

The Management and Development of Museums Under the Perspective of the ICOM's New Spirit “Museum as a Cultural Center”

Based on the Case of Yaowangshan Museum

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Abstract—In September 2019, the International Council of Museums held its 25th conference in Kyoto, Japan. The theme of the conference is “Museum as a Cultural Center: traditional future”. It explored as a cultural base, museums should assume social responsibility, play their new functions, and create a prosperous future through traditional culture. Based on this, this paper combines the spirit of the ICOM and the resource characteristics of the Yaowangshan Museum to analyze challenges, seize opportunities, and make recommendations for management and development.

Keywords—Yaowangshan Museum; International Council of Museums (ICOM); cultural center; management; development

I. INTRODUCTION

In September 2019, the International Council of Museums held its 25th conference in Kyoto, Japan. The theme of the conference is “Museum as a Cultural Center: traditional future”. It explored as a cultural base, museums should assume social responsibility, play their new functions, and create a prosperous future through traditional culture. The new positioning of the museum by the ICOM is that the management and development of domestic museums bring new opportunities and challenges. It is worth thinking about how museums can make full use of their traditional cultural resources to improve their management and play a role in connecting people to a better life in the future. This study takes the Yaowangshan Museum as an example, combines the spirit of the ICOM and its own resource characteristics to analyze challenges and make recommendations for management and development.

II. GENERAL OVERVIEW AND RESOURCE CHARACTERISTICS OF YAOWANGSHAN MUSEUM

A. General Overview

Yaowangshan is located 1.5 kilometers east of Yaozhou City. It was called Qingyu Mountain in the Tang Dynasty, Mount Wutai, North Wutai Mountain, or Dongshan Mountain in Song Dynasty. The name of “Yaowangshan” originated

from the famous medical scientist Sun Simiao in the Tang Dynasty. In order to commemorate him, the people built a memorial temple of Immortal Sun in the mountains and honored him as the king of medicine. In the 6th year of Longqing of the Ming Dynasty (1572), the monument of Taixuandong in the mountains recorded Sun Simiao's “valuable prescriptions for emergencies” and “Haishangfang” and other medical classics. This mountain is called Yaowangshan. [1] In 1958, Yaowangshan stone carving was selected as the first batch of key cultural relics protection units in Shaanxi Province. In 1961, the Ministry of Culture selected 180 cultural relics and historical sites with significant historical, artistic and scientific value among many provincial cultural relic protection units. Approved by the State Council, it is the first batch of national key cultural relics protection units. There are 11 stone carvings and other items in the fourth category, including the Yaowangshan stone inscriptions. This marks China's recognition of the outstanding value of the Yaowangshan stone inscriptions and bas-reliefs on precipices from the Northern Wei Dynasty to the Tang Dynasty.

Founded in 1986, Yaowangshan Museum is responsible for the collection and display of cultural relics unearthed in Yao county and Yaowangshan. In 2006, the State Council announced that Yaowangshan Temple was included in the first batch of key cultural relics protection units in the country, the Yaowangshan stone carvings, marking the protection of all cultural relics within the entire territory of the museum. [2]

The Yaowangshan Museum has 419 pieces of cultural relics (including stone carvings), including 28 first-class cultural relics and 68 second-class cultural relics. The collection of cultural relics ranks second in Shaanxi and fourth in the country, including inscriptions from the Northern Wei Dynasty to the Tang Dynasty, stone towers, bas-reliefs on precipices, Ming Dynasty Taoist murals and other precious cultural relics, as well as Jin, Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties architectural groups. It is a natural botanical garden and a Chinese medicine garden. There are more than a thousand cypress trees represented by cypress trees planted by Yaowang, that of age of five hundred and more than a thousand years. It is one of the few natural and human landscapes. It is a movable

and immovable cultural relic. It has a rich intangible cultural heritage and a museum with outstanding historical, artistic, scientific, social and cultural values.

