Modern Construction of Traditional Ethnic Festival: Taking "March 3rd" of the She People in Jingning as an Example

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Based on the new classical "Structure-Function Theory" this article, by putting a traditional ethnic festival under the background of a modern society investigate how a traditional ethnic festival, as a kind of "structural heritage", can come to an adjustment with the modern society in the process of integration and development of tourism, and how it becomes an important embodiment of development of tourism and, at the same time, optimize its tourist economic structure. The research shows that, the modern structure of the traditional ethnic festival proves that, though an ethnic festival might be a most stable content in the ethnic culture, it can also be adjusted and changed in order to adapt itself to the new trend of society and economy, and thus it can produce a structure and function in line with that modern society. As for the modern construction of the traditional ethnic festival itself, it is, on the one hand, built on a gain of some modern characteristics during the developing process of the time and society on the basis of the internal changes (including a transforming of function and expanding of structure);on the other hand, the successful realization of a modern construction of the traditional ethnic festival cannot be fostered without the support and promotion of external forces including "umbrella" power with the government as the main body and "honeycomb power" with enterprise and people as a major body too.

Keywords: traditional ethnic festival, modern construction, new classical "Structure- Function" Theory, She nationality in Jingning

INTRODUCTION

In the past people's understanding of tourist items was limited to natural resources such as famous mountains, rivers and lakes, oceans and islands, forest and grasslands, desert, gobi etc. Those constituted key resources for the early development of tourism, as well as key routes for sightseeing for contracted tourist groups. However, the overemphasis of or limitation to natural resources have made tourism fall into a kind of trap with a low development in "collecting tickets in circled scenes". As the society and economy developed, cultural tourism has gradually become a new trend of world tourism. In 2004, a relevant investigation from WTTC about the purpose of tourism for people indicated that, among the five purposes including business, vacation, shopping, exploration and culture experience, the last ranked the first (Wang 2017:15). In recent years, cultural tourism has become a new fashion in the Chinese tourism industry in

concert with the development trend of world tourism, and it is showing even more rapid momentum nowadays.

Under the background of a rapid integration of culture and tourism, governments in more and more regions have made traditional ethnic festivals a tourist project for deeper exploration, such as Water-Sprinkling Festival of the Dai ethnic group, "March 3rd" of the She, "April 8th" of the Miao, and festival tourism thus emerges at the right moment. As a most common and abundant element among those forming an ethnic culture, traditional ethnic festivals almost cover every aspect of life of all ethnic groups. On the one hand, the diet, clothing, building, song and dance with ethical flavors, religious faith, literature and art can all be reflected in ethnic festivals. On the other hand, traditional ethnic festivals can also embody the cultural factors of an ethnic group, such as its social structure, regime, system, laws and rules, etc. In this sense, a traditional ethnic festival is like a mirror which can truly reflect the facets of ethnic life, record the changes there in, show the overall style of that people and echo the changes in the social environs of the ethnic group (Zhang and Hou 2020; Yang 2003).

Along with the deeper changes in economic and social structure, new modern symbols and content have been added into a traditional ethnic festival, endowing the festival with unique survival methods and features, and thus its real function and developing space been gradually expanded. Some scholars point out that, as a tourist attraction with distinctive features, traditional ethnic festivals have undergone a transition from the edge to the center driven by tourism (Li 2009), and have become an important means and capital for promoting the development of local tourism and economy (Janet 2006). Whether in or outside of China, festival events and tourism are developing vigorously, and have gradually become one of the fastest growing leisure product in the world leisure market (Getz 1991; Nicholson and Pearce 2001). Especially in the minority ethnic areas, with unique cultural charms and enjoyable experiences, participation and fun, festival events attract more and more tourists, not only driving forward the development of society and economy in an ethnic area, but also helping promote the tourist image building and traditional ethnic culture, and therefore optimizing the environment of tourist destinations in there to some extent (Ma *et al.* 2017).

