

An Interpretation of Qingming River Park's Development from the Perspective of Cross Cultural Communication

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Abstract: The Qingming River Park is an important part of the national cultural industry model of Song Dynasty culture, it is also one of the highlights of Henan cultural industry and the leader of Kaifeng's tourism development. Through analyzing the development of tourism in Qingming River Park from the perspective of cross-cultural development, the author concludes that its development still needs to learn from the development of foreign tourism in order to be able to reach a larger international stage.

Keywords: Cross-Cultural Communication, Tourism Industry, Communication Effect, Qingming River Park.

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background and Status

With the rising of the world economy, the tertiary industry will replace the first and the second industry with the leisure and entertainment industry as its main consumer products and has become the mainstay of national economy gradually. The proposal of the concept of cultural industries combine the entertainment industry and people's cultural needs. More and more leisure and entertainment industry are labeled with "culture" as well as tourism industry. As one of the popular recreation for people's leisure time, tourism industry launches many cultural tourism project during recent years.

Intercultural communication is the cross-cultural communication of social information or the cross-cultural operation of social information systems. It is also the flow, sharing and interaction process of various cultural information in time and space.[1] It is not only related to the information dissemination and interpersonal interaction that occurs between members of different cultures, but also involves the diffusion, penetration and migration of many cultural elements in human society. In essence, intercultural communication is a kind of cultural communication activity that communicates and establishes coexistence between people of different cultures, or it is a kind of "extension" process of human social relations and social communication across cultures and regions.

Although the development of tourism in Qingming River Park is also in full swing, the current situation of tourism development in Qingming River Park from the perspective of cross-cultural communication is still lacking. Therefore, this thesis will interpret the development of tourism in Qingming River Park from the perspective of cross-cultural communication and propose corresponding initiatives for the current issues encountered in the development of Qingming River Park.

1.2. Research Purpose and Significance

Since the development of tourism in Qingming River Park is still limited to the domestic theses and there is a few relevant literature on the development of related tourism. The

development of tourism in Qingming River Park is always in the primary stage. Although it is a 5A tourist attraction at home, it is still very low reputation abroad and few people even heard of this attraction before. This thesis attempts to analyze the development of tourism in Qingming River Park, through reflect the problems in its development and propose corresponding solutions to promote its long-term operation and cross-cultural tourism.

The study of Qingming River Park has important practical significance for the heritage of traditional Chinese culture, the development of local cultural tourism and other related industries. It can also promote the cross-cultural development and communication of the tourism industry, so that more and more people at home and abroad can know the tourism culture and concept of the Qingming River Park.

2. Literature Review

Research on theme parks has always been an important topic in domestic and foreign tourism research. As early as in the 1980s, foreign research institutions on theme parks were formed, such as the International Association of Amusement Parks (IAAPA), the National Amusement Parks and Historical Association (NAPHA), the Economic Research Association (ERA), and Theme Parks Online (Theme Parks Online) and so on. Since entering the 21st century, foreign research on theme parks has mainly focused on the role of theme parks on regional economic development, the influence factors of theme park ticket price changes, the influence factors of theme park consumers' decision-making, and the tourism experience of theme park tourists, and other aspects, and the representative research results mainly include Bradley M. Brown's work Competitive Strategies for Theme Parks, [2]Astrid D.A.M. Kemperman's work Consumer Choice in Theme Parks: Seasonal Influences and Diversity-Seeking Behavior in a Composite Consumer Choice in Theme Parks: An Integrated Model of Seasonal Influences and Diversity Seeking Behavior, [3]and Theme Park Experience: An Analysis of Enjoyment, Motivation, and Satisfaction by J·Ennque·Bigne.[4].

3. Qingming River Park

3.1. The Development of Qingming River Park

The development of the Qingming River Park took such a long time and experienced many difficulties and setbacks to develop it into a household tourist attraction, which can form a strong force to drive the economic development of Kaifeng.

