

Research on the Inheritance of Guizhou Ethnic Festivals From the Perspective of “Colorful Guizhou” Cultural Brands: A Case Study of Sister-ship Festival of the Miao Nationality

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Abstract—“Colorful Guizhou” cultural brand is a provincial-level iconic leading brand proposed by Guizhou Province on the basis of combining Guizhou’s unique natural landscape and colorful ethnic culture. Based on the core value characteristics of the “Colorful Guizhou” cultural brand, this paper studied the impact of the industrialization development of the Guizhou Miao Sister-ship Festival on the “Colorful Guizhou” cultural brand from a cultural perspective, a market perspective and a competitive perspective. Based on the WeChat index, the paper considered that the Sister-ship Festival has enhanced the popularity and market share of Guizhou’s ethnic cultural resources and enhanced the market competitiveness of Guizhou’s ethnic cultural resources. However, from the cultural perspective, the industrialization development of Sister-ship Festival has changed the cultural connotation and affected the construction of “Colorful Guizhou” cultural brand to a certain extent. Based on the above problems, the paper believed that the government should strictly control the details of the activities, such as the content of activities, the audit of folk artists, and the price of commercial products, and be cautious about the “degree” of festival utilization.

Keywords—*Colorful Guizhou; ethnic festival; Sister-ship Festival; inheritance*

I. OVERVIEW OF “COLORFUL GUIZHOU” CULTURAL BRAND

In recent years, most provinces and cities in China have focused on brand image management. They have set up brand image from the aspects of history and culture, natural landscape and ethnic customs, and enhanced their core competitiveness. Provincial brands such as “Hospitable Shandong”, “Large Beautiful Qinghai”, “Home to Wonders” and “Colorful Yunnan” have good reputation and influence. Guizhou is rich in cultural resources, including red culture, historical culture, ecological culture, and ethnic culture. Multi-ethnic cultures are in harmony and symbiosis. Cultural resources and natural resources complement each other and are highly original. In 2005, based on changing the situation of Guizhou’s “underdeveloped economy”, with the great attention and strong promotion of the Guizhou Provincial Party

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Committee and the Provincial People’s Government, the “Colorful Guizhou” cultural brand was officially born.

The “Colorful Guizhou” cultural brand is formed on the basis of combining Guizhou’s unique natural landscape with colorful ethnic culture. Through a series of cultural activities to show, promote and develop Guizhou, it has formed a significant cultural phenomenon and a leading brand of Guizhou’s cultural industry [1]. Since its introduction, the Guizhou Provincial Party Committee and Provincial Government have attached great importance to brand image management. At the beginning of 2012, “Several Opinions of the State Council on Further Promoting the Sound and Rapid Development of Guizhou’s Economic Society” (No.2 document of the State Council) stressed that it is necessary to enlarge and strengthen the cultural brands such as ethnic songs and dances, arts and crafts, festival exhibition, drama, film and animation, etc., represented by “Colorful Guizhou”. The development of “Colorful Guizhou” brand has risen to the national strategic level.

II. THE CHARACTERISTICS AND CURRENT SITUATION OF GUIZHOU ETHNIC FESTIVALS

Ethnic festivals are formed in the long-term historical development of a nation and have special significance, and hold celebrations or sacrificial ceremonies on a fixed date. The celebration, sacrifice and commemoration of festivals are associated with festival customs, involving clothes, food, singing and dancing, forming a unique material culture, spiritual culture and behavior culture. Festivals reflect the people’s belief and worship, with the characteristics of stability, mass, nationality and inheritance.

Guizhou has the largest number of ethnic festivals in China. As the saying goes, “Big festivals are in Three-Six-Nine, and small festivals are held every day”, it reflects the huge number. According to statistics, there are 1,046 festival gatherings for ethnic minorities in Guizhou during one year. There are 20 ethnic festivals and customs listed in the national intangible cultural heritage list in Guizhou Province (see Table I for specific items and declaration areas). Ethnic songs and dances,

costumes, diets, skills and so on can all be displayed and inherited in festival customs. Chinese traditional festivals are mostly produced in the era of farming. With the changes of society, the cultural soil on which they rely for survival has changed greatly, and many customs have not adapted to this era. In order to adapt to the changes of social environment, traditional festivals can be properly industrialized, which is not only the requirement of economic development, but also can

promote the inheritance of traditional culture. The industrialization development of ethnic minority festivals can enrich the derivatives of traditional festival culture, deeply excavate its derivative value forms, and then carry out market-oriented and industrial development [2]. The industrialization development of Guizhou minority festivals plays an important role in shaping the cultural brand image of “Colorful Guizhou” and improving the brand competitiveness.