In a sense, the traditional festival in the minority ethnic area has shown its unique survival methods and features under the background of tourism development. In other words, the development of the traditional festival in the ethnic area has reshaped the folk traditional festival there. Based on the practice of integrated development between the traditional festival "March 3rd" of the She people in Jingning, Zhejiang province and tourism there, this article tries to discuss a modern construction of its traditional ethnic festival. Specifically, how can the traditional ethnic festival carry out its adjustment to the needs of a modern society in its integration with tourism? How can it become a key carrier of tourist culture and optimize its tourism and economic structure? In other words, how can the traditional ethnic festival make for an industrialization of tourism and play a role in protecting the minority ethnic culture and promote the development of society and economy?

RESEARCH METHODS

Traditional festivals of ethnic minorities are precious spiritual wealth created and inherited throughout the development of the nation, but it is also an important component of the specific ethnic culture. In the current academic world research on traditional ethnic festivals can be roughly divided into 3 levels: the first is "ontological research". Research on this level mainly focuses on the ethnic festivals themselves with nothing else involved, e.g. the origin, type and main feature of a traditional ethnic festival. Gao Jia has studied the origin of Chinese traditional festivals and pointed out that, season and climate, ethnic culture and folklore are the main sources of Chinese them (Gao 2012). Based on different standards, ethnic traditional festivals can be divided into different categories. Based on properties, there are single-nature festivals and comprehensive-nature festivals, and based on their major contents there are agricultural festivals, memorial festivals, sacrifice festivals, social and entertainment festivals, and celebration festivals (Wu 2010). In terms of features, ethnic traditional festivals usually are marked by agricultural culture, obvious commemorative feature, mass feature, inheritance feature, courtesy feature, epochal feature, ethnic feature and variability feature (Yang 2012). The second level is "cultural research". Compared

with"ontological research", "cultural research" goes further, to emphasize an analysis of the cultural connotations and values behind those traditional ethnic festivals. Li Hanqiu (2015) pointed out that, all kinds of celebrations held by people of various ethnic groups on the arrival of traditional ethnic festivals can help remind them of the core and connotations of their ethnic culture, enhance ethnic recognition and team spirit, thus serving to promote traditional ethnic culture and contributing to building a harmonious society at large. The third is the "economic and social analysis" level. Research on this level goes even further than the second one, by regarding traditional ethnic festivals as a kind of "structural heritage" putting them under the background of a transformation of the whole social structure, so as to make prominent the unique values of traditional ethnic festivals in the changing social structure and functions.

Zhang Jijiao, et al. proposed the new classical "Structure-Function Theory" (Zhang and Hou 2020; Du and Zhang 2020; Zhang 2018) to analyze the transformation of cultural heritage "from tradition to modernity", and came up with the three dimensions for research on cultural heritage, ontological structure, external structure and autogenous structure. The "ontological structure" dimension regards cultural heritage as a cultural capital and resource, and explores material and intangible cultural heritage themselves; the "external structure" dimension puts cultural heritage in Bourdieu's "Field" or Giddens' "Structure" (including big domain and structure represented by city, area and country, and small domain and structure by old street, towns with features and traditional villages), and explains how a cultural heritage gets affected by its external structure; the "autogenous structure" dimension regards a cultural heritage as a structural heritage, and believes that cultural heritage can not only be expanded to produce all kinds of enterprises, organizations or even industrial clusters, but also influence its the external structure (Zhang 2020). On this basis, Zhang et al. (2020) conducted research on Chinese traditional ethnic festivals like the Bullfighting Festival of the Miao people, Water-Sprinkling Festival of the Dai, Winter Fishing Festival around the Chagan Lake and Ha Festival of the Jing. They believed that a traditional ethnic festival is a combination of attributed and self-living factors, not only developing actively on its own, but also undergoing some structural and functional changes of its own, and thus producing some self-living or self-expanding structure, self-living or self-expanding function. Based on Zhang Jijiao's new classical "Structure-Function Theory", this article follows the "economic and social analysis" of the traditional ethnic festival (Zhang 2021), and puts the ethnic traditional festival under the background of social modernization, so as to explore it as a kind of "structural heritage", to see how the traditional ethnic festival can realize a coexistence and link between tradition and modernity in the process of development and inheritance, become a kind of capital with both economic and cultural values, and drive the economic development and rural revitalization of the ethnic areas concerned.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