The first phase of the project to reproduce the water system of Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival was formally proposed in April 1991, and applied for project approval in August of the same year, and broke ground in July 1992. This was the initial plan of the Qingming River Park, which originated from an idea of Liu Yi, former director of the National Tourism Administration, when inspecting the tourism work in Kaifeng. He proposed that the Kaifeng water system project should make use of the many water conditions to make a big effort on the Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival and highlight the culture of the Song Dynasty. But by the end of 1994, affected by the reform of the national investment and financing system, the construction of the Qingming River Park was halted due to lack of funds.

In 1998, Qingming River Park was finally officially opened after many twists and turns. The whole park is based on the construction of Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival by Zhang Zeduan, a painter of the Northern Song Dynasty, and is the first theme park in Henan Province. [5]As the ancient capital of the Song Dynasty, Kaifeng has rich cultural resources of the Song Dynasty, and Qingming River Park is the first national 4A-class tourist attraction combining Kaifeng's unique traditional culture with modern tourism and leisure. It is also one of the few theme parks in China with good operation effects.

Launching the second phase of the project in 2005, extending the Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival to the royal garden. It made the overall area of Qingming River Park reach 40 hectares, and the visitor reception reached 1 million per year, which constructed a solid foundation for the development of Qingming River Park.

In 2018, on the basis of the construction content of Phase I and Phase II, around the transformation and upgrading of the park, the original intention of building a better life and providing better quality tourism products for the people, we started to make full efforts to plan and invest in the construction of the third phase of the Qingming River Park tourism project, which mainly consists of two big projects: one is to build a high-tech animation and interactive experience zone in the northern part of the Qingming River Park; and the other is to create an open living block of Song style in the southern part of the Qingming River Park.

The development of Qingming River Park for more than 20 years, from nothing to developing into a famous scenic spot in China, which consumed huge manpower, material and financial resources. This can be called the first step and great conduct in the development of tourism in Kaifeng.

3.2. Existing Achievements and Experience

From the development route and development status of Qingming River Park up to now, it has achieved significant industrial benefits, the development path is clear and reasonable, and each step is moving towards a larger market.

In April 2008, invested 135 million yuan to launch the large-scale water live-action show "The Dream of Tokyo in the Song Dynasty" in which the total number of visitors exceeded one million in that year. In 2014, invested more than

10 million yuan to create the live-action show "Yue Fei Gunning down the King of Liang" and "The Defense of Tokyo in the Song Dynasty", which helped push the visitor reception to exceed 2 million for the first time, and the income to break the 200 million yuan mark for the first time. In 2017, the Qingming River Park was opened for the first time for night tour, and from that time the Qingming River Park truly reached a new stage of all-weather tourism development. In 2018, it was the 20th anniversary of the establishment of Qingming River Park. In 2019, the large-scale water live-action show "The Dream of Tokyo in the Song Dynasty", the revenue exceeded 100 million. In October 2021, selected as the first batch of primary and secondary school study tour practice bases in Henan Province to be recognized. On June 1, 2022, it was selected as one of the first provincial cultural and tourism "white list" enterprises in Henan Province.

Qingming River Park has distinctive cultural themes and outstanding core projects. Among the many set up programs, visitors are most impressed by the architecture and performances in the park. Around the theme of civil culture and court culture in Song Dynasty, Qingming River Park takes architecture in Song Dynasty, folk and historical drama performances, special snacks in Song Dynasty and traditional handicrafts as the main products of the park, forming a "eat, drink, play, enjoy and appreciate" one-stop tour of the park, with these four items interlocking and interpenetrating which can greatly enriching visitors' tourism experience.

Qingming River Park has flexible marketing strategies and abundant media publicity means. The ticket price of Qingming River Park, for example, is 120 yuan in high season, 100 yuan in low season, and half price for students. In addition, the Qingming River Park has introduced corresponding preferential measures for the military, the disabled, the elderly and other special groups. Qingming River Park also adopts an integrated marketing and communication approach, using almost all modern ways of communication (including newspapers, the Internet, cell phones, TV and radios) to widely publicize its scenic spots, celebration ceremonies, special events and referential activities.

Convenient transportation widens the passenger market of Qingming River Park. Kaifeng has railway station, high-speed railway station and bus station in its convenient transportation system. Tourists in Henan province can choose to travel to the Qingming River Park by taking speed railways or self-driving. While tourists from other provinces close to Henan, they can also choose speed-railways, airplanes and etc. No matter what you choose for your tourist transportation, it is very convenient to get to the park.

