

Research on the Development Strategy of Cultural Heritage Tourism in the Korean Peninsula

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Abstract: There are numerous cultural heritages on the Korean Peninsula. As early as the 1940s, the governments of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea successively worked out laws and regulations for cultural heritage protection. In the 1970s and 1980s, they strengthened the protection and excavation of historical culture and traditional national skills. After the 1990s, the government of the Republic of Korea carried out the development strategies for "culture-oriented national development" during Kim Dae-jung's presidency. Therefore, cultural heritage tourism, as one of the cultural tourism projects with Korean characteristics, has successfully spread to the world through the Korean Wave culture. There are now 21 projects in the Republic of Korea and two in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Among them, Ssireum (traditional wrestling) is jointly declared by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea. This paper studies the history and present situation of cultural heritage protection in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea to analyze the characteristics, types, and policies of cultural heritage tourism, which provides profitable experiences for cultural heritage tourism in Northeast Asia.

Keywords: Korean peninsula; Cultural heritage tourism; Current situation; Revelation

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1. Literature review

In recent years, the academic community in Asia has paid particular attention to the cultural heritage tourism strategic planning of both the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea on the Korean Peninsula, as well as the impact on tourists. For example, Sadan Yang (the Republic of Korea) conducted a comparative study of cultural heritage tourism at Hwaseong Fortress in Suwon, the Republic of Korea, and Pingyao Ancient City in China. The analysis identified the strengths and differences in cultural heritage tourism development between the two countries and provided useful recommendations ^[1]. Wen Xing (the Democratic

People's Republic of Korea) analyzed the history of tourism development in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, discussed current conditions and potential for tourism development, and presented innovative approaches to diversifying tourism themes and developing tourist sites throughout the Democratic People's Republic of Korea^[2]. Jin Ji-sun and Park Mi-sook (the Republic of Korea) proposed specific strategies for the future development of the Republic of Korea's cultural heritage based on current trends in the tourism industry and global developments^[3]. Li Mingji (the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) stressed the significance of utilizing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's famous historic sites for research and enhancing the country's developing tourism industry, which in turn promotes an increasingly progressive image of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the world^[4]. Finally, Yi Ik-su (the Republic of Korea) analyzed the influence of world cultural heritage sites on tourists and suggested measures to enhance tourist satisfaction, using Gyeongju in the Republic of Korea as an example^[5].

In terms of cultural heritage protection and legislation, Ding Xiuzhen's (the Republic of Korea) analysis provides historical insight into the evolution of the Republic of Korea's laws and regulations regarding cultural heritage protection. The study demonstrates how the country's political, economic, and social status, as well as the rights relationships between various groups and individuals, have contributed to and influenced the development of the "Cultural Heritage Protection Law"^[6]. Hao Da and Xia Yuanyong's (Chinese) research on the Republic of Korea's intangible cultural asset system highlights five fundamental characteristics: legal construction dynamics, collaborative list-building, tiered inheritance systems, cultural cultivation incentives, and market empowerment. Their findings may offer valuable ideas for improving and optimizing China's listing system for intangible cultural heritage^[7]. Jiang Luyang's (Chinese) study follows the timeline of the Republic of Korea's governments and outlines the non-material cultural heritage protection policies during each presidential term, focusing on the governing philosophy and policy measures employed by the different administrations. The author examines how changes in these policies have impacted the development of non-material cultural heritage protection and aims to draw out the formation and developmental trajectory of the Republic of Korea's non-material cultural heritage protection policies^[8]. Kim Yeong-seon's (the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) systematic introduction explores the cultural wealth created by the Korean nation in the fields of metal, architecture, astronomy, military, and meteorology from ancient times to the Middle Ages and modern days. The author emphasizes the importance of non-material cultural heritage protection and the creation of tourism resources^[9-10].

From the above research, it can be seen that some scholars in Northeast Asia have put forward prospective analysis and countermeasures on the study of cultural heritage tourism on the Korean Peninsula, and realize its significance of it in spreading national culture and driving the development of tourism economy. In the future, summarizing the experience and inspiration of the tourism will afford lessons for other Asian countries.

2. Overview of cultural heritage tourism in Korea

2.1. Classification of Korean cultural heritage

After the establishment of Korea in 1948, special administrative agencies such as the Cultural Preservation Division of the Cultural Affairs Bureau (1955), the Cultural Heritage Administration (1961) and the Cultural Heritage Agency (2010) were established, and the management functions were expanded from the initial conservation of old imperial relics and natural monuments of folk relics to include tangible and intangible cultural products such as drama, music, fine arts, crafts and folklore. In 1988, Korea joined as a State Party to the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and classified cultural heritage

into tangible heritage, intangible heritage, monuments, folklore materials, registered cultural heritage, and non-registered cultural heritage according to UNESCO and the World Heritage Committee.