During the transformation from a traditional society to a modern one, various cultural factors usually converge and get utilized in the form of economic capital. In terms of its nature, this is a kind of conversion of the traditional ethnic festival from cultural resources to cultural or economic capital. As Zhang Jijiao, *et al.* pointed out in their research, a traditional ethnic festival was not only a kind of cultural capital and cultural structure, it had its autonomous initiative, the structure and function of attracting and configuring resources (Zhang 2020), and was able to make some structural and functional changes to form some kind of self-living or self-expanding structure and some self-living or self-expanding function (Zhang and Hou 2020), with the effect that it could become an important resource or capital for self-development and economic development under the background of the economic integration and cultural diversification at a larger scale. From a survey on the ethnic traditional festival "March 3rd" in the She autonomous county in Jingning we can find that, with the rapid transformation and development of social economy, the traditional ethnic festival has developed from being "traditional-negative-static" to "modern-autonomous- dynamic", and in so doing, it has actively formed some new functions and structures. Specifically, those are mainly reflected in the rich traditional ethnic festival factors, transformation of ethnic traditional festival functions, and anew industrial structure with the core sign of "culture-tourism" formed on this basis.

Rich Ethnic Traditional Festival Factors

Jingning in Zhejiang province is the only She nationality autonomous county in China, where the custom of "March 3rd" of the She people spreads. It is said that in the Tang dynasty the She's hero Lei Wanxing led some rebels to fight against the official army, and because of a lack of supplies, they chose to eat a kind of black wild fruit, and the whole army got cheered up in this way, successfully breaking through the enemy's block and having a final win. In order to commemorate this, the She people pick Vaccinium leaves, smash them or boil to get its juice, and use the juice to soak rice for one to two days, until the latter becomes pure black, and then steam the rice in a pot. Preparing and eating black rice has become one important event in the "March 3rd" festival of the She people. Hobsbawm (2004) believed: "For traditions, including the invented traditions, their targets and features rely on invariance. The past is related to such traditions, and no matter real, or invented, will bring some fixed (usually formalized) events, for example some repeated behavior." The She people attach as much importance to "March 3rd" festival as to the Spring Festival. On that day, apart from preparing the black rice, the She people will, after night falls, also hold bonfire parties, and perform traditional singing and dancing, such as the torch dance, wooden clap blade dance, bamboo dance, dragon lantern dance, lion dance, fish lantern dance, etc. Meanwhile, some She people's sports events are also carried out, such as asking stool, controlling stone under pillar, belly stick, controlling bar, and expelling wild boar. Every year on "March 3rd", the She people will slaughter cattle and offer sacrifices to their ancestors. In addition, they also choose this date as a romantic or wedding dav.

In the modern market economy, resources are of high importance, as they are the basis for competition and development in the market, and therefore, all kinds of resources, no matter material resources or intangible resources, will be developed and utilized maximally. It is firstly reflected in the more and more festival goods as "material symbols" of traditional ethnic festivals during the process of market economic development. From being single to complex, comprehensive to diversified, traditional ethnic festival has become a most distinctive feature of an ethnic culture (Yang 2003). During such a process, more new content has been added into the factors of a traditional ethnic festival. In the past, the initial symbol of "March 3rd" of the She people in Jingning was the black rice, i.e. the She people pick Vaccinium leaves, soak the glutinous rice in the tender leaf juice to make black rice for entertaining the guests, exorcising evil and praying. Currently, during the "March 3rd", besides the black rice, new meanings have been given to other festival goods, for example, "10 Bowls of She" is introduced in Jingning, based on the medicine culture of She nationality in conjunction with cookery, nutriology and traditional Chinese medicine, "10 Medicinal Cuisines of She" and "10 Dishes of She" have been created.

