

Research on the Revitalization of World Cultural Heritage in the Grand Canal under the Perspective of Cultural and Creative Canal

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Abstract: *This thesis focuses on the revitalisation of the World Cultural Heritage of the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal from the perspective of cultural creativity, discusses its theoretical basis, analyses in detail the current situation of cultural creativity, and then proposes a series of targeted revitalisation strategies. By exploring the cultural connotation, promoting the integration of innovative design and science and technology, as well as strengthening the training and cooperation of talents, it aims to provide useful reference and practical guidance for the protection and sustainable development of the World Cultural Heritage of the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal, and to realise the synergy between cultural inheritance and economic and social development.*

Keywords: Grand Canal; World Cultural Heritage; Cultural Creation.

1. INTRODUCTION

General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that ‘the Grand Canal is a valuable wealth left to us by our ancestors, and it is a flowing culture, which should be protected, inherited and utilized in an integrated manner’ and ‘cultural heritage carries the genes and bloodline of the Chinese nation, and it is a non-renewable and irreplaceable resource of the excellent Chinese civilization’, all reflect the importance of the cultural heritage of the Grand Canal. In the context of cultural heritage protection, the world cultural heritage of the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal has returned to the social field of view because of its traditional architectural style, unique folklore and original spatial form. As the international community and the Chinese government pay increasing attention to the protection of cultural heritage, the protection and utilisation of the Grand Canal has become an important part of the economic and social development of various places, an important source for cultivating local characteristic industries and promoting economic development, an important way to shape regional characteristics and awaken people's identity, and plays a positive role in promoting economic development, social progress and the protection of advanced culture.

As the earliest, largest and longest man-made canal in the world, the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal carries a deep historical and cultural heritage. It is the result of the interaction between human activities and the natural environment in the historical period, and records the information of social economy, politics, culture and folklore from different sides at that time, with rich historical and cultural connotations [1]. Under the background of today's booming cultural and creative industries, how to achieve the revitalisation of the World Cultural Heritage of the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal with the power of cultural and creative industries has become an important issue in the field of cultural heritage protection and development. This is not only related to the inheritance and continuation of the heritage, but also has far-reaching significance in promoting the sustainable development of regional economy, culture and society.

The purpose of this paper is to analyse the path and strategy of the revitalization of the World Cultural Heritage of the Jiangsu Section of the Grand Canal from the perspective of cultural creativity, and through systematic research on the characteristics and values of the heritage as well as the existing cases of cultural creativity practice, to dig out the experiences and models that can be popularized, so as to provide theoretical support and practical references for the construction of a more scientific and effective revitalization system, so as to promote the creative transformation and innovative development of the World Cultural Heritage of the Jiangsu Section of the Grand Canal in modern society and highlight its unique charm. to promote the creative transformation and innovative development of the World Cultural Heritage of the Jiangsu Section of the Grand Canal in modern society, and to highlight its unique charm and contemporary value.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE WORLD CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE JIANGSU SECTION OF THE GRAND CANAL

2.1 Heritage Composition and Distribution

The Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal stretches for hundreds of kilometres, and its heritage composition is rich and diverse. The river is crisscrossed like a bloodline running through the land of Jiangsu, connecting many cities along the route. In these cities, there are many representative heritage sites, such as ancient wharves, bridges, locks and other water conservancy facilities, which bear witness to the important historical functions of the Grand Canal in transportation and water regulation. In addition, rich historical and cultural districts, ancient architectural complexes and canal-related folk culture sites remain along the route. In terms of geographical distribution, the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal flows through a number of cities, including Xuzhou, Suqian, Huai'an, Yangzhou, Zhenjiang, Changzhou, Wuxi, Suzhou, etc. The heritage of each city has its own distinctive features, which are intertwined with the local natural environment and humanistic traditions. For example, the Qingkou Junction in Huai'an, as a key node where the canal meets the Yellow River and the Huaihe River, has a complex and sophisticated engineering system that demonstrates the superior wisdom of ancient water conservancy engineering; while Suzhou is famous for its many ancient canal towns, where ancient streets, bridges, and houses make up a stunning picture of the water towns of the south of the Yangtze River, carrying a wealth of historical and cultural information.

2.2 The Relationship between Cultural Creation and Cultural Heritage Revitalisation

As the material carrier of cultural heritage, cultural and creative products can present the history and culture of the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal to the public in an intuitive and vivid form [2]. For example, comics and illustrated books based on historical stories and folk customs along the Grand Canal, as well as handicrafts made by miniaturising the canal landscape, etc., these cultural and creative products make the originally abstract and distant cultural heritage within reach. By displaying and selling them in tourist attractions, cultural venues, online platforms and other channels, the cultural and creative products can widely disseminate the cultural information of the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal, attract more people's attention, and thus raise the public's awareness of the cultural heritage. Meanwhile, cultural and creative activities such as cultural exhibitions and theme festivals also provide the public with opportunities to personally participate in and experience the culture of the Grand Canal, further deepening their understanding and memory of the heritage.