TABLE I. GUIZHOU ETHNIC FESTIVALS AND CUSTOMS IN THE NATIONAL INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE PROJECT

The Batch	Item
First	Duan Festival of Shui nationality in Sandu Autonomous County; Chabaige Festival of Bouyei nationality; Sister-ship Festival of Miao Nationality in Taijiang County; Sama Festival of Dong Nationality in Rongjiang County; Maolong Festival of Gelao nationality in Shiqian County; Shui Script in Qiannan Miao and Buyi Autonomous Prefecture.
Second	Canoe Dragon Boat Festival of Miao Nationality in Taijiang County; Flower Jumping Festival of Miao Nationality in Anshun City; New Year of Miao nationality in Danzhai and Leishan County; Sama Festival of Dong Nationality in Liping County (Extend Item).
Third	“The third day of the third lunar month” of Buyi Nationality in Zhenfeng and Wangmo County; New Year of Dong nationality in Rongjiang County; Song Festival in Tianzhu County (Song Festival in forty eight villages); Yueye Custom in Liping County; Rock Planting custom of Miao Nationality in Rongjiang County; Torch Festival of Yi nationality in Zhang County (Extend Item); Twenty Four Solar Terms of the Lunar Calendar in Shiqian County (Extend Item).
Forth	Sanyaotai Dietary Custom of Gelao nationality in Daozhen Gelao and Miao Autonomous County; “The third day of the third lunar month” in Zhenyuan County (Extend Item); Drum Festival of Miao Nationality in Rongjiang County; Lift Pavilion Custom in Tunbao Xixiu District, Anshun City (Extend Item); Kuan Clause f Dong Nationality in Liping County (Extend Item).

III. SISTER-SHIP FESTIVAL OF THE MIAO NATIONALITY

A. Overview of Sister-ship Festival

Sister-ship Festival originated from Miao narrative poem “Ejiao and Jindan”, which has a history of thousands of years. Sister-ship Festival shows the faithful love between young men and women during the transition from matriarchal clan to paternal clan. It is known as “the oldest Oriental Valentine’s Day” and “festival hidden in the stamen”. According to legend, there wre 800 girls in Shidong town of Taijiang County who can’t find their husbands, and 800 men in Sanbingdatang (There is no such place today. This paper inferred that Sanbingdatang is Datang Village, Bingmei Town, Congjiang County) couldn’t find girls to marry. With the story of “Ejiao and Jindan”, the old people asked 800 single girls to invite 800 young men to come over for sisters’ dinner. Finally, they all found their favorite person and got married. Since then, there have been Sister-ship Festival activities aimed at finding a

sweetheart. During Sister-ship Festival, the girls and the invited male guests stepped on drums, played sensation, drank alcohol and song duels, and sent the prepared sisters’ meal to the young men. Sisters’ meal was in five colors. Green symbolized the beauty of hometown, red symbolized the prosperity of stockade, yellow symbolized abundant grain, purple symbolized affluence and white symbolized pure love. Girls can also hide pine needles, Chinese toon sprouts, coriander and chili peppers in sisters’ meal to represent their willingness or unwillingness to associate.

In 2006, “Guizhou Miao Sister-ship Festival” was listed as the first batch of intangible cultural heritage protection projects in China. In 2011, “Guizhou Miao Sister-ship Festival” was selected into the list of the most popular folk festivals in the first CCTV “local festival”. In 2014, “Guizhou Miao Sister-ship Festival” was selected as the hometown of national folk culture. More and more attention has been paid to Sister-ship Festival. In Table II, this paper summarized the value characteristics of Sister-ship Festival.