Secondly, the reflection of various festival factors is embodied in the multiple festival events as an "expression" of the traditional ethnic festival. Currently, apart from the original She singing and dancing, and folk sports, there are also new celebrating events on "March 3rd" based on the cultural theme for each year. For example, in 2018, the theme of "March 3rd" was "Show cultural confidence, promote ethnic spirit, push forward the rural revitalization", on which occasion were introduced She clothing design, She artwork design and manufacturing competition, unique She folk-customs, "harmonious and beautiful villages" talks with tourism celebrities, rural revitalization, She folk song collection, ethnic sports party, taste of She food, etc. Meanwhile, in each town there were also theme events such as "Thousands of Straits -- Fishing in the Bohai Sea", "Benevolence and Filial Piety Cultural Festival", "Rural Tourist Cultural Festival", "Boat Tracker Cultural Festival", etc. On the one hand, various festival events were the inevitable requirements of social and economic development and modern social culture building; on the other hand, they were closely linked with the improvement of daily life of the She people. Various festival events are alively reflection of the new atmosphere, new changes and achievements in the economic and social development of the She in Jingning. Ceremonious and multiple festival events add new elements and connotations into the traditional ethnic festival, resulting in an integration of the traditional ethnic festival with modern life. Meanwhile, as a kind of public cultural supply, the festival can better meet the multiple spiritual and cultural needs of people, and further improve the participation and satisfaction of people of all ethnic groups.

Thirdly, the various festival factors are reflected in the continuous expanding of the culture space of a traditional ethnic festival as an "interactive field". Cultural space is the location where a traditional cultural

event is held or traditional culture expressions are presented together, with both time and space elements (Zhang 2018). It is a public cultural space for a mixture and coexistence of folk traditional customs and modern needs, and also the space or domain where individual initiatives, dynamic roles and creativity can be fully shown. The cultural space of a traditional ethnic festival is not fixed but is a flowing, reproduction process. At first the cultural space of "March 3rd" was mainly of separate celebrations formed by people's voluntary organizations at domestic and private domains, while right now such celebrations in private domain have been gradually replaced by centralized celebrations organized by the government in the public domain. In 2021, "March 3rd" the 12th China She Folk Song Festival was held in the Dongnong She pastoral complex in Jingning, where She dancing, folk singing, intangible cultural heritage, snacks and the so-called "600" products from Jingning were exhibited. Besides, from the Performing Square to Phoenix Square in the main street of the Ancient She City, there were also centralized displays of "China's Best She" in She ethnic street of "March 3rd" in 2021. And in the way the holding time for the festival has been gradually fixed.Another important reflection of the expanding of cultural space of the traditional ethnic festival is the transformation from an on-site event to online virtual space. Especially affected by the pandemic of COVID-19, the large public event is suspended and some events are held online.

Transformation of the Function of the Traditional Ethnic Festival

As a special humanistic symbol gradually formed in long history (Xiao 2005), the traditional festivals of ethnic minorities carry rich historical and cultural connotations, and have become effective occasions of expressing homesickness and keeping on with traditional ethnic culture, thus playing a key role in the protection of intangible cultural heritage. In essence, a traditional ethnic festival is a kind of cultural resource possessing its own value. In a modern society, as social economy develops rapidly, there has been some functional change of a traditional ethnic festival, and some self-living or self-expanding functions are formed to produce new vigor and value to the festival.

As an "economic force", a traditional ethnic festival plays a key role in promoting development of tourism economy in minority ethnic areas, in which most people will render the local festival tourist resources into important parts in the display of traditional local culture of ethnic minorities (Li and Peng 2009). With its cultural display, a traditional ethnic festival can attract tourists to visit it and have fun, and prompt tourists to consume so as to make more benefit for local people. In the series events of "March 3rd" of the She people in Jingning, the "Four Seasons in Jingning" program with ethnic style, freshness, harvest and Spring Festival like feeling based on the current trend of cultural experience, rural leisure, summer vacation, body care and outdoor expansion has become a popular tourist event. "10 Bowls of She", "10 Dishes of She", "10 Medicinal Cuisines of She", "Bean Pastry of Yingchuan" and "China's Best She" special cuisine, together with the She handmade artwork shown in the She clothing pavilion, She handmade clothing and cloth shoes cultural pavilion, Xiaoqin She folk display room, She cultural innovation base and She silver museum, have been presented on the market now.

