

Strategies for Rural Tourism Cultural Revitalization in Haikou Economic Circle from the Perspective of Ecological Space

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Abstract: *Against the backdrop of comprehensively promoting the “Rural vitalization” strategy and the integration of culture and tourism, rural tourism in the Haikou Economic Circle has become an important potential growth point for the regional economy with its rich ecological resources and unique regional culture. However, at present, rural tourism in this area generally suffers from ecological space damage, fragmented cultural expression, monolithic experience modes and other problems, which have led to difficulties in the inheritance and revitalization of rural culture. Ecological space emphasizes the synergetic development logic of “ecological priority, spatial integration, and cultural embedding”, providing a new pathway to solve this problem. Based on the actual development of rural tourism in the Haikou Economic Circle, this paper starts from the intrinsic connection between ecological space and rural culture, analyzes the core value of rural tourism cultural revitalization from the perspective of ecological space, and explores tridimensional revitalization strategies of “ecological space restoration - cultural resource comb - experience scenario construction - industrial synergetic development”, and proposes guarantee measures, such as policy support, technological empowerment, and talent cultivation, at the same time, aiming at providing reference for the high-quality development of rural tourism and cultural inheritance in the Haikou Economic Circle.*

Keywords: Ecological Space; Haikou Economic Circle; Rural Tourism; Cultural Revitalization; Strategies

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1.Introduction

The 14th Five-Year Plan for the Development of the Tourism Sector clearly states that rural tourism should uphold the principle of “ecological protection first and cultural inheritance foremost”, promote the deep integration of ecological resources and cultural resources, and achieve the value transformation from “lucid waters and lush mountains” to “invaluable assets”. As one of the core areas for the construction of the Hainan Free Trade Port, the Haikou Economic Circle covers five counties and cities including Haikou, Wenchang, Chengmai, Ding’ an and Lingao, boasts rich ecological and cultural resources such as volcanic villages, coastal fishing villages, tropical rainforests and ancient hometowns of overseas Chinese, and has a natural advantage for the development of rural tourism^[1].

However, the problems of “emphasizing development over protection” and “emphasizing business over culture” have gradually emerged in the development of rural tourism in this area in recent years. Some rural areas excessively transform their ecological space in pursuit of short-term economic benefits, resulting in the damage of characteristic ecological landscapes such as volcanic landforms and mangrove wetlands. Rural culture is mostly displayed in a static way, such as folk museums and cultural walls, and lacks the integration with ecological scenarios, making it difficult for tourists to have deep experience. In addition, cultural resources within the area are scattered, and there is a lack of coordination among rural tourism in various counties and cities, failing to form a synergistic brand effect of “ecology -culture”^[2].

2.Current Situation of Rural Tourism Cultural Revitalization in Haikou Economic Circle

2.1 The Damage of Ecological Space Leads to the Loss of Culture Carriers

The core appeal of rural tourism in Haikou Economic Circle stems from its dual characteristics of “ecology + culture”, however, the integrity of its ecological space is under threat now^[3]. On the one hand, some rural areas

harden their roads excessively and construct large-scale recreation facilities during tourism development, which have damaged the ecological features of “stone houses, stone walls and stone alleys” in volcanic villages, as well as the natural pattern of “mangroves - mud flats - fishing boats” in coastal fishing villages. On the other hand, the abuse of chemical fertilizers and pesticides in agricultural production and the indiscriminate discharge of rural domestic sewage have led to soil pollution around tropical rainforests and the degradation of river ecosystem. This ecological space is important carriers of the “slash-and-burn” culture of the Li people and the “living by fishing” culture of the Tanka people. For instance, due to overcultivation of cash crops, the ancient banyan trees and volcanic stone roads have been damaged along the ancient post road around the ancient post road of Luyi in Chengmai. The related “courier station culture” and “horse caravan culture” have lost their original ecological scenarios, making it difficult for tourists to experience its historical profundity [4].

