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When Tradition Meets Modernity — The Contemporary Changes of the "Sanyuesan" Festival of She Ethnic Group in Jingning, Zhejiang Province

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Abstract

This study discusses the contemporary changes of the "Sanyuesan" festival of the She ethnic group in Jingning by collecting relevant literature and conducting field investigation. Qualitative analysis is mainly carried out with participatory observation and in-depth interview as research tools. This paper mainly summarizes the change track and characteristics of the She's "Sanyuesan" festival. This study mainly explores the changes of the times of the She People's "Sanyuesan" festival from the aspects of connotation and function, form and content, subject composition of participation and cultural space. The research results are helpful to explore the historical context and cultural space of the contemporary construction of She's "Sanyuesan" festival music.

Keywords: She ethnic group, Sanyuesan, Festival celebration, Change

Introduction

The She ethnic group is an ancient minority in Southeast China, and it is also a typical group scattered across the region. In the long process of history, unafraid of hardships and dangers, She people have created a splendid history and culture with their own diligence and wisdom, leaving a rich cultural heritage. As the second batch of national intangible cultural heritage, their "Sanyuesan" (Category: folk custom; No.: X - 73) is emitting a bright and unique brilliance with its distinctive ethnic temperament, rich cultural meaning and active form of expression.

Jingning, located in East China, is the only She Autonomous County in China. Since it was established as a county in 1984, Jingning She Autonomous County has successively held such cultural festivals as She Township Cultural Festival, Festival Customs and "Sanyuesan" Festival Celebration of She Township in China. Since 2007, it has been uniformly named "Sanyuesan of She Township in China". In 2012, it won the title of "the most distinctive ethnic festival", in 2016, Jingning She Autonomous County was awarded "China brand festival demonstration base", and in 2017, China's She Township "Sanyuesan" and the fourth She



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ethnic customs tourism culture festival of Zhejiang Province won the national "most charming Festival City (region)" award.

Research objectives

In order to explore the cultural space and historical context of the contemporary construction of She People's "Sanyuesan" festival music in Jingning, Zhejiang Province;

Research Scope

1. Content scope

The contemporary changes in the connotation and function, form and content, main body composition of participation and festival cultural space of the She ethnic group,

2. Regional scope

It involves Southwest Zhejiang (Lishui, Quzhou, Jinhua, Wenzhou), and Ningde, Fujian. The focus is on the scene of the "Sanyuesan" festival in Jingning She Autonomous County, Lishui.

3. Study period

The study lasts for 12 months, from June 2020 to June 2021.

Research Method

1. Research methods

This study is a qualitative study, which aims to study the four aspects of the contemporary changes of the She ethnic group's "Sanyuesan" festival.

2. Research process

It determines its background of the problem and research objectives, study and analyze relevant theories and literature, and use investigation and research to develop the conceptual framework from theories, concepts and literature review.

Through literature review, this paper clarifies the context of the contemporary changes of She people's "Sanyuesan" festival, forms mutual evidence and interpretation with the results of field investigation, and obtains the reasons and characteristics of the changes.



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Research Results

I. The Origin of “Sanyuesan” Festival

Historically, the She ethnic group has been migrating for thousands of years, living in the open, slashing and burning fields all the way, and has gone through hardships, which has created a ethnic character of perseverance, loyalty and enthusiasm. At the same time, She people always have the saying that "songs do not depart from customs, and customs do not depart from songs." “Sanyuesan” is a manifestation of She people's ethnic character, its customs and spiritual beliefs. There are many popular sayings about the origin of "Sanyuesan", among which is about Lei Wanxing, the ancient hero of She people, who led the She army to fight against the officers and soldiers. When besieged in the mountains and cut off food, they used wurenguo (the fruit of *Vaccinium bracteatum* Thunb) to feed their hunger, which helped them get through the spring famine and win the victory of anti encirclement and suppression. Since then, on the third day of Lunar March, She people collected the leaves, soaked the glutinous rice in the juice of the leaves, and cooked them to make black rice to commemorate the victory of the resistance against the enemy, and eventually forming a folk custom and inheriting it from generation to generation. Its earliest practices included "doing merit", "eating black rice" and "singing folk songs". With the development of the times, the folk custom function has changed from offering sacrifices to ancestors for happiness to entertainment and other cultural diversities. Today, She people's “Sanyuesan” has become a grand festival for She people's cultural inheritance and exhibition, cultural exchange and folk tourism , which has made great contributions to the development of local tourism culture, the revitalization of rural economy and the unity of ethnic relations.

II. An overview of the traditional "Sanyuesan" of She people in Jingning

"Sanyuesan" of the She ethnic group in Jingning, Zhejiang Province, is a festival custom passed down from generation to generation by the She people. It is distributed in the She villages where She people live and multiply, especially in Chengzhao, Hexi, Waishe, Zhengkeng, Dongkeng and other towns where She people live. The descendants of the She ethnic group, meanwhile, spread to Lanxi, Longyou, Taishun, Jiande, Qingtian, Suichang, Lishui, Yunhe and other towns and cities in the province, with the farthest one moving to Tongqing County, Sichuan Province, and thereby the "Sanyuesan" of She people radiated from Jingning to such places.