B. Resource Characteristics

The Yaowangshan Museum features inscriptions, murals, temples, Taoist temples, bas-reliefs on precipices, coopers, herbs, doctors, Yaoshanfang, ancient buildings, etc., which can be analyzed from the perspective of horizontal and vertical structures. The horizontal structure mainly includes four parts: Houshan, Nanan, Cliff, and Beidong. The vertical structure consists of three parts: landscape, activity and belief. The landscape includes the natural landscape and cultural landscape of Yaowangshan. Activities include ritual Buddha, worship, medical treatment, folklore and health care. Every year from February 2nd to February 12th, the Yaowangshan Temple Fair is held. The beliefs are mainly Yaowang, Buddhism and Taoism.

III. CHALLENGES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF YAOWANGSHAN MUSEUM

The Yaowangshan Museum is responsible for the preservation, display, scientific research, publicity and education of the unearthed cultural relics collection of Yao County and Yaowangshan. The unit is a public welfare institution. And it co-works with the Yaowangshan Administration, established in 1997. In recent years, the Yaowangshan Museum has achieved fruitful results in the collection, protection and environmental management of cultural relics. The overall design of the Yaowangshan Museum highlights the value of heritage resources in the details of the processing to form a special feature. For example, a pile of stone carvings is placed on the mountain road between the regions as a safety isolation column. The biographic picture from the birth of Sakyamuni to Nirvana is engraved on the fence outside the bas-reliefs on precipices. The floor lamp and trash can are designed in an antique style that echoes the surrounding architectural style. As a treasure house of medicine culture and a natural Chinese medicine garden, the Yaowangshan Museum has marked the medicinal value and efficacy on the plant logo in addition to the basic information such as the name list (see “Fig. 1”).



Fig. 1. Plant logo of Yaowangshan.

It should be pointed out that this “one group has two identities” management mode, under the historical reasons and

conditions at that time, although it is conducive to the development of work, better coordinated the relationship between cultural relics protection and tourism development. However, with the development of cultural relics, some problems have also been exposed. For example, the huge difference in the management model between the museum and the modern museum is first manifested in the failure to consider comprehensively in the accountability system and management compensation. For example, compared with some private museums with independent profits and losses, the comprehensive management system of the “step-by-step” of the Yaowangshan Museum, especially the lack of supervision mechanism, makes its development momentum and vitality seriously insufficient. With the development of China's cultural relics and museums and the continuous improvement of management concepts, especially in ICOM's positioning of the museum as a “cultural hub” today, multi-level and multi-platform display and education methods relying on digital technology and the Internet are increasingly being applied to museums. This has also brought new challenges to the development of the Yaowangshan Museum in the new era, especially in display exhibitions, publicity and education.

A. The Utilization Rate of the Display Is Low, and the Digital Display Is Missing

The display and display of cultural relics is one of the most basic duties of the museum. Effective display can maximize the transfer of cultural relic information to visitors, which is an important prerequisite for the museum to effectively play its educational role. In terms of display, the Yaowangshan Museum currently has some low-efficiency display, single form, unclear theme, and lack of digital display. The Yaowangshan forest of steles is a 回-shaped building that mimics the Ming and Qing Dynasties built on the ruins of Jimougong. There is a 76-pass map of the statues from the Northern Wei to the Sui and Tang Dynasties. The layout of the exhibition is shown in Figure 2. Of these, 43 statues are placed in the corridor, and another 33 are placed indoors and are not open to the public. Visitors can only see the outer part of the first row of monuments from the window. The statues consist of the monument, the body and the cover, and the front, back, left and right of the monument are engraved with words, patterns or patterns. Therefore, for nearly half of the statues in the forest, this kind of exhibition method is inefficient, visitors can not fully appreciate and understand the content and information presented by the statues.