3. The development and current situation of heritage tourism in Korea

In the 1960s, the Republic of Korea government passed a national tourism development plan, which began to accelerate the development of the inbound tourism industry and actively promoted public utilities and infrastructure construction, laying a good environmental foundation for the development of the tourism industry in the Republic of Korea. The highest authority on tourism in the Republic of Korea is the Korea Tourism Organization (KTO), established in 1962 as the Korea National Tourism Corporation. Beginning in the 1970s, the foundation for international cooperation in the tourism industry was laid. In 1998, President Kim Dae-jung launched the “Cultural President Declaration”, in which the Korean government aimed to cultivate the cultural industry as a basic industry of the 21st century to revive the sluggish Korean economy and to establish legal and support systems for the development of the cultural industry.

By July 2005, the Korean government had formulated a cultural powerhouse strategy, in which the cultural and tourism industries were designated as key strategic industries for the nation, with the tourism industry identified as the leading industry in Korea’s “cultural powerhouse” strategy.

3.1. Restoration of cultural heritage sites and promotion of palaces as tourist attractions

Since the early 1980s, the Korean government has undertaken significant restoration work on historical sites within Korea, with a focus on repairing rusted surfaces and fixing incorrect or missing lettering. In particular, the successful hosting of the Seoul Asian Games (1986) and Seoul Olympics (1988) presented an opportunity for the government to restore ancient folk village buildings and monuments. During the 1990s, the government made efforts to increase access to five major palaces (Gyeongbokgung Palace, Changdeokgung Palace, Changgyeonggung Palace, Gyeonghuigung Palace, and Deoksugung Palace) and ancestral shrines while also promoting them as popular tourist attractions. To further promote cultural heritage tourism, the government hosted exhibitions and established museums such as the Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty Museum. The growth of the Korean film and television industry since the 2000s, particularly with the popularity of historical dramas like “Dae Jang Geum” and “Empress Myeongseong”, has further boosted the development of Korean cultural heritage tourism throughout Asia ^[11].

3.2. Cultural heritage preservation and development of tourism resources across Korea

In the Republic of Korea, cultural heritage tourism has gradually expanded beyond the capital city region to other cities. Each province, city, and district has enhanced measures to protect cultural heritage. By transforming cultural heritage resources such as rural academies, religious temples, and traditional houses into Confucian cultural heritage sightseeing resources, coastal tourism folklore projects, Baekje historical recreation parks, and other culturally rich tourist sites with distinctive local characteristics, the Republic of Korea has developed a wide range of cultural heritage tourism projects. For instance, the Jeju Haenyeo culture, Heohoe Village, Nangnang Village, and Hahoe Mask Dance in Gyeongsangbuk-do, and cultural sites such as Beopjusa Temple and Confucian schools have become essential components of the Republic of Korea’s cultural tourism. In addition, various folk activities are held across Korea to attract international visitors and allow them to experience first-hand the country’s unique cultural heritage.

3.3. Application and promotion of world heritage sites and the development of tourist products

The Republic of Korea's government places great emphasis on utilizing media platforms such as film, advertising, music, news, social media, and other forms of communication to promote cultural heritage. Secondly, incorporating cultural heritage landscapes in television dramas, advertisements, and music videos results in a win-win situation. Additionally, the Republic of Korea's cultural media institutions produce exquisite short videos to promote their cultural heritage through various international conferences, exhibitions, and activities. Thirdly, interesting stories from cultural heritage sites have been explored and transformed into tourist attractions. A prominent example is the 2014 Republic of Korea film "My Love, Don't Cross That River", which showcased the ancient houses and traditional customs of Hengchun County in Gangwon Province and received an enormous response from audiences worldwide. Fourthly, the Republic of Korea tourism departments actively organize a national competition for cultural heritage interpreters, which enhances communication between them and promotes a greater appreciation of cultural heritage preservation work and its significance. Lastly, the Republic of Korea has taken advantage of its intangible cultural heritage and natural monuments to develop a diverse selection of tourist souvenirs and crafts. This is particularly evident in the integration of traditional skills with food packaging and cosmetics promotion, resulting in unique products that showcase the country's rich cultural heritage.

4. Overview of cultural heritage tourism in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

On August 24, 1953, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea established the Korea International Travel Company to specialize in international tourism services for socialist and third-world countries. From the 1960s to the 1980s, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea identified notable mountains, such as Mount Kumgang and Mount Myohyang, as tourist attractions. At the same time, it constructed the Pyongyang-Yuanshan tourist highway and established tourist reception facilities, such as the Pyongyang Koryo Hotel and Xiangshan Hotel. During this period, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's tourism mainly focused on foreign affairs receptions while also developing folk tourism between friendly countries.

In the 1990s and 2000s, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea vigorously developed its tourism industry, seeking to develop the economy through tourism by investing in tourist projects such as Baekdu Mountain, Mount Chilbo, and Mount Paektu. It also opened up tourism at the borders of Sinuiju and Rason, primarily receiving visitors from China and Russia. Additionally, it established a joint development project with the Republic of Korea for Mount Kumgang tourism (the project ended in 2018), restored historical sites such as Kaesong and Tongrim, and renovated the Pyongyang-Myohyangsan tourist highway and the Pyongyang-Kaesong-Gaesong highway. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea joined the United Nations World Tourism Organization (WTO) in 1987, expanding its potential tourism market. In 1995, it also joined the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA).