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The traditional "Sanyuesan" practices of the She people in Jingning mainly include:

1. Eating WuFan. The content of the practice mainly includes making black-colored rice, eating it and giving it to relatives and friends as gifts. It is said that after eating black rice, you are not afraid of ants while climbing the mountain.
2. Singing to each other. The duel song of She people is the highlight of "Sanyuesan" practice. On the big day, as the night falls, She people gather around the burning bonfire and sing folk songs to each other. Most part of the practice is in memory of their ancestors, praising the true, the good and the beautiful, and praising the great changes of the motherland and the place where they thrive.
3. Go to the dance floor. On the day, both men and women of the She ethnic group are dressed in festival costumes, rushing to the dance hall. There are torch dance, dance to wood flapping the magic sword, bamboo pole dance and so on. There are also dragon lantern dance, lion dance and fish lantern dance with local characteristics, which present an auspicious and festive atmosphere.
4. She folk traditional sports competition. The folk traditional sports of She people include rock drilling, playing the stool, belly sticking, holding the bar, chasing the boar, etc. Compared with modern times, the traditional "Sanyuesan" festival of She people is relatively simple and unsophisticated, but the participation of She people is high. Almost all of them participate in the celebration, which is closely related to the local social conditions and economic environment at the time.

III. The contemporary changes of Jingning She People's "Sanyuesan"

Since April 22, 1985, She people's traditional "Sanyuesan" festival was held, and the local authority organised a grand meeting in Hexi Town to celebrate the formal establishment of China's first She Autonomous County. Since the establishment, She people have held grand festival folk performance activities annually when spring flowers bloom. Since 2007, Jingning has been using the brand name of "Sanyuesan of She Township in China". Based on a series of activities such as special folk culture exhibition and traditional sports festival, "Sanyuesan" has become an indispensable cultural feast in Jingning, which has better inherited and developed the culture of She people. The scale, form, content and influence of the festival have been greatly improved, especially in recent years, considering its whole scene is grand and lively, it lasts much longer and the festival content is more diversified, covering almost all aspects of its traditional culture. It fully embodies the new characteristics of the times of "cultural platform, economic drama".



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With social progress and economic development in the region, "Sanyuesan" of She people has gradually become a cultural name card for the development of tourism economy in Jingning She Autonomous County of Zhejiang Province. Thus, the content and the derived significance of "Sanyuesan" have considerably exceeded the traditional "WuFan Festival", which includes artistic performances, singing competitions, costume performances, sports competitions, photography and painting, academic research, food promotion and many other cultural projects of large-scale festival celebrations. The contemporary change and construction process of "Sanyuesan" of She people vividly reflects the interesting theme of "traditional invention", and reflects the delicate position of "culture" in the economic development of ethnic minorities. The specific performance is as follows:

i) The change of festival connotation and function

Traditional She people's "Sanyuesan" is also called "Folk Song Festival" and "WuFan Festival". Singing folk songs reflects the ethnic characteristics of She ethnic group, such as "taking songs as the media" and "speaking with songs"; Eating black rice is not only for ancestor worship, but also a folk custom. The traditional "Sanyuesan" WuFan Festival has basically four cultural connotations: commemorating national heroes, worshiping the ancestors of She people, praying for peace and harvest. However, in recent years, with the acceleration of globalization and urbanization, social and economic development, the economic function of culture has been gradually valued and explored. The "Sanyuesan" festival with the characteristics of She ethnic group has naturally become a platform for the development of tourism economy and a cultural card for promoting the image of Jingning She Autonomous County in Zhejiang Province. The connotation of the festival has also changed, that is, from the original pure memorial connotation of exorcising evil and worshiping ancestors for happiness to the political and economic connotation of seeking entertainment, unity and development.

The traditional "Sanyuesan" WuFan Festival not only has the function of offering sacrifices to gods, but also has the social function of free communication, emotional connection, blood relationship and ethnic relationship among the people, and moreover, the agricultural function of praying for a good harvest. Nevertheless, the traditional folk custom function of "Sanyuesan" is gradually weakened, and then it is transformed into the direction of tourism economy, national unity, cultural exchange and display.