4. Existing Issues and Prospect

4.1. Existing Issues and Resolutions

Qingming River Park has made a sound name and established a good brand image, but the supporting facilities and original projects in the park still need further improvement. Moreover, many scenic spots around the park have not been fully recognized and utilized, the food provided in the tourist attraction is not special and prominent enough, and the surrounding accommodation environment and service also need to be improved. The business model and marketing strategy of Qingming River Park have become more and more mature with the development of tourism, so more attention should be paid to enhancing the reputation and maintaining a

good brand image of the whole tourist park. [6]

4.1.1. Formation of Tourism Clusters

Although the Qingming River Park has made great achievements and sound development in recent years, the park still has the problem of visitors can not staying for a long time. The reputation and popularity of Qingming River Park has been greatly enhanced, however, there is still a lot of barriers to change the situation of “one-day tour”. Due to the lack of segregation with other surrounding tourist attractions, so it is rarely possible to provide a fixed tourist clusters for tourists to visit and enjoy, which is also the biggest challenge for the future development of the Qingming River Park.

The solution of this problem needs to put forward some effective measures together with the local government, for example, we can first carry out in the attractions near Qingming River Park, include Daxiangguo Temple, Kaifeng Mansion, Longting Park, Baogong Temple, Iron Pagoda, Tianboyang Mansion, HanYuan Park, Yanqing Temple and etc. If we can integrate the available resources and launch a cultural tourism route and Kaifeng travel package tickets with Qingming River Park, Longting Park as well as other attractions as the main brand of Kaifeng. We can also make a good use of the resources of the government. If the various elements of “Bianjing” culture in Kaifeng such as eating, drinking, playing, enjoying and shopping can be effectively integrated, it may be able to solve the problem of “one-day tour to Qingming River Park” or even “one-day tour to Kaifeng”.

4.1.2. Orientation of Local Food

Food culture in the surrounding of Qingming River Park is also on the weak side. Eating can be said to be the most attractive item and the icing on the cake program during the process of tourists visiting the park and other attractions. Under the background of the Yu cuisine system gradually disappeared from the world-renowned eight Chinese major cuisines, Kaifeng snacks are famous in China for their unique soup dumplings, barrel chicken, peanut cake, sweet potato puree and other snacks. Although the “Tokyo Night Market” was specially set up around the Qingming River Park to include elements of Kaifeng snacks, however, the actual situation of the “Tokyo Night Market” did not achieve the desired effect and tourists around the attraction are not very satisfied with the snack street actually. There are several problems in the snack street of Qingming River Park through the analysis and investigation in my hometown: the cost performance is not high, the special products are not outstanding, and the dining environment is not satisfied by customers.

The development of this special snack street can learn from the model of Chongqing and Taiwan, which are both famous for their local special snacks. These two places not only have a wide variety of snacks and local food, but also rich in local characteristics. The outer packaging of snacks is exquisite and clean, and the dining environment is neat and comfortable, so that visitors can not only taste the local cuisine, but also can feel the rich local food culture at the same time.

4.1.3. Building of Accommodation

The further development of Qingming River Park is also affected and constrained by various factors of the surrounding accommodation such as the environment, conditions, prices and other reasons. Although there are both B&B and fast hotels, the accommodation around the Qingming River Park and other tourist attractions around the hotels are particularly

expensive because of the favorable location, the cost effectiveness is relatively low. Besides that the rooms supporting hardware facilities are not complete, such as some B&B does not have a washing machine, projector, breakfast supply, free parking and other settings, so the experience for those tourists is extremely bad, it becomes another aspect that hinders the residents to travel in Kaifeng for another time of the experience. In addition, some hotels are located in remote areas, and the rooms are old and damp, which should be taken seriously to solve the accommodation problem to a large extent to improve the possibility of tourists to return to the park and surrounding attractions.