TABLE II. VALUE CHARACTERISTICS OF SISTER FESTIVAL

Value Manifestatio	Characteristics
Historical Value	Sister-ship Festival comprehensively reflects the Miao nationality’s history, economy, material life, religion, taboo and other cultural phenomena and their changing process.
Social Value	Sister-ship Festival promoted the social interaction between young men and women. In the era of information block, it played a vital role in ethnic communication and continuity. Nowadays, the industrialization development of Sister-ship Festival has promoted the inter-ethnic contacts and enhanced national influence.
Spiritual Value	The historical value, social value, economic value and other values of the Sister-ship Festival subconsciously united the nation firmly and enhanced the cultural self-confidence of the nation.
Economic Value	The economic value of Sister-ship Festival was mainly reflected in modern times. As the pillar of cultural industry in Taijiang County, Sister-ship Festival has promoted the overall economic development of Taijiang area.
Cultural Value	Sister-ship Festival shows Miao’s national culture such as dress, food, singing, dancing, faith, and production and lifestyle, which enhances the soft power of national culture.

B. Development Status of Sister-ship Festival

Since 1998, Sister-ship Festival has been changed from a folk spontaneous event to a government guided one. It is located in Taijiang County, Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture. Since then, Sister-ship Festival has gradually evolved from a traditional love festival within a nation to a comprehensive festival that shows ethnic customs to tourists, and its popularity has risen rapidly. In the past, the traditional Sister-ship Festival was held according to the slack season of their villages. For example, the day in Shidong

Liangtian and jingdongtang was February 15th of the lunar calendar. In laotun Rongshan and Shidong Qingshuijiang and other places, the days are from March 15 to 17 of the lunar calendar. After being hosted by the government, the site of the Sister-ship Festival has been unified, and the duration of the festival was generally five days. The longest duration was 24 days, in 2017. Sister-ship Festival activities involve ethnic customs display, ethnic song and dance competition, folk culture experience, etc. the content is very rich (See Table III for details).

TABLE III. ACTIVITIES OF SISTER FESTIVAL

Kind of Activity	Content
Eating sisters' meal	Eating sisters' meals is the most important custom of Sister-ship Festival. A few days before the festival, the Miao girls will go to the mountains to pick the flowers and plants such as maple leaves, honeysuckle flowers, red and blue grass, and make juice and dye colorful glutinous rice, which is called "sister rice". In the past, girls only gave sister rice to unmarried young men. Today, all tourists come to the Sister-ship Festival, whether they are married or not, can have sisters' meals.
Long table banquet	Long table banquet was once the grandest banquet for the Miao people, usually only during weddings, full moons, and village associations. There was no long table banquet in the traditional Sister-ship Festival. Nowadays, the long table banquet is large in scale and mainly serves tourists. During the banquet, Miao girls toasted and performed.
Dress up parade	Miao women wear festive costumes and carry out grand parades in villages.
Theatrical performances	Miao singing and dancing exhibitions, such as the singing of Wengni River by thousands of people, Miao song king competition, the altar sacrifice of Miao, production and living customs performance, the Flying Songs of Miao, Lusheng dance, etc.
Competitive competition	Miao traditional competitive competitions, such as Lusheng competition, antithetic competition, manual competition, bullfighting, birdfighting, cockfighting, dog fighting, martial arts Sanda, etc. The Top Ten Flower Sisters Selection was also a more influential competition during Sister-ship Festival.
Commodity display	Miao costume exhibition, Miao silver exhibition, ethnic handicraft exhibition, calligraphy and painting exhibition, etc.
Cultural investigation	Miao culture forum, economic and trade fair, industrial park investigation, etc.
Folk culture experience	Group wedding, welcome guests, bonfire party, Miao village experience, etc.

As the leader of Taijiang County's tourism, Miao Sister-ship Festival has made great changes in organizational structure, performance content, function, audience groups and cultural characteristics in order to cater to the market. See Table IV for details. These changes make Sister-ship Festival from a pure and beautiful love festival to a commercial

performance that no longer pays true feelings. People's participation in festivals has also become a kind of professional performance, and even some non-Miao people also participated. These non-Miao professional performers lack of understanding and worship of Miao culture, and their own national festivals and culture have also been destroyed.

TABLE IV. CHANGES OF SISTER-SHIP FESTIVAL OF MIAO NATIONALITY

Content	Changes
Organization structure	From the spontaneous organization of folk villages to the government's guidance, the government has set the time, place and content of the festival.
Performance content	From traditional folk "self-entertainment" activities, to large-scale festivals that contain a variety of elements and content.
Function	From the real-life function of meeting the partner of young people to the performance function of pursuing economic benefits.
Audience group	From the masses of ethnic minorities themselves to the participation of the government, businesses, masses, and tourists, the audience is inclined to tourists, and the benefits are mainly government and enterprises.
Cultural characteristics	From simple cultural activities embodying the national spirit, to the loss of traditional culture in a commercial environment.