In addition, some of the statues are displayed in the corridors of Nanan, but modern style photos such as the neon lights of the night scenery fountains in Yaowangshan are displayed on the back wall of the corridor. This is in sharp contrast with the statues and the cypresses of the Yuan Dynasty and the Ming and Qing Dynasties, and the theme of the exhibition is not clear.

In summary, in the collection exhibition, the Yaowangshan Museum still has room for improvement, and the biggest challenge in the development of the new era is the lack of digital display. Today, digital display is used by many museums with its advantages of convenience, wide audience and high display efficiency. Especially for cultural relics that

are not suitable for close visits such as bas-reliefs on precipices, sarcophagus and so on. The digital display screen can better display the details of the statue's ornamentation, making the true "traditional future" possible. At present, Yaowangshan Museum does not currently have on-site digital display equipment, and has not yet established an official website. For ordinary people, the way to understand the Yaowangshan Museum and its rich collections is very limited. It has to be said that it is a lack of digital display, which also limits its educational functions and scientific research functions to a certain extent.

B. The Function of Youth Education Is Limited, and Public Cultural Services Need to Be Improved

Mr. Yu Weichao pointed out: "Only human beings can produce 'culture'. The ability to accumulate in the previous generation (including knowledge, of course) can be accumulated through generations of 'culture', so that 'culture' can be developed." [3] The transmission and development of "culture", that is, the manifestation of cultural values, depends on the function of public cultural services and social education. Educational function is the most important function of the museum. It has the characteristics of social education, auxiliary education, leisure education and amateur knowledge education. [4] Yaowangshan Museum is currently the training base of Beijing University of Chinese Medicine. The function of youth education is limited, and there is no cooperation mechanism with local primary and secondary schools such as Yaowangshan Primary and Secondary School and Tongchuan Middle School. In addition, the Yaowangshan Museum regularly holds various medical training classes and seminars on Chinese medicine. Its educational functions are more reflected in the auxiliary education for professionals, and the audience needs to be expanded. The lack of digital display and promotion platform relying on the Internet also limits the full play of public cultural service functions to a certain extent.

C. English Transcripts and Public Signs Need to Be Standardized

English commentary and public sign language are important ways to convey cultural heritage information and traditional culture carried by cultural relics to international visitors. It should be accurate, concise, and standardized, otherwise it will not only be able to transmit effective information, but also have a negative impact. In the English translation of the commentary, the Yaowangshan Museum mainly has problems such as tense, structure and punctuation. Some of the words used are relatively blunt, do not conform to the English expression habits, and need to be standardized. For example, in the commentary on Yide Beilang, it is suggested to change "He was also kind to lepers disliked by everyone." to "He was also kind to people suffering from leprosy, who were often discriminated against." Therefore, the translation is more standardized, fluent and in line with English expression habits.

In terms of public signs, a sign with the words "preservation of cultural relics" and "worship Buddha to eliminate disaster" is very abruptly placed in the precious bas-reliefs on precipices that have been excavated over 1200 years,

greatly destroying the overall landscape and atmosphere. There is no inevitable connection between the content of the publicity language "preservation of cultural relics" and "worship Buddha to eliminate disaster", and the two are not properly put together.

D. Insufficient Mining of Cultural Relics, Limited Cultural and Creative Products

Relying on collection resources and intellectual resources to develop cultural and creative products, and increase the effective supply of cultural products. It has the distinctive characteristics of low carbon, green and sustainable, and is the basic way for creative transformation and innovative development of excellent cultural resources. [5] Cultural and creative products can also be regarded as an extension of the museum's educational function. At present, the products sold by Yaowangshan Museum mainly include the Yaowangshan stone carvings, the Yaowang health care series books, and the health care insoles. There is a clear shortage of cultural resources, and there is a certain room for improvement in product types and development depth.

