

Opportunities, Challenges and Countermeasures for Cultural Industry Development in Heilongjiang Province Against Background of “the Belt and Road”*

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Abstract—“The Belt and Road” initiative is an important measure of China for implementing the outward-looking opening-up strategy after the economy has shifted to a new normal. It has been widely recognized and supported by countries along the routes since it has been put forward by President Xi Jinping in 2013, and has entered the stage of practical cooperation from initiative stage. The interlinked hearts of people is the social foundation of “the Belt and Road” construction, while culture plays the vital role of communication. Located in Northeast China, Heilongjiang Province is an important gateway for “the Belt and Road” to open to the north, an integral part of “China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor”, so its strategic position is of vital importance. Under such background, cultural industry development in Heilongjiang Province faces not only the unprecedented new opportunities but also numerous challenges. In this paper, the opportunities and challenges for cultural industry in Heilongjiang Province are analyzed and relevant policies and suggestions are proposed to promote cultural communication and interlinking of the hearts of people of China and countries along the routes.

Keywords—*Heilongjiang Province; cultural industry; “the Belt and Road”*

I. INTRODUCTION

China’s economy has been growing rapidly and per capita income enhanced with steady steps since the implementation of the reform and opening-up policy in 1978, allowing China to become the world’s second-largest economy with significantly increased overall national strength. However,

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external market environment for China’s economic growth has changed a lot after the financial crisis in 2008. The world economic growth has slowed down gradually with trade protectionism on the rise. China’s economic growth has also changed from high-speed to medium-high-speed growth, with high-quality development having become the goal of China’s economic development at present stage. China’s economic achievements promote the social and economic development continuously, with its construction of cultural soft power drawing more and more attention and becoming an important part of the construction of happier life for people. Located in the hinterland of northeast Asia, Heilongjiang Province is an important channel for Asia-Pacific region to get to Russia and Europe by land, the vital window and gateway for China to open its borders. At present, it is the forefront for China to open to Russia and other CIS countries. Heilongjiang Province has developed into a great province of cultural construction gradually by virtue of the unique geographical location and local conditions and customs in its border areas together with Russian culture. The vital role of cultural industry development to the promotion of sustainable and healthy development of provincial economy and to integrating into “the Belt and Road” initiative has attracted widespread attention from related departments. Cultural industry development has a late start in Heilongjiang Province with limited scale, but it is a sunrise industry and will bring new opportunities and challenges to the development of Heilongjiang’s cultural industry with continuous progress of “the Belt and Road” initiative and “China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor” construction. The significance and value of the studies in this paper lies in how to cope with the opportunities and challenges and how to promote cultural industry development in Heilongjiang Province.

II. OPPORTUNITIES OF HEILONGJIANG'S CULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

A. *Contributing to Continuous Upgrading of Cultural Industry*

The unique resources of Heilongjiang Province, including four distinctive seasons, charming natural scenery, diverse historical culture, unique folk customs, the world's longest-running ice & snow festival and the world's largest ice & snow theme park, snow sculptures, have laid foundation for tourism and cultural industry development. In the process of "the Belt and Road" initiative construction, Heilongjiang Province will gather more human resources, capital, preferential policies and other resources with more reasonable resource allocation, and the common development of countries along the routes will also increase people's consumption ability and level. The development of cultural industry is indispensable from cultural consumption and cultural integration, so only by enhancing economic development level of countries along "the Belt and Road" can social demand for cultural industry be increased, market environment for cultural industry development improved and cultural industry upgraded. In addition, "the Belt and Road" initiative will push the construction of transportation infrastructure of countries along the routes to reach connection of facilities. Infrastructure construction also includes construction of communication trunk network facilities besides traditional roads, bridges, airports, ports, hydropower stations and other facilities. China's cultural products and services enter countries along "the Belt and Road" mainly through information network in virtual form. It can be seen that both resource aggregation and facility connection formed in construction of "the Belt and Road" initiative provide better environment for cultural industry development in Heilongjiang Province, which is conducive to cultural industry upgrading.