Jeong Eun Kim, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea leader, emphasized revitalizing the tourism industry at the 7th Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea in 2016 and in speeches given in 2015 and 2018, stating that it would bring a more civilized life for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea people. In 2019, he inspected the Yangdok Hot Spring Tourism Resort, the Wonsan-Kalma Coastal Tourist Area, and the Mount Kumgang Tourist Area. The country also renovated the Pyongyang International Airport and increased efforts to build leisure tourism

projects such as the Samjiyon tourist resort, the Masikryong Ski Resort, and the Meilin Equestrian Club.

5. Prospects for cultural heritage tourism on the Korean peninsula

5.1. Strengthening cooperation and exchanges between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea to promote the branding of cultural heritage tourism on the Korean peninsula

Cultural heritage exchange and cooperation between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea began in 2000. The most notable examples include two activities carried out by the Association of Korean and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Historians, and the Cultural Heritage Administration, as well as efforts to excavate and investigate the Wanwoltae site in Kaesong. Additionally, a comprehensive academic investigation and research project on the cultural heritage of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was jointly proposed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea from 2004 to 2013. In 2007, some projects were initiated, including collecting materials related to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea cultural heritage pioneers and operating a cultural heritage museum, publishing reports related to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea cultural heritage, and conducting surveys of temple cultural heritage sites in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. However, due to political factors and other issues, these plans were not implemented as scheduled ^[12]. This brought new vitality to the development of cultural heritage and tourism cooperation, but it has not been substantially advanced. Despite the unpredictable situation on the Korean Peninsula, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea are of the same ethnicity with common cultural attributes and historical backgrounds. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen institutional cooperation and promote the branding and publicity of cultural heritage tourism on the Korean Peninsula. At the same time, the strength of the cultural tourism management organizations, trade associations, and foundations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea should be brought into play to promote the protection of the peninsula's cultural heritage and the forms and contents of cultural heritage tourism cooperation.

5.2. Improving the popularity of cultural heritage tourism resources on the Korean peninsula and strengthening comprehensive marketing

Efforts should be made to strengthen connections with world-renowned tourism media, promotional channels, and travel magazines while actively conducting cultural heritage annual events and nurturing representative cultural celebrations in various regions. Through different cultural manifestations, cultural heritage tourism can be promoted to other countries. Furthermore, it is important to enhance activities during cultural heritage days, providing multilingual language services and emphasizing storytelling as a means of interpreting intangible cultural heritage. Additionally, cultural heritage display departments should refine their interpretation of cultural heritage according to the needs of tourists. These departments should focus on improving their operational capacity and producing multilingual tourism maps tailored to visitors' preferences. Training and expanding the number of professional cultural heritage narrators, especially focusing on building a mechanism for cultivating non-professional interpreters of intangible cultural heritage, is also important. Finally, it is necessary to train more professional cultural heritage narrators and build mechanisms for cultivating professional interpreters of intangible folk cultural heritage.

5.3. Supporting the education and consultation of cultural heritage and tourism talents

In recent years, several universities in the Republic of Korea, such as the Traditional Korean Culture University, Korea University, Dongguk University, Andong National University, Chung-Ang University, and Chungbuk National University, have successively established cultural heritage-related majors, as well as related courses on cultural heritage tourism, cultivating a large number of talented individuals in cultural heritage and tourism. In addition, the Republic of Korea has also developed adult non-material cultural heritage training courses in its social education system. Similarly, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has also attached great importance to the cultivation of cultural heritage talents and discipline education in the last decade. Today, more than ten colleges and universities in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea offer non-material cultural heritage majors, with teacher training universities being the main institutions providing these programs. To promote cultural heritage tourism, Pyongyang Tourism University, Wonsan Teachers College, and Che Gwang Su Shinuiju Teachers College provide courses that integrate non-material cultural heritage tourism. Going forward, both South and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are poised for significant breakthroughs in the development of national cultural heritage tourism talent training.

5.4. Accelerating the technological informationization of cultural heritage tourism to promote international exchanges and cooperation

The Republic of Korea has harnessed advanced technology to enhance the digitization of cultural heritage archives. This has facilitated the provision of high-quality, unified cultural heritage information, as well as diversified the visiting experience through the use of heritage information technology. Going forward, the Republic of Korea intends to use cutting-edge information technology for preserving cultural heritage records and reconstructing relevant historical sites. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, on the other hand, focuses on maintaining the originality of cultural heritage and has strengthened effective management of cultural heritage at all levels. In addition, famous historical sites in cities such as Pyongyang have been equipped with modern facilities for promotion and interpretation. Both the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea maintain close contacts with the United Nations and other international organizations devoted to cultural heritage and tourism. The Republic of Korea regards cultural tourism as an important industry pillar, while the Democratic People's Republic of Korea views tourism development as a key factor in its economic growth strategy. As such, stronger international cooperation in cultural heritage and tourism is crucial for promoting the peninsula's ethnic and cultural identity and expanding UNESCO World Heritage Site applications.

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The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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