The temple fair instills morality through rituals, such as the collective kneeling during the sacrifice, which strengthens the concept of order. Temple fair can "purify the social atmosphere", such as the Hushan Temple Fair in Shangqiu, Henan, advocating justice with the couplet "Lift the fire from the sky, burn out the wicked people in the world". The Tu Shan temple fair can learn from this approach and integrate elements of clean governance culture to serve the construction spiritual civilization in the new era.

3.3. Promoting the Integration of Culture and Tourism and Economic Development

The temple fair has driven the high-quality development of the regional economy. The Tong Temple Fair attracts more than 100,000 visitors per day, stimulating the tourism, catering, and accommodation industries. The temple fair has become a "material exchange," with vendors gathering and transactions being active. This model of integrating culture and tourism, in response to the development philosophy of "lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets, transforms cultural resources into economic capital.

Innovative cultural and creative products are new growth points for the temple fair economy. For example, it is possible to develop Dayu- trendy toys and Qimu Stone souvenirs, drawing inspiration from the "Guan Gong Trendy Toys" at the Yuncheng Guan Gong Temple Fair and young consumers through "traditional culture trend fashion." The temple fair should be combined with the Yuhaitun Archaeological Site Park to create cultural tourism routes and form an chain. This not only enhances the self-sustaining capacity of the temple fair but also provides support for rural revitalization, such as promoting the sales of local agricultural products [6].

3.4. Innovative Cultural Expression and Dissemination Methods

Modern technology empowers temple fairs to innovate. The Tu Shan Temple Fair can introduce ARVR technology to create a "metaverse temple fair," allowing visitors to experience the scene of Dayu's flood control immersively. The Beijing Changdian Temple Fair uses AR technology to achieve a combination of tradition and modernity. This innovative expression has expanded the reach of temple fairs, especially attracting the participation of Generation Z.

Temples are also bridges for cultural dissemination. Through media live broadcasts and social media interactions, the Tu Shan Temple Fair can showcase the charm of Chinese culture to the world. For example CCTV once reported "Archaeological confirmation of the Yushu meeting of the dukes is not a legend," which enhanced the international popularity of the temple fair. Under "Belt and Road" initiative, temple fairs can become a platform for cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries, spreading Chinese stories [7].

4. THE PATH OF PRACTICE FOR THE INTEGRATION OF TU SHAN TEMPLE FESTIVAL INTO THE CONSTRUCTION OF A STRONG CULTURAL COUNTRY

The conversion of temple festival resources into the driving force for the construction of a strong cultural country requires a collaborative effort from the government, the market, and society. Based on the case of the Tu Shan Festival, this article proposes four paths: adherence to the original, regional synergy, dynamic inheritance, and integrated dissemination.

4.1. Adherence to the Original: Ancing Tradition and Modernity

The development of temple festivals needs to adhere to the cultural roots while injecting elements of the times. On the one hand, it is necessary to the authenticity of temple festivals, such as restoring the ancient sacrificial ceremony, preserving ancient sites like "Chao Yu Road" and "Qi Mu Stone," and strictly prohib excessive commercialization from destroying their atmosphere. On the other hand, it is necessary to innovate content and forms, such as launching digital sacrifice and ecological temple festivals. Temple festivals can combined with modern festivals such as the Qingming Festival and the National Day to expand their connotations.

Policy support is key. The government should issue regulations for the protection ofangible cultural heritage, set up special funds, and encourage cultural and creative development. For example, the city of Bengbu can incorporate the Tu Shan Temple Festival into the urban development, and create a brand event by referring to the "New Year's Feast" model of the Beijing Temple Festival in Dongtan. Xi Jinping's cultural thought emphasizescreative transformation," and temple festivals can achieve a dialogue between tradition and modernity through new forms such as script-killing and national trend markets.

4.2. Regional Synergy: Building a Cultural Ecology Circle

The Tu Shan Temple Fair needs to break geographical constraints and promote synergy. Cities along the Huai River, such as Bengbu, Huainan, and Fengyang, share cultural relics of Dayu, which can establish a "ai River Temple Fair Alliance" to integrate resources and co-organize festivals. Huai'an Temple Fair has organized cross-regional tours through industry associations, and Tu Shan learn from this experience to connect with temple fairs in Zhenxian, Henan, and Mount Tai, Shandong, to launch a "Temple Fair Direct Bus and enhance its influence.