B. *Contributing to Financing of Cultural Industry*

The products and services provided by cultural industry are unique, and are different from those of manufacturing industry, agriculture and sometimes the general service industry, but all of them must rely on the support of capital. Without financing platform, the cultural corporations will be short of capital and be reduced by their ability to resist risks. In the progress of "the Belt and Road" initiative promotion, China plans to invest about RMB 100 billion yuan of special fund to support the enterprises' investment and operation in countries along "the Belt and Road". Heilongjiang Province is a vital region of "the Belt and Road" construction, so the state will gradually increase capital investment to it. China will provide financing platform for enterprises to enter countries along the routes through Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and "Silk Road Fund", so that financing cost and difficulty will be reduced, the fund can be utilized effectively and financing environment can be improved constantly, which is beneficial to rapid development of cultural industry.

C. *Contributing to the Provision of Personnel Support to Cultural Industry*

The government of Heilongjiang Province has studied how to integrate into and provide service to the implementation of "the Belt and Road" initiative since the initiative was proposed by President Xi Jinping in 2013. The contents of "the Belt and Road" construction include facility connection, smooth trade, monetary circulation and interlinking of the hearts of people and each item is indispensable from personnel support. Heilongjiang is a great province of education with universities and colleges having strong strength, so it has the foundation to cultivate compound talents and to provide personnel support to "the Belt and Road" initiative. Cultural industry belongs to the service industry, and the innovative compound talents who can speak foreign languages and master knowledge of economy, management, manners and customers, laws and regulations are in need in terms of creativity, design and high-end technology. With the implementation of "the Belt and Road", universities and colleges in Heilongjiang Province introduce the incentive policies one after another for the cultivation of compound and innovative talents, to provide personnel support to "the Belt and Road" initiative. Moreover, the increasing cultural exchange and economic and trade exchanges between Heilongjiang Province and Russia also provide appropriate environment for talent cultivation and development, which is conducive to talent cultivation for cultural industry.

III. CHALLENGES FACED BY CULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT IN HEILONGJIANG PROVINCE

A. *Challenge of Political Risks*

Most of the countries along "the Belt and Road" are developing countries with great differences in their political system, market economy development environment, economic development performance, religious belief, customs, languages, historical contradictions and other aspects, resulting in potential safety hazards in some regions along the routes. Particularly, governments of some countries do not understand the goal of "the Belt and Road" initiative proposed by China, and are doubtful about the initiative. Russian cultural market is the main market that Heilongjiang cultural industry enters, and the political relation between the two countries will have impact on enterprise development environment. Political mutual trust between China and Russia has risen to a certain height with continuously deepening bilateral and strategic cooperative partnership. However, the long-term low-level trade structure between the two countries makes Russian people believe that Russia is becoming the raw material base of China. "China Threat Theory" still exists in Russia with involuntary boycotting of Chinese culture by Russian people, who are short of sense of identity of Chinese culture. Government of Russia is likely to set up certain barriers against Chinese cultural industry's entering into its market. As a result, cultural industry of Heilongjiang Province faces challenge of political risk in entering Russian market.

B. *Challenge of Cultural Industry Strength*

Heilongjiang Province starts its cultural industry quite late with limited comprehensive strength of cultural enterprises,

and the forms are mainly ice-snow tourism, cultural tourism, red culture and modern Pingju opera, Longjiang opera, Peking Opera, drama, music, dance, folk art, acrobatics and other excellent performance activities. But, these activities are mainly perfumed domestically by cultural enterprises, with few entering Russian market. Viewing from the main body of cultural enterprises, Heilongjiang Province is lack of large joint-stock listed enterprise or group on the scale, resulting in insufficiency in scale or market competitiveness of the enterprise with weak ability to resist risks. The cultural contents need to be innovated constantly and Russian people's demand for Chinese culture and the concept difference need to be understood, so that Heilongjiang cultural industry can enter Russian market, enterprises' long-term goal can be realized, and the excellent traditional culture of China can be transmitted. To achieve this goal, higher requirements are raised to the strength of cultural industry in Heilongjiang Province.

C. Challenge of Cultural Distance

Cultural distance will bring cost for an enterprise to enter a market, the farther the cultural distance, the higher the market entry cost. The cultural industry of Heilongjiang Province has geographical advantages to enter Russia market, but cultural distance of the two countries does not have such advantages. Great differences exist in political system, economic system, religious belief, customs, history and other aspects of the two countries. Russia is a European country. Russian people still wary with China's rise and are short of identity of Chinese culture despite of the close geographic location of northeast China region and Russia's Far East, but the recognition of cultural identity is enhanced by political mutual trust between the two countries in recent years. Cultural distance is an obstacle for Heilongjiang cultural enterprises to enter Russian market, and such obstacle is of cultural exclusivity, which is easily to make Heilongjiang cultural enterprises "unaccustomed" after entering Russian market and cause losses to cultural enterprises.