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ii) The changes of festival forms and contents

The main contents of the traditional "Sanyuesan" Festival are outings in the countryside, courtyards and ancestral halls, singing to each other, eating black rice and sacrificial activities. Among them, singing to each other has become an important part of She people's spontaneous celebration of the festival as well as young men and women's expression of love. Nowadays, there are couplets in "Sanyuesan", but their content mainly praises the modernization, reform and opening up and other contents with the flavor of the times. Even the traditional love songs are weakened due to the weakening of the marriage custom function of "Sanyuesan". In reality, the "Sanyuesan" festival of She people has been transformed into a platform for ethnic gatherings, where singers from relevant regions have been invited to sing their own local folk songs, and other non-She organizations such as the Central Ethnic song and dance troupe and Taiwan ethnic minorities have also been invited to get together for a gala. Eating black rice is also different from taking family as a unit in the past. Nowadays, not every household of She people eats black rice on Lunar March 3rd. In order to offer tourists black rice on the day, the organizer has designated the supply place. The ancestor worship ceremony has also changed from private to public, from the original stage of producing "self" to the stage of performing for "audience".

In addition to the changes of the traditional activities of singing songs and eating WuFan to worship ancestors, the She people's "Sanyuesan" festival has also integrated the activities with the cultural characteristics, commercial value and publicity value of the She people, including She tea, She Mother, She art, She flavor, She scenery, She craftsmanship, She music, She dance, She product, She painting and so on. Special attention has been paid to the integrated development of "Sanyuesan" Festival and tourism economy, and the main participants of the festival have been transformed into tourists. The tourism department has carefully planned "folk experience tour" and "ecological leisure tour" and other high-quality routes for the Festival, and cooperated with social media to carry out publicity activities. Taking "marketization" as an important festival idea, the economic function of She people's "Sanyuesan" Festival has been highlighted.

iii) The changes of the participants of festivals

Before 1984, She people lived in a relatively closed area and continued their own way of life. The folk customs retained their traditional characteristics. They spontaneously took the family as a unit to "worship their ancestors" and the family as a unit to "eat black rice". Thus, the main participants were family members and family members, which presented



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the characteristics of self-entertainment, spontaneity and group. After the establishment of Jingning She Autonomous County, the administrative means of the government have been involved in the construction of She identity and promoting the development of She culture. The government gave full play to its administrative advantages, consciously explored and integrated the folk customs, culture and art of the She people, and became the initiator and organizer of the "Sanyuesan" festival of the She people. At this time, the "Sanyuesan" festival of the She people became a big gathering and get-together of the She ethnic group and other brother ethnic groups, and also an exhibition of the She culture. With the deepening of reform and opening up as well as the development of market economy, the "Sanyuesan" festival has become the "cultural platform" of "economic drama", and the participants of festival have been diversified with the change of its function.

In order to further expand the popularity of the regional brand of "She Township in China" and give full play to the tourism economic function of She culture, relevant media, enterprises, experts and foreign tourists have become the important participants in the "Sanyuesan" festival.

iv) The change of festival culture space

As an important folk activity of She people, the "Sanyuesan" also has a specific ritual space environment. The traditional ritual space of "Sanyuesan" mainly include the family courtyard and ancestral hall. Family holidays are relatively simple, making and eating black rice at home, and giving it to relatives and friends as gifts. In addition, She people go out to sing in pairs or at home. They sing all the time and everywhere. She people not only sing folk songs on various festivals or festive occasions, but also express their feelings and speak for them in daily life. It can be seen that She folk songs have a relatively rich space for antiphonal singings, and the requirements for space are relatively free, such as she's residence, ridge in the mountains, bamboo grove and stream side and so on. However, for festival activities, antiphonal singings can also have specific space restrictions, that is, she memorial temple hall or ancestral hall.

With the acceleration of globalization and modernization, the She people are more open and confident, and actively integrate themselves into social interaction and development. Therefore, the space for ceremony activities of the "Sanyuesan" festival is becoming increasingly wider, extending from the past courtyard, field, ancestral temple to the square, auditorium and other large-scale public activity venues. At the same time, due to the development of digital media and we media, it has become fashionable and normal to hold



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"Sanyuesan" celebration activities offline and online simultaneously. In particular, online celebration booms dramatically during and post pandemic era.

Conclusion and Discussion

1. The above changes reflect a kind of "acculturation" phenomenon of the traditional culture of the She ethnic group under the impact and influence of modern civilization and under the open ethnic policy and economic and cultural life. It is also the self-adjustment of its own cultural development. At the same time, it also metaphors the era choice of game, compromise and win-win cooperation between She people and Han people and other ethnic groups in the contemporary context of intertwined capital, power and discourse; Under the background of globalization, it is a practical practice to respond to the requirements of the times of the community of common destiny of mankind, strengthen national unity and realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

2. From the traditional She folk custom "WuFan Festival" to the modern multi sound landscape "Sanyuesan" festival, this is not only the reconstruction of the sound structure of She Folk Festival ceremony, but also the change of its ritual symbol and cultural function. That is because the former is mostly based on a kind of folk sacrificial activities in the context of sacredness, while the latter is more with stage aesthetic nature of Modern Folk Festival ceremony performance. This remarkable change of performance space, performance text, ritual symbol and cultural function clearly shows the interaction and practice of power and discourse such as "state power", "folk power" and "experts and scholars".

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