IV. THE INFLUENCE OF THE SISTER-SHIP FESTIVAL ON THE "COLORFUL GUIZHOU" CULTURAL BRAND

The core value of "Colorful Guizhou" cultural brand has three characteristics: first, the core value must first be the core of Guizhou culture, which has extensive relevance with all aspects of Guizhou culture; second, it must have greater market potential and be convenient for industrialization; third, it must

be able to withstand competition and comparison, and has the value of differentiation and authority. These three aspects also constitute the three perspectives of this paper, namely, cultural perspective, market perspective and competition perspective.

A. From the Cultural Perspective

The Sister-ship Festival was formed in the ancient farming society and has a strong agricultural civilization. With the

development of social economy and the change of communication methods, the social soil of the Sister-ship Festival has changed greatly. The rise of network media and modern entertainment methods has provided diverse social occasions for the younger generation of Miao men and women. Miao youth no longer use Sister-ship Festival and Youfang as the main social means. Youfang fields disappeared and the drum treading fields were idle. The marriage function of Sister-ship Festival was dysfunctional, and the traditional marriage and social customs and social structure of the Miao nationality in Taijiang were challenged by destruction [3]. In order to protect traditional festivals from dying away with the weakening of the influence of farming civilization, “festival development”, “festival utilization”, “festival tourism”, etc. have become an idea of festival protection, and also brought opportunities for local economic development. In the process of industrialization of the Sister-ship Festival, although traditional folk customs have been preserved and displayed in form, their cultural connotation has changed. From the traditional activities to promote the acquaintance of young men and women, to today’s tourist products for tourists, the traditional cultural display gradually evolved into Professional performance [4].

The influx of multi culture makes the traditional moral concept, value standard and aesthetic taste impacted. National cultural characteristics have also been damaged, specifically manifested in the gradual decline of national languages, changes in national costumes, and the gradual loss of traditional handicrafts such as jacquard embroidery. The current Sister-ship Festival no longer has the cultural significance of the traditional “Valentine’s Day”, but extends into a tourism program, a platform for attracting investment and a window to expand regional competitiveness [5]. From the cultural perspective, the industrialization development of Sister-ship Festival has destroyed the authenticity of the culture to a certain extent, which is not conducive to the connotation construction of the “Colorful Guizhou” cultural brand.

B. From the Market Perspective

Intangible cultural heritage generally exists as the expression form of art or culture. The proper development of intangible cultural heritage can inject fresh vitality into the development of cultural industries, increase the content of cultural and creative industries, and establish a good cultural brand for regional development [6]. Therefore, some cultural resources with national characteristics can be regarded as a kind of scarce productivity, bringing market profits. Taking Sister-ship Festival as the productive force, Taijiang has gradually upgraded the Sister-ship Festival, a regional folk custom activity, into the most representative Miao festival in Guizhou by means of government guidance, nongovernmental association organization and market operation. It not only carried forward the traditional culture of Guizhou Miao people, but also attracted the investment of many large and medium-sized enterprises at home and abroad. It has greatly promoted the economic development of Taijiang county, solved the employment problem of the local people, and greatly improved people’s living standards. Tourism has become the pillar

industry of the local economy, which strongly supports the local economic stability.

In 1998, the Sister-ship Festival was included in the 23 major ethnic minority tourism festivals in “Urban and Rural Tourism in China” by the National Tourism Administration. In 2008, the Sister-ship Festival of Miao nationality was included in the “National Intangible Cultural Heritage List”. Taijiang county has become a “world famous ethnic cultural tourism county”, “China’s top ten most original ecological tourism counties” and “China’s top ten most amorous tourism counties” from a small and isolated poverty-stricken county. It has been well-known at home and abroad and has made rich tourism income. In 1997, only 3900 domestic and foreign tourists were received in Taijiang County, with an income of 3 million yuan. During the Sister-ship Festival in 2002, 105 000 tourists were received and 9.524 million yuan of income was generated. During the Sister-ship Festival in 2008, 111 000 tourists were received and the income was 16.6464 million yuan. During the festival in 2019, 389 300 tourists were received and 154 million yuan of income was generated. The industrial development of Sister-ship Festival not only directly created economic value, but also became the cultural card of Taijiang County, which enhanced the popularity of “Colorful Guizhou” cultural brand, and played an important role in deepening the brand connotation.