Regional synergy can also promote economic sharing. For example, the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Temple Fair Direct Bus achieves ticket recipro, and Tu Shan Temple Fair can cooperate with nearby scenic spots to form a "one-ticket-all" tourism route. This not only responds to the national strategy of "reg coordinated development" but also avoids homogeneous competition.

4.3. Living Inheritance: Integration into Modern Life

The core of temple fair inheritance is "people-oriented", integrating it into life. Firstly, education integration, compiling the spirit of Dayu into local textbooks, and carrying out research study activities. Secondly, community participation, encouraging the public to form Hu Drum and Lantern societies, making temple fair art a part of community culture. The temple fair in Tangjia Village, Shanxi, declined due to the youth's migration.shan should involve the left-behind groups in temple preparation through e-commerce platforms to enhance a sense of belonging.

Living inheritance also needs to focus on sustainability. Temples face environmental pressures, and green temple fairs should be promoted, such as the use of degradable supplies and limiting the flow to protect the ecology. Tongshan can establish aTemple Fair Civilization Convention" to guide

tourists to participate in environmental protection, achieving a win-win situation for cultural heritage and ecological conservation.

4.4. Integrated Communication: Expanding Influence Channels

Digital dissemination is the only way to modernize temple fairs. The Tu Shan temple can build an online platform for 4K live streaming and short video marketing, attracting global audiences. For example, the "Yun Temple Fair" model emerged during the pandemic in 2023, and Tu Shan can create a permanent digital museum to showcase the culture of Dayu.

International cooperation enhances cultural soft power. Through the "going out" project, the Tu Shan temple fair can participate in international folk festivals, engage in dialogue with the Japanese Gion Matsuri and the Brazilian Carnival, and enhance the influence of culture. Temple fairs are the "blood ties connecting the descendants of the Yellow Emperor at home and abroad", and under the concept of the "community of shared future for", such exchanges are more meaningful in the era.

5. CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

Despite its great potential, the development of Tushan Temple Fair faces challenges. First, excessive commercialization may dilute cultural connotations such as the rampant temple fair gambling activities, which require strengthened supervision. Second, there is a transmission gap, with low youth participation, and the participants in rural temple fairs are elderly, which should attract young groups through innovation. Third, there is a lack of infrastructure, such as the narrow mountain road in Tushan, which poses safety risks, and investment needs to be increased.

In terms of measures, a diversified co-governance mechanism should be established. The government should take the lead in planning, enterprises should in operation, the academic community should provide intellectual support, and the public should participate in decision-making. For example, Bengbu City can establish a temple fair council, attract-heritage experts and merchant representatives, and formulate a scientific development plan.

Looking to the future, Tushan Temple Fair should aim for the goal of a strong cultural country become a symbol of "perceivable Chinese civilization". With the empowerment of technology and international dissemination, temple fairs can not only inherit culture but also showcase Chinese wisdom on world stage. General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out: "Without a high degree of cultural confidence and the prosperity of culture, there will be no great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" The revitalization of Tushan Temple Fair is a vivid practice of this idea.

6. CONCLUSION

As a living heritage of a millennium-old custom, the Tu Shan Yu Wang Temple Fair plays a multifaceted role in the construction of culturally strong socialist China: it is a spiritual bond to enhance cultural identity, a service platform to promote cultural benefits for the people, an economic engine to boost the integration of culture and, and also a communication carrier to innovate cultural expressions. Through the paths of adhering to the original, innovation, regional synergy, and living inheritance and integrated dissemination, the temple fair has realized an organic combination of tradition and modernity, and provided a paradigm for the creative transformation and innovative development of traditional culture.

The construction of a culturally nation is a long-term task that requires the continuous empowerment of folk activities like temple fairs. The case of the Tu Shan Temple Fair shows that only by rooting in history being close to life, and facing the future can traditional folkways be revitalized. On the new journey of the new era, we should deeply explore the cultural value of temple fair, and let it become

an important fulcrum for building Chinese spirit, Chinese value, and Chinese strength, and contribute to the construction of modern civilization of the Chinese nation.

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