2.2 Cultural Expression Is Fragmented and Divorced from Ecological Space

The rural cultural resources are rich in Haikou Economic Circle, covering volcanic culture, overseas Chinese hometown culture, Tanka culture, Li ethnic culture, etc. However, the current cultural revitalization mostly features “fragmentation” and has not been organically integrated with the ecological space. This is manifested as follows. Firstly, the forms of cultural presentation are monotonous, and mainly consist of “text introduction + artifact exhibition”. For instance, the Overseas Chinese Cultural Villages of Huiwen Town in Wenchang only display old photos, Qiaopi and other cultural relics through the Overseas Chinese Museum, and do not integrate the surrounding ecological space such as ancient coconut groves and dwellings in hometowns of overseas Chinese to design experience activities. Secondly, the cultural content is superficial. Some rural tourism projects merely extract cultural symbols for commercial application, such as printing the totems of the Li people on the walls of guesthouses without explaining their connection with the tropical rainforest ecosystem, resulting in that the culture lost the “ecological roots”. Thirdly, there is inadequate regional collaboration. Each culture fights its own battle in different regions, for example, the “volcanic culture” of volcanic crater villages, the “Tanka culture” in Lingaojiao Fishing Villages, and the “folk culture” of Jiuwengang cold spring in Ding’ an. They fail to form cultural chains through ecological corridors, making it difficult to establish a regional cultural brand.

2.3 The Experience Modes Are Monolithic and Lack Immersive Interaction

At present, the cultural experience of rural tourism is mostly confined to the “sightseeing” level, and lack immersive interaction combining with ecological space in the Haikou Economic Circle. For instance, in the volcanic villages of Jiazi Town in Haikou, tourists can only visit the exterior of the volcanic stone houses and are not allowed to engage in cultural experience related to volcanic ecosystem such as “volcanic stone masonry” and “volcanic mud potting”. In the ancient town of Puqian in Wenchang, the experience of overseas Chinese hometown culture is mostly about “strolling along the old streets and eating snacks”. The mangrove wetlands around the ancient town have not been used to design integrated projects such as “Simulated Navigation of Overseas Chinese Merchant Ships” and “Mangrove Ecological Research and study + Explanation of Overseas Chinese Hometown History”. In addition, the experience projects are highly homogeneous. Various rural areas generally launch the conventional projects such as “picking, fishing, and guesthouses”, and do not combine with their own ecological characteristics to explore cultural connotation. This has led to short stay of tourists, low revisit rate, and poor effect in the transmission and inheritance of rural culture.

3.The Core Value of Rural Tourism Cultural Revitalization in Haikou Economic Circle from the Perspective of Ecological Space

3.1 Ecological Space Restoration: Providing “Natural Carriers” for Cultural Revitalization

Ecological space is the foundation for the generation and inheritance of rural culture. Restoring ecological space can provide “original” scenario carriers for cultural revitalization. The formation of rural culture is closely related to the local ecological environment in the Haikou Economic Circle. Volcanic culture is based on volcanic landforms.

Tanka culture relies on coastal wetlands for development, and overseas Chinese hometown culture is accompanied by ancient post roads and ancient coconut groves. Through ecological space restoration, such as the vegetation recovery around the Haikou Volcano Crater, the protection of the Wenchang Mangrove Wetlands, and the governance of the Ding' an Cold Spring Basin, the original ecological scenarios of rural culture can be reproduced to allow tourists to feel the vitality of culture while "Watching mountains, gazing at water, and recalling homesickness". For instance, restoring the volcanic stone roads and the ancient banyan tree cluster along the ancient post road of Luoyi in Chengmai can recreate the ecological pattern of the "ancient courier station", provide carriers for cultural activities, such as "Horse caravan culture experience" and "courier route hiking + historical explanation", and make the cultural revitalization more authentic and appealing.

3.2 Spatial Integration: Achieving the "Systematic Revitalization" of Cultural Resources

The ecological space perspective emphasizes "regional collaboration and spatial interaction", which can break down the administrative barriers of rural tourism in various counties and cities in the Haikou Economic Circle and promote the systematic integration of cultural resources. At present, the rural cultural resources are scattered in this area. However, if the "ecological corridor" serves as a bond, the series connection of cultural resources can be achieved, which takes the "Haikou Volcano Crater - Chengmai Fushan Coffee Garden - Ding' an Jiuwentang Cold Spring" ecological corridor as the axis to integrate volcanic culture, coffee culture and folk culture, and takes the ecological corridor of "Haikou Dongzhaigang Mangrove Forest - Wenchang Puqian Ancient Town - Linggaojiao Coastal Wetland" as the axis to connect the Tanka culture, overseas Chinese hometown culture and Marine culture. This model of "ecological space integration + cultural resource comb" can help Haikou economic circle to avoid the fragmentation of cultural revitalization, form a regional tourism product system of "one ecological corridor and one cultural line", and enhance the integral competitiveness of rural tourism in the Haikou Economic Circle.