C. From the Competitive Perspective



Fig. 1. Comparison of WeChat search index between Sister-ship Festival and other minority festivals (2020-05-07)



Fig. 2. Comparison of WeChat search index between Sister-ship Festival and other minority festivals (2020-07-08)



Fig. 3. WeChat search index of Sister-ship Festival on International Women's Day 2020

Intangible cultural heritage is unique and difficult to be imitated and regenerated, and this uniqueness is also associated with unique creativity. The Sister-ship Festival has a comprehensive display of the Miao culture. Activities such as singing, stepping on Lusheng, Youfang, horse racing, bullfighting, long table banquet, folk cultural experience, handicrafts display, etc., show the national cultural characteristics of the Miao nationality. This comprehensive exhibition and national cultural experience make Sister-ship Festival have strong competitiveness in the market. This paper took the WeChat index as the basis to study the market

competitiveness of Sister-ship Festivals. Wechat index is a mobile index based on Wechat big data analysis provided by Wechat officials. Wechat index integrated the search and browsing behavior data on Wechat. Based on the analysis of massive data, it can form the dynamic index changes of "Keywords" on the current day, 7 days, 30 days and 90 days. It is convenient to see the heat trend and the latest index dynamic of a word in a period of time. It can reflect the popularity and market competitiveness of a brand. Compared with other ethnic minority festivals listed in the "National Intangible Cultural Heritage List", Duan Festival, Chabaige Festival and Maolong Festival, by randomly obtaining the Wechat search index of a certain day (This paper randomly obtained Wechat search index on May 7, 2020 and July 8, 2020), we can see that the search volume of Sister-ship Festival was far more than that of other festivals (See Figure 1 for details). Since the traditional Sister-ship Festival is a female-based festival, the WeChat search index soared on the day of International Women's Day on March 8th, with a month on month increase of 1463.94% (See Figure 2 for details). Compared with other festivals, such as weeding out the old and spreading the new, praying for a good harvest and offering sacrifices to gods and Buddhas, Sister-ship Festival has unique cultural characteristics.

Although some community residents and tourists did not recognize the government-led ethnic festivals and events, they believed that the content and form were different from the traditional ones, but these differences were to enhance the overall understanding of national culture and increase the cultural capital of resources in ethnic areas, which could not be copied in other regions [7]. Sister-ship Festival took "love" and "women" as the cultural core, combined the characteristics of "Valentine's Day" and "women's Day". It endowed Taijiang county with the cultural image of the birthplace of "the Oldest Valentine's Day", making it irreplaceable in the market, and improving the market competitiveness of "Colorful Guizhou" cultural brand.

V. CONCLUSION

Since 1998, the Sister-ship Festival has been held for 22 times under the guidance of the government. Its income has been increased year by year, and people's life has gradually become rich. In 2020, due to the impact of the new coronavirus pneumonia (COVID-19), Sister-ship Festival was suspended. Local tourism income has been greatly reduced, and people's life has been affected to a certain extent. From the perspective of the government and the Miao people, Sister-ship Festival has become a valuable resource for survival. Therefore, protecting the culture of the Sister-ship Festival, improving the compatibility with history, and improving the reputation, are the key points for the development of the Sister-ship Festival in the future. Nowadays, as a major project of the government, Sister-ship Festival undertakes the functions of politics, economy, culture and leisure. The holding of Sister-ship Festival is a process of cultural reproduction. Therefore, this paper believed that the government should further strengthen detailed intervention, strictly control the details of festival activities, folk artists review, commercial product prices and other details etc., to grasp the details of cultural reproduction. In the reproduction of traditional festivals, we must be cautious

about the degree of festival use. The core value of the “colorful Guizhou” cultural brand is “original ecology”. The core value and great challenge of the industrialization development of the Sister-ship Festival is to maintain its unique, authentic and pure form. The core value of “Colorful Guizhou” cultural brand is “original ecology”. The biggest challenge for the industrialization development of the Sister-ship Festival is to maintain its unique, authentic and pure form.

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