The development of cultural and creative industries has brought significant economic benefits to the World Cultural Heritage of the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal. On the one hand, the sale of cultural and creative products directly creates economic benefits. From special souvenirs and handicrafts to cultural and creative clothing and household items, the rich and diversified cultural and creative products satisfy the needs of different consumers and form a consumer market with potential. On the other hand, the rise of cultural and creative industries has driven the development of related industries, such as tourism, catering and accommodation. Tourism routes themed on cultural and creative products have attracted more tourists to visit the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal, prolonging their stay and increasing tourism spending. In addition, the cultural and creative industries are able to attract investment, promote the prosperity of the regional economy, and provide financial support for the protection and further development of cultural heritage.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION OF CULTURAL AND CREATIVE PRODUCTS IN JIANGSU SECTION OF THE GRAND CANAL

3.1 Types and Characteristics of Cultural and Creative Products

Traditional crafts-type cultural and creative products occupy an important position in the cultural and creative creation of the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal. Taking Yangzhou paper-cut bookmarks as an example, it combines the art of paper-cutting with the cultural form of bookmarks, showing the natural scenery and historical buildings of the Grand Canal with delicate paper-cutting techniques, which is both of artistic appreciation and practical value, and has become a treasured product for cultural enthusiasts to collect. The pompom hairpin is also a typical representative of traditional handicrafts. The pompom is made with exquisite craftsmanship, presenting a variety of flowers, animals and other motifs in bright colours and exquisite shapes, and is worn in the hair, adding beauty and passing on the culture of traditional handicrafts. These traditional crafts cultural and creative products

promote the protection and development of traditional handicrafts while inheriting and promoting the culture of the Grand Canal.

Fashion creative cultural and creative products pay more attention to the integration with modern fashion elements [3]. The Grand Canal Beast T-shirt is inspired by the legendary beasts of the Grand Canal and reinterpreted using modern illustration style, combining the image of the ancient beasts with the fashionable T-shirt, which is popular among young people. The nail stickers are patterned with the water ripples, bridges and other elements of the Grand Canal, providing a unique decorative option for fashionable women. In addition, there are also fashionable and creative cultural and creative products such as mobile phone cases, backpacks and jewellery with the theme of the Grand Canal, which integrate the culture of the Grand Canal into daily life with novel designs and convenient ways of use, so that the cultural heritage can be interpreted and spread in a new way in modern fashion.

3.2 Advantages and Shortcomings of Cultural and Creative Development

The development of cultural creation in Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal has many advantages. Firstly, the rich cultural resources provide a solid foundation for cultural creation. Numerous historical and cultural relics and folk cultures along the route provide a constant source of inspiration for the development of cultural and creative products. Secondly, Jiangsu has a developed economy and a large number of talents, with strong design, R&D and production capacity. The close cooperation between universities, research institutions and enterprises in the field of cultural and creative products can promote the innovation and industrialisation of cultural and creative products. In addition, Jiangsu's favourable geographical location, convenient transportation and developed tourism market provide a broad platform for the sales and dissemination of cultural and creative products.

However, there are some shortcomings in the development of cultural and creative products in Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal. In terms of innovation, some of the cultural and creative products lack depth and uniqueness, and are homogenised, failing to fully explore the connotation and characteristics of the Grand Canal culture. Insufficient brand building, lack of cultural and creative brands with national and even international influence, insufficiently distinctive brand image, market competitiveness needs to be improved. In terms of market promotion, publicity channels are limited and marketing means are not diversified enough, resulting in some excellent cultural and creative products not being widely known and recognised. In addition, the cultural and creative industry chain is not yet perfect, and the synergistic development between upstream and downstream enterprises is not close enough, which affects the overall benefits of the cultural and creative industry.

4. STRATEGIES FOR CULTURAL CREATION TO REVITALISE THE JIANGSU SECTION OF THE GRAND CANAL

4.1 Tap into the Cultural Connotation and Create Characteristic IPs.

4.1.1 Establish a cultural resources database

Using modern information technology such as big data and cloud computing, comprehensively collect, arrange and analyse the historical and cultural information of the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal, including cultural relics and monuments, historical documents, folk customs and folklore. A resource database covering rich cultural elements is established to provide data support and creative sources for the development of cultural and creative products. Through in-depth excavation of the resource database, the core value and characteristic elements of the Grand Canal culture can be accurately grasped, laying the foundation for the creation of representative cultural and creative IPs.