4.Strategies for Rural Tourism Cultural Revitalization in Haikou Economic Circle from the Perspective of Ecological Space

4.1 Ecological Space Restoration and Cultural Carrier Reconstruction: Consolidating the Foundation for Revitalization

The first is to restore characteristic ecological space, that is, implement differentiated restoration projects for different types of rural ecological resources in the Haikou Economic Circle. For volcanic villages (such as Jiazi Town in Haikou and Luoyi Village in Chengmai), the focus is on restoring volcanic stone houses, crater vegetation, and ancient post roads, preserving the ecological features of "stone walls, stone alleys, and ancient banyan trees", and reconstructing the original scenarios of volcanic culture. For coastal fishing villages (such as Yanfeng Town in Haikou and Lingaojiao), efforts should be made to enhance the protection of mangrove wetlands and mud flat ecosystem, restore the wharfs for Tanka fishing boats, and the ecological pattern of "fishing boats - mangroves - fishing villages". For overseas Chinese villages (such as Huiwen Town in Wenchang and Puqian Ancient Town), it is necessary to improve the ecological environment of the farmland and rivers around the ancient villages, restore the ancient coconut groves and ancient stone bridges, and provide an ecological background of "fields and gardens and villages" for overseas Chinese hometown culture.

The second is to upgrade the functions of cultural carriers, that is, reconstruct the functions of traditional cultural carriers on the basis of ecological restoration. For instance, the idle stone houses in Haikou Volcanic Villages can be transformed into a "Volcanic Culture Experience Hall" to display the geological evolution process of volcanoes inside it and set some interactive areas such as volcanic stone masonry and volcanic mud potting outside it. The ancient dwellings can be transformed into "Overseas Chinese Life Museums" in Wenchang hometown of overseas Chinese to restore the daily life scenes of overseas Chinese families in combination with the ancient coconut trees and wells in the courtyards, and allow tourists to experience cultural activities such as overseas Chinese cuisine and embroidery. The old fishing boats of the Tanka people in Lingao can be transformed into

“mobile cultural stations”, which are moored around the mangrove wetlands. Tourists can board the boats to learn about the fishing history of the Tanka people and listen to the saltwater songs.

4.2 Sorting Out Cultural Resources and Integrating Ecological Space: Building an Interactive System

The third is to systematically sort out regional cultural resources, that is, establish a database of rural cultural resources in the Haikou Economic Circle to classify them by “ecological form + cultural theme” into volcanic ecological form (volcanic culture, agricultural culture), coastal ecological form (Tanka culture, Marine culture), rural ecological form (overseas Chinese hometown culture, folk culture), and rainforest ecological form (Li ethnic culture, herbal medicine culture). At the same time, it is necessary to explore the associative points between cultural resources and ecological space, such as the formation history of volcanic culture and volcanic landforms, and the dependence relationship between Tanka culture and mangrove wetlands, to form the relational graph spectra of “ecology-culture”, and provide basis for subsequent integration. Based on the existing ecological corridors in the Haikou Economic Circle, three “ecology + culture” interactive tourism routes can be designed.

4.3 Immersive Experience Scenario Construction: Enriching the Revitalization Forms

The fourth is to design “Ecology + Culture” immersive experience, that is, design diverse experience projects by integrating the characteristics of different ecological space. In the volcanic ecological space, an immersive experience of “volcanic adventure” can be developed, where tourists wear VR devices to simulate the scenarios of volcanic eruption, learn about volcanic geological knowledge, and then engage in the real-scenario interaction of “building a volcanic stone house” to learn the construction technology of volcanic stone houses. In the coastal ecological space, a “One-day Tour of Tanka Life” experiential activity can be launched, in which tourists follow Tanka fishermen to go out to sea on fishing boats, learn the observational methods of mangrove wetlands, experience trawler fishing, and participate in activities, such as “Saltwater Songs with Double” and “Seafood Cooking”, in the fishing village in the evening. In the pastoral ecological space, an “Overseas Chinese Memory” immersive theater can be created, which is with the ancient village of Wenchang Hometown of Overseas Chinese as the background, interprets the historical stories of overseas Chinese going to Southeast Asia and returning to their hometowns to build villages through live action. Tourists can play the roles of villagers, merchants, etc., and deeply experience overseas Chinese the hometown culture.

