

A Study on the Path of Implementing the Strategy of “Tai You Yin Li” with Cultural Resources in Hailing District, Taizhou City

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Abstract: In the context of urban competition focusing on comprehensive attractiveness, cultural soft power is crucial. This paper studies Haizhou District, Taizhou, exploring how to implement the strategy of “Tai You Yin Li (Taizhou’s Attraction)” via its three key cultural resources: Mei Lanfang’s opera culture, morning tea culture, and salt tax culture. It analyzes their dilemmas and proposes innovative paths to address these. The goal is to build a cycle where “cultural context nourishes talents and talents feed back the city,” boosting Taizhou’s attractiveness.

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background and Significance

In the current context of globalization, urban competition has shifted from a mere contest of economic scale to a game of comprehensive attractiveness. Cultural soft power is the core engine of urban competition. Cities attract talents by shaping unique cultures, thereby driving innovation, promoting economic value-added, and directly enhancing urban competitiveness.

Taizhou City, located in the central part of Jiangsu Province, is a vital water and land transportation hub connecting the south and the north, with a history of more than 2,100 years since its founding. During the Han Dynasty, Taizhou was called “Hailing”. In 1996, when Taizhou was upgraded to a prefecture-level city, the original Taizhou City was renamed “Hailing District”, which is the only main urban area of Taizhou and also the core carrier of Taizhou’s urban image. Therefore, it is necessary to make full use of the unique advantages of building Haizhou District’s cultural resources, based on local characteristics, aiming at talent needs, and construct a sustainable development ecology of “shaping the city with culture and gathering talents with the city”.

1.2. The Core of “Tai You Yin Li” Strategy

“Tai You Yin Li” is a strategy to attract young talents and promote urban development of Taizhou city. It builds a talent ecology of “pleasing those near and attracting those far” through policy

support, industrial collaboration, and activity promotion. In this strategy, cultural attraction becomes a unique attraction for talents and the core of the strategy. The main cultural resources in Hailing District can be divided into three categories: Mei Lanfang's opera culture, morning tea culture, and salt tax culture. Therefore, "Tai You Yin Li" can rely on these three cultural resources to build a unique attraction system: Mei Lanfang's opera culture condenses artistic identity with Oriental aesthetic symbols and becomes an "emotional currency" linking global creative talents; morning tea culture weaves social networks through urban morning rituals, forming a "life adhesive" that strengthens talent belonging; salt tax culture carries the wisdom of fiscal and tax governance for thousands of years and is transformed into a "trust foundation" for institutional talents.

2. Analysis of the Current Situation of Cultural Resources in Hailing District

2.1. Mei Lanfang's Opera Culture

Taizhou Mei Garden, also called as Mei Lanfang Memorial