A traditional ethnic festival can be regarded as a "gathering force". As some scholar pointed out, in social life, people can use a ritual to overcome their difference in society, build a social order and common sense of belong. Ritual can provide people with an opportunity to meet and know each other and get together for common actions (Singerhoff 2009:5). Currently, the celebrations of "March 3rd" of the She in Jingning has turned from an autonomous folk event to a kind of construction with a purpose led by the government, and thus, through the platform of festival events, it can attract more people, especially those from other ethnic groups to come and experience the festival atmosphere, to the effect that they canalso gain knowledge, understanding, acceptance and recognition of the She's culture. A folk-custom always takes the recognition and faith of some common cultural concept as a premise, and people regulate own behavior by participating into common cultural events and, by following a common code of conduct, form a system of identity recognition. Therefore, to an individual in a modern society, acknowledging a common festival and participating into its recognized events one becomes a carrier of cultural identity and also a symbol of irreplaceable identity. Currently, the Han ethnic culture has gradually influenced the "March 3rd" of She ethnicity, having rendered the festival into a symbol of cultural identity recognition for people of all ethnic groups. That is to say, with this traditional ethnic festival as a carrier, through ritual interaction and culture

communication among different ethnic groups, they finally come to a common cultural recognition. People of all ethnic groups will possess common cultural memory by internalizing various excellent Chinese traditional ethnic cultural elements into one's own cultural mentality, and thus form a common spiritual core of the Chinese nation. In this process, the differences in culture between different ethnic groups will be gradually reduced, each ethnic group will feel more and more for others, their communication and interaction gradually increased, and finally a grand ethnic fusion realized.

A traditional ethnic festival can also serve as a "protection force". Traditions mostly hide behind daily life and are deep inside the mentality of people. The expression or presentation of a tradition requires a specific time or periodin the form of festive custom events. Therefore, a traditional ethnic festival becomes an important carrier of inheritance of ethnic culture. Since She nationality does not have their own writing, in the song competition on "March 3rd" people are required to sing in She spoken language, therefore objectively protecting the language. During the festival all She people will wear their traditional clothes, which is also for the protection and inheritance of their ethnic way of dressing. The concentrated display and expression of She wedding ceremonies, She song and dance, and She cuisine on the festival can further enhance the cultural memory of this ethnic group. Meanwhile, the festival also has the function of promoting some innovative development of She ethnic culture.

Structural Expansion of Traditional Ethnic Festival

This is mainly reflected in the formation of a festival tourism economic structure with a traditional ethnic festival as the core; in other words it is an economic hierarchy or system formed organically by all kinds of economic components, industries and products connected with the festival tourism. Specifically, the formation of an economic structure of festival tourism takes resources-gathering as a basis, their marketization as a premise, the industrial operation as a method, and the development of industrial chains as a breakthrough point. Therefore it is also a process of transformation for the traditional ethnic festival to turn from a cultural resource into a cultural industry.

All kinds of festival celebrating events traditional ethnic festivals can be easily remembered in the community concerned, and become a symbol of village culture inheritance. Their effective development and utilization can not only help increase the popularity of avillage, gain cohesion for the village, but also become a major impetus in promoting local economic development. In recent years, the county party committee and county government of Jingning have formulated a series of policies and measures to provide planning and guarantee for a market-oriented development of the traditional ethnic festival. In 2012, Jingning county formulated and issued an"Overall Plan of She Ethnic Cultural Development Base and Key Project", and set up an office of cultural industry, to guide the development of cultural industry in the county. In 2013, a leading team for the Jingning cultural construction and She ethnic cultural base construction was established, and in 2014, "She Ethnic Cultural Headquarter for Development Planning" and "Jingning She Autonomous County Cultural Industry Planning" were formulated, creating a "She Ethnic Cultural Headquarter" and industrial development of the She culture were thus put on the agenda. By deeply exploring the festival customs, She clothing, folk song, dance, sports and game, symbol and expressions on "March 3rd", Jingning county has made the festival an important platform for the local government to attract investment. In this manner the traditional ethnic festival can directly serve to promote the local economic construction.

Meanwhile, Jingning county is gradually creating an industrial cluster of cultural tourism relying on "March 3rd", which is meant to be a gathering of cultural industrial items. According to a certain correlation, many enterprises will gather in a specific range and form an organic industrial cluster based on the division of labor and cooperation. Currently, with the principle of using "the festival as a platform, tourism as a performance, to advocate ethnic culture", Jingning county is promoting the development of festival tourism relying on the advantages of She traditional culture, and with the She cultural industry mainly for "ethnic art creativity, folk-custom performance, modern media and public cultural service industry", ethnic tourism industry mainly for "folk-custom experience, She village vacation, city sightseeing and ethnic unique cuisine experience, and health care and pension industry mainly for "She medicine, Huiming tea, leisure sports and pension real estate" are planned and carried out.