4.1.2 Selecting big IPs for development

Among the many cultural elements of the Grand Canal, select big IPs with wide influence and unique charms for key development. For example, taking the two lakes (Taihu Lake and Hongze Lake), two museums (Yangzhou China Grand Canal Museum and Huai'an Canal Museum), two towns (Zhouzhuang and Yaowan Ancient Town) and two gardens (Suzhou Garden and Yangzhou Slim West Lake) as the core, digging deeply into the cultural stories, historical backgrounds and featured landscapes behind them, and creating a series of cultural and creative IPs with distinctive personalities and strong attraction. Through literature, film and television, animation, games and other forms of all-round creation and promotion, it will enhance the brand awareness and market influence of the cultural creations of the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal.

4.2 Integration of Innovation Design and Technology

4.2.1 Innovative Design Methods

Encourage cultural and creative designers to break through traditional thinking and adopt innovative design methods. For example, in the design of traditional crafts cultural and creative products, modern design concepts and methods are introduced to reinterpret and combine traditional patterns and shapes to create works with traditional flavour and modern aesthetics. At the same time, focusing on user experience, we optimise the function, form and material of the products to improve the practicality and fun of the cultural and creative products. Take the new paper-cutting expression as an example, it can be combined with three-dimensional modelling, light and shadow effects and other elements, so that the paper-cutting works from plane to three-dimensional, from static to dynamic, and to enhance its artistic infectious force.

4.2.2 Technology-enabled Cultural Creation

Actively promote the in-depth integration of science and technology with cultural and creative industries, and inject new vitality into the development of cultural and creative industries in the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal. Use virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), artificial intelligence (AI) and other technologies to create immersive cultural and creative experience projects [4]. For example, the development of the Grand Canal cultural VR tourism experience allows tourists to immerse themselves in the historical changes and cultural charms of the Grand Canal; the use of AI technology to design intelligent cultural and creative products, such as tour guide robots with voice explanation functions, and intelligent systems for recommending cultural and creative products according to user preferences. In addition, digital museums and cultural halls can be developed to display the cultural heritage of the Grand Canal more vividly and comprehensively by means of digital display, and expand the spatial and temporal scope of cultural dissemination.

4.3 Strengthening Talent Cultivation and Co-operation

4.3.1 Establish talent cultivation mechanism

Strengthen the cultivation system of cultural and creative talents and establish a multi-level and multi-disciplinary talent cultivation mechanism. Offer relevant professional courses in colleges and universities to cultivate professionals with solid cultural foundation, innovative design ability and market awareness. At the same time, it will strengthen the training and continuing education of in-service personnel, and improve the professional quality and skill level of cultural and creative practitioners. Encourage interdisciplinary talent training, promote exchanges and co-operation among talents in the fields of culture, art, design, science and technology, and cultivate a group of composite talents who understand both culture and technology. In addition, a talent incentive mechanism will be established to attract and retain outstanding cultural and creative talents, and provide a talent guarantee for the development of cultural and creative industries in the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal.

4.3.2 Promote regional cooperation

Strengthen cooperation between cities along the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal to achieve resource sharing and complementary advantages. Establish a regional cultural and creative industry alliance, jointly formulate development plans, and collaborate to promote the development of cultural and creative projects, brand building and marketing. Promote cooperation and exchanges among cultural and creative enterprises, and encourage them to carry out activities such as joint creation, joint production and joint marketing, so as to form an industrial cluster effect and enhance the overall competitiveness of the cultural and creative industries in the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal. Meanwhile, it will strengthen cultural and creative exchanges and co-operation with other regions at home and abroad, introduce advanced concepts, technologies and experiences, and promote cultural and creative creations of the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal to a broader market.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This paper discusses the revitalisation of the World Cultural Heritage of the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal from the perspective of cultural creativity, and clarifies the important role of cultural creativity in enhancing the

recognition of heritage and promoting the transformation of economic value, as well as the close connection between regional culture and cultural creativity design. Through a comprehensive analysis of the current situation of cultural creativity in the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal, the advantages and shortcomings of its development are revealed. On this basis, a series of revitalisation strategies are proposed, such as excavating cultural connotations, creating characteristic IPs, integrating innovative design with science and technology, and strengthening talent training and cooperation. The implementation of these strategies will help promote the creative transformation and innovative development of the world cultural heritage of the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal, and achieve the win-win goal of cultural heritage and economic and social development.

5.2 Research Suggestions

Future research can focus on the changes in market demand and consumption trends of cultural and creative products to better meet the increasingly diverse needs of consumers. Further explore how to strengthen the balance between cultural heritage protection and cultural and creative development, and ensure that the authenticity and integrity of cultural heritage are not compromised while being developed and utilised. At the same time, strengthen research on assessing the social benefits of the cultural and creative industries, and comprehensively measure the impact of cultural and creative development on regional cultural heritage, social harmony and environmental improvement. In addition, with the continuous emergence of emerging technologies, continuous research will be conducted on how to better apply them to the practice of cultural and creative revitalisation of the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal, so as to enhance the level of protection and utilisation of cultural heritage.

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