The fifth is to upgrade experience through digital technology empowerment, that is, enhance the interactivity of cultural experience by using AR, big data and other technologies. For instance, in the volcanic villages of Haikou, an AR tour guide system can be set up. Tourists can scan the volcanic stone walls to see the virtual “life scenarios in ancient volcanic villages”. In the Puqian ancient town in Wenchang, a mini-program called “Memory of Overseas Chinese Hometowns” can be developed. Tourists can unlock the historical stories of overseas Chinese hometowns by fulfilling online tasks such as “Searching for Ancient Shops” and “Decoding the Codes of Qiaopi”, and obtain tour guides for nearby ecological attractions (such as mangroves) at the same time. In addition, a digital platform for rural tourism in the Haikou Economic Circle can be established to integrate experience projects of “ecology-culture” from various cities and counties, and provide service such as online appointments and personalized route customization to enhance the convenience of tourists.

4.4 Industrial Synergetic Development: Promoting Sustainable Revitalization

The sixth is to integrate “ecological agriculture and cultural tourism”, that is, rely on the characteristic ecological agriculture of Haikou Economic Circle to develop tourism products of “agriculture + culture”. For instance, the Fushan Coffee Industrial Park in Chengmai can integrate overseas Chinese hometown culture and design a project called “Coffee Planting Experience + Explanation of the History of Coffee in Overseas Chinese Hometowns”. While tourists are picking coffee fruits, they can also learn about the history that overseas Chinese introduced coffee varieties. The Ding’ an Zongzi Industrial Park can integrate folk culture and launch the activity of “Zongzi Making Experience + Dragon Boat Festival Customs Display”, or combine the surrounding rice paddy

ecosystem to carry out “rice field cycling + zongzi culture research and study”. In addition, efforts should be made to promote the “Ecological Agricultural Cultural and Creative Industry”, make vegetables grown in volcanic rocks and seafood caught by Tanka fishermen “cultural souvenirs”, and print regional cultural symbols on them to increase the added value of the products.

The seventh is to upgrade “Rural Guesthouses + Ecological Culture”, that is, create “ecology+ culture” concept guesthouses to avoid homogenization of guesthouses. For instance, the guesthouses in Haikou volcanic villages can adopt the architectural style of volcanic stones, features volcanic cultural elements in their interior decoration, and offer special activities such as “Volcanic Night Chat” (inviting local elders to tell volcanic stories) and “Starry Sky Camping” (observing the starry sky around the crater). Guesthouses in Wenchang hometown of overseas Chinese can retain the architectural features of the Arcade and offer service such as “Overseas Chinese Hometown Breakfast” (like Baoluo Noodles and Envelope Cakes) and “Overseas Chinese Hometown Embroidery Experience” to allow tourists to experience the culture during their stay. Meanwhile, guesthouses must strictly adhere to ecological protection requirements, adopt environmental protection facilities such as solar energy and rainwater recycling, and achieve the coexist of “ecological accommodation + cultural experience”.

5.Conclusion

The revitalization of rural tourism culture in the Haikou Economic Circle from the perspective of ecological space is a key pathway to achieve the synergetic development of “ecological protection”, “cultural inheritance” and “economic development”. This perspective takes the restoration of ecological space as the basis, the integration of cultural resources as the core, and immersive experience as the carrier. By deeply integrating “ecology and culture”, it cannot only solve the current problems of ecological damage and cultural fragmentation in rural tourism in the Haikou Economic Circle, but also enhance the appeal and competitiveness of rural tourism, and inject impetus into regional rural revitalization. However, this process requires the joint engagement of the government, enterprises, villagers and tourists. The government needs to do a good job in top-level design and policy support; Enterprises need to uphold the development idea of “Ecology as Priority, Culture as Essence”; Villagers need to actively engage in cultural inheritance and ecological protection; Tourists need to establish the awareness of “civilized traveling and ecological tourism”. Only in this way can we promote the realization of the goal of “ecological beauty, cultural revitalization and prosperous people” for rural tourism in the Haikou Economic Circle, and enable rural culture to regain its lasting vitality in the ecological space.

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