The formation of the industrial cluster of cultural tourism will further promotes the development of diet, accommodation, traffic and entertainment industries. Each year on "March 3rd", "China's best She taste", aka "10 Bowls of She Cooking Match" will be held in Jingning. The materials used come from a unique ecological environment, and the legendary stories produce a unique atmosphere; the delicious food not only satisfies the tastes of tourists, but also maintain good relations among people; with the principle of sharing things between hosts and guests, Jingning county has put a lot of effort in building tourist houses, transforming unused rural residences into elite homestay, thus allowing tourists to "see the mountain, view the water, and tender their home-sickness". For this purpose the Hidden Residence and Cloud Crane Water Bank have been built, so that the tourists from the city can experience a slow living rhythm, and feel into the unique local customs; with two unique advantages of the "ethnic group" and "local ecology", the county are specifically building beautiful economic traffic pathways, and creates public traffic networks from the county to each town and, together with important industrial gardens, to form an urban and rural public passenger transport system composed of regular buses, characteristic tourist buses and taxis; with the "March 3rd of She Village in China" as the core, and based on the theme cultural tourism forfour seasons, i.e. "Ethnic Jingning, Fresh Jingning, Harvest Jingning and Spring Festival Jingning", the county has integrated the cultural festival events of She folk-customs, and created a festival cultural system of "Stars around Moon" with "One Product in Each Village" and "One Festival per Month"; Focused on the rural spring festival, the county has launched program of ethnic folk customs festival + rural tourist boutique routes.

CONCLUSION

The modern construction of traditional festivals of ethnic minorities proves that, though traditional ethnic festivals are a most stable content in an ethnic culture, they are not fixed; rather, they can dynamically adapt to the development of a modern society, and can be adjusted and changed with regards to the new social and economic trends, thus resulting in structures and functions in line with modern society. Traditional ethnic festivals have sustainability, regeneration ability and developing ability; in the transformation of "tradition-modernity", with richer content and multiple functions, they have become keystones of the economic development and rural revitalization of ethnic areas (Zhang and Hou 2020).

It should be pointed out that, so far as the modern construction of traditional ethnic festivals concerned, they are, one the one hand, built on gaining modern elements on the basis of internal changes (including the transforming of function and expanding of structure). On the other hand, the smooth modern construction of traditional ethnic festivals cannot be accomplished without the support and promotion of some external factors. Zhang *et al.* (2020) pointed out that we not only need to research on traditional ethnic festivals themselves, but more importantly, we need to put them in the bigger domain or structure like those of anation or region, and a smaller domain or structure of a town or village, and to analyze the structural factors involved in the development and changes of traditional ethnic festivals. On the basis of investigation and analysis of China's industrialization, marketization and urbanization, Zhang (2016) proposed two concepts, *i.e.* "Umbrella Society" and "Honeycomb Society", to explain the social structural transformation in China. He believed that the so-called "Chinese style of development" was driven by a "Umbrella" economic power led by the government and "Honeycomb" economic power by the people themselves (Zhang 2018).

For Jingning county, the structural and functional transformation of the She "March 3rd" festival is actually an enrichment of its structural factors functions, and the formation of an industrial cluster of cultural tourism based on traditional festival events is created by the "Umbrella Power" of the government, which provides a system guarantee and policy support. However, although the "Umbrella Relation" and its resource configuration between government and enterprise has irreplaceable advantages and reasonable factors, there are some limitations in them. Under the condition of market economy, the government cannot take all aspects of social and economic development in for consideration; that is to say, government not a panacea. The market must be given full play to let play an active role in all areas. Therefore, Jingning county proposed the mode of cultural tourism industry of being"led by government, run by market, operated

by enterprise, and participated by society". In recent years, Jingning has regarded tourism as the first strategic pillar industry, and introduced quite a number of key cultural tourism projects. With the forms of wholly owned by the people and jointly with the government, those tourism projects have been efficiently promoted. Such a "Honeycomb Power" with civil power as the core can effectively make up the deficiency of government power in building up the tourism industry, so that the marketing methods theme targeting, operation modes and managing are more accurate, flexible and diversified.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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