The solution to this problem requires both the local government to control and the hotel management to cooperate with to improve the effect of surrounding accommodation, so that can meet the accommodation requirements and experience of tourists from other areas of our country to visit Qingming River Park and surrounding clusters. On the one hand, the government should strengthen the market supervision, to set the price according to the hotel facilities and geographical location, so that tourists will have a high cost-effective accommodation experience in here; on the other hand, the relevant hotels should be committed to promoting their services, improving the internal facilities and conditions of the hotel, in order to support the hotel to attract repeat customers and increase tourism revenue. In addition, it can also further promote the tourism development of Qingming River Park and the surrounding tourism clusters.

4.1.4. Lacking of Advanced Technology

The development of Qingming River Park also has the problem of technological development. Its development lacking of the combination with high and innovative technology. The cultural products development of Qingming River Park is still based on traditional performances, festivals, experiential leisure and entertainment products, which is not in line with the requirements of modern society characterized by information and high technology, and this situation is not conducive to the sustainable and long term development of the park. Although there is a 3D experience hall in Qingming River Park, its scale and influence are still only limited to a small audience. [7]As a result, the park will lose the market of young people who are pursuing high and advanced technology as fashion. At the same time, it will also lead to the loss of tourists from the surrounding clusters around Qingming River Park.

From the perspective of the current social development process, the tourism industry is in a highly competitive. Excepting the own special features of scenic spots, the details of supporting services also can attract tourism to Qingming River Park. In addition, the development of cultural industry cannot be separated from the content innovation. Technological innovation has provided new means of communication and created new forms of expression for the cultural industry, and cultural innovation has given new contents and meanings to the cultural industry. Therefore, the Qingming River Park is bound to be integrated with modern high technology in its future development. For example, the electronic screen introduction of the program in the park can be provided, which is both fashionable and environmentally friendly; the “The Dream of Tokyo in the Song Dynasty” at night can add water curtain, LED and other elements to increase the attractiveness of the program; the animated version of Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival exhibited at the Shanghai World Expo in 2010 had caused a sensation and

attracted millions of visitors to watch it. It can be expected that the combination of Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival and modern technology will bring another new climax to the development of Qingming River Park.

4.2. The Prospect of Qingming River Park

In the early stage of establishment, Qingming River Park chose a creative expressions, high requirements for the quality of the park projects, and integrated marketing communication for the park. More importantly, it is the professional interpretation and development of “Bianjing” culture in Song Dynasty. Although there are different kinds of problems in Qingming River Park, we still believe that these problems will be solved one by one with the mature development of the park, which is because the park has not been stagnant due to the achievements.

In addition, the successful development of Qingming River Park shows that traditional folk custom and culture still has unique charm and great value in the lifestyle of modern society, but the key lies in the need for a reasonable way to integrate it into the modern lifestyle. [8]Qingming River Park effectively combines leisure, entertainment and people’s intrinsic demand for traditional culture, using modern expressions of traditional historical folk culture, such as the use of festivals, exhibitions, technologies and other elements, and combining the latest communication media, such as television, Internet, cell phones and other means of communication in the process.

As long as Qingming River Park can achieve the combination of traditional culture and high technology in its development, create tourist attractions and experiences that meet modern public needs, and improve the introduction and services of the attractions in the park at the same time, including the services of the surrounding clusters, local special snacks and other aspects, the development prospects of Qingming River Park will be full of brightness, not only in the domestic tourism market but the international tourism will also has a place.

5. Conclusion

As one of the top tourist attractions in the province of Henan, Qingming River Park performed very well in spreading the culture of Song Dynasty and modern tourism development. The Qingming River Park is the only 5A scenic spot in Kaifeng, so naturally its development is of great interest to locals. Based on its general development from 1991 to today, this thesis discusses a series of achievements made by Qingming River Park during its development, the different dilemmas hindered its development and the corresponding

solutions, finally demonstrates the prospect on the international development of Qingming River Park.

All in all, the history of the Qingming River Park, the development process and future prospect are prevail throughout the whole thesis. The author interpreting the development of Qingming River Park from the perspective of cross-cultural development and argues that the development of it still needs to be combined with advanced technologies, to conform to the travel customs and methods of contemporary youth. Prescribing the right remedies for the exist problems, it will be possible to gain a solid foundation in the international tourism market and make more people to know Qingming River Park better.

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