IV. COUNTERMEASURES FOR CULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT IN HEILONGJIANG PROVINCE

A. Enhancing Political Mutual Trust Between China and Russia Continuously

Economic and trade cooperation with Russia is the main direction of Heilongjiang Province's opening to the outside world, and the scale of imports from and exports to Russia accounts for more than 50% of the total import and export volume of this province, even over 70% in some years. Russian market is the important export market of Heilongjiang cultural industry. Continuous enhancement of political mutual trust between China and Russia will reduce political risk of cultural enterprises in the investment and trade in Russia, develop the trust of Russian people in Chinese enterprises and increase their identification of Chinese culture. All of these have provided a mass basis for Heilongjiang cultural enterprises to enter Russian cultural market and increased social demand of Chinese cultural products.

B. Enforcing Comprehensive Strength of Cultural Industry

Cultural industry development in Heilongjiang Province starts quite late, and the enterprises are mostly small and medium-sized enterprises, lack of large and medium-sized ones, let alone listed cultural enterprises, which has resulted in weak market competitiveness of cultural enterprises and weak ability of developing foreign cultural market. Heilongjiang cultural enterprises should create high-quality cultural products with local ethnic characteristics by enhancing innovation ability, and pay attention to the introduction of capital through capital market, to improve the quality of cultural products and services, strengthen the comprehensive competitiveness of cultural industry in Heilongjiang Province. In addition, the cultural enterprises should provide targeted and individualized cultural products in combination with demand preferences in Russian cultural market, so as to take more share of Russian cultural market and to spread excellent Chinese culture to Russia.

C. Reducing Cultural Distance Between the Two Countries Through Multiple Ways

Cultural distance will bring market entry cost to enterprises, the further the cultural distance, the higher the market entry cost. The main target of Heilongjiang cultural enterprises is Russian cultural market, and cultural distance between the two countries will increase cultural enterprises' entry cost. Cultural enterprises of China can display the Chinese traditional culture with a long history by taking advantage of opportunities such as tourist year and year of regional cooperation and exchange held jointly by China and Russia in the diversified forms, including art exhibition, artistic performance, film and television works, Peking Opera, local snacks and border tourism, to deepen Russian people's identification with Chinese culture gradually, thus to reduce cultural distance between the two countries, decrease the cost for cultural enterprises to enter Russia, and promote cultural industry development in Heilongjiang Province.

D. Accelerating Innovative Development of Cultural Industry

Cultural enterprises in Heilongjiang Province are generally small scaled ones, and mainly carry out performance activities such as Pingju opera, Longjiang opera, Peking Opera, drama, music, dance, folk art and acrobatics. Products of cultural enterprises are diversified, but innovation in contents which include innovative elements, spirit and awareness is still insufficient. Most of the performances are for domestic audiences, while the demand performance for cultural products in foreign markets is significantly different from that in domestic market, which will result in good products not always suitable for foreign customer demand, particularly Russian culture which is obviously different from Chinese culture. As result, cultural enterprises in Heilongjiang Province should learn more about cultural demand in Russian market, make constant innovation in cultural products, form and contents, add modern elements and technological elements, to better meet the needs in foreign cultural market and promote cultural industry development in Heilongjiang Province.

V. CONCLUSION

Though cultural industry development starts late in Heilongjiang Province with limited scale, it belongs to sunrise industry. As “the Belt and Road” initiative continues to advance, constant progress has been made in the construction of “China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor”, which will bring many opportunities to cultural industry development in Heilongjiang Province. Meanwhile, lots of unfavorable factors, such as challenges of political risk, cultural industry strength and cultural distance, will be encountered. As a result, government of Heilongjiang Province, industry association, enterprises and colleges are required to cooperate with each other. In addition, measures such as enhancing political mutual trust between China and Russia, strengthening comprehensive strength of cultural industry, reducing cultural distance through multiple forms, and accelerating innovative development of cultural industry are required to be implemented, to promote healthy development of cultural industry in Heilongjiang Province, and thus to expedite healthy and sustainable development of “Longjiang economy”.

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