IV. DISCUSSION ON THE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEW POSITIONING OF MUSEUM BASED ON ICOM

A. Improving Display Utilization and Building a Digital Display Platform

In view of the low utilization rate of some cultural relics present in the Yaowangshan Museum and the lack of digital display, the official website should be built on the basis of improving the exhibition rate of cultural relics in the future, and the media and more public platforms should be relied on to digitally display cultural resources. In the construction of the official website, we can learn from the forest of steles museum, which is the first batch of national key cultural relics protection units. Their website has a guide to visit, exhibitions, boutique windows and other sections, which have played a very good publicity. In terms of self-media, we should adjust the proportion of administrative news in the media platform, combine its own characteristics, increase the collection of cultural relics in the collection, and set up special features such as "Yaowangshan Monument", "Yifang inscription" and "Chinese medicine garden". Finally, Yaowangshan Museum can participate in the digital museum platform such as Baidu Encyclopedia, so that the exhibition rate of cultural relics can be further enhanced, attract more people to enter the museum, and make the cultural relics protection benefits more to the people.

B. Playing the Role of Youth Education and Enhancing Public Cultural Services

Adolescents are the future of a country, and the role of museums in connecting tradition and the future is inseparable from youth education. Most countries in Europe have incorporated museum education into the national education system. In France, groups of elementary school students are often seen visiting museums or heritage parks to receive education on cultural heritage. As early as 1998, the European

Commission has issued a call to Member States through Recommendation No: R (98) 5 (1998), breaking through the traditional classroom teaching and applying more flexible and diversified methods to cultural heritage education. In the same year, cultural heritage education was just beginning in China, and its logo was the first World Heritage course offered by Peking University. In contrast, some areas of the museum's youth education function play to be thrown away. Based on this, the Yaowangshan Museum should gradually improve the educational function of young people in the development of the new era. Relying on its rich resources, in the fields of "art, calligraphy, sculpture, history, botany, and traditional Chinese medicine", the museum must establish cooperation mechanisms with surrounding primary and secondary schools such as Yaowangshan Primary and Secondary School and Tongchuan Middle School. It is necessary to provide explanation services or educational activities for primary and secondary school students, and to create educational activities such as "Second Classroom" or "Theme Winter/Summer Camp".

C. Standardizing the English Commentary Public Language to Enhance the International Image

With the success of the "Silk Road: Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor Network" application for the list of world heritage and the implementation of the national "One Belt, One Road" strategy, Shaanxi has attracted more and more attention from the world, and the number of international tourists has increased year by year. Normative English commentary and public sign language are the basis for accurately conveying cultural relics information. Most international tourists have limited knowledge of Chinese culture, and the importance of English commentary is even more prominent. At present, the English commentary and public sign of the Yaowangshan Museum have problems of tense, structure, punctuation, etc. Some of the words do not conform to the English expression habits. In the future management, the Yaowangshan Museum should standardize the interpretation of the commentary and public sign, so as to effectively convey the cultural relic information, especially the cultural information carried by the cultural relics, and will play a positive role in promoting its international influence.

D. Digging Deep into Cultural Relics and Developing Cultural and Creative Products

In the development of cultural and creative products, the example of the Palace Museum is worth learning. Based on its own resources, the Forbidden City has developed a wide variety of cultural and creative products, including pen and ink, umbrella and calendar pendants, which have achieved good social repercussions and economic benefits. Yaowangshan Museum should seize the opportunity to leverage its own policies and rely on its own characteristics to enhance the quality and quantity of cultural and creative products.

V. CONCLUSION

In summary, Yaowangshan Museum should take the spirit of the 25th ICOM Conference as a guide, combine its own resource characteristics, seize opportunities and meet

challenges. On the basis of cultural relics protection and environmental governance, Yaowangshan Museum should do the following work. Improve display utilization and build a digital display platform: giving play to the function of youth education and enhancing public cultural services; standardizing English commentary and public sign to enhance the international image; digging deep into cultural resources and vigorously developing cultural and creative products. In order to better disseminate China's excellent traditional culture, the museum's function as a cultural center can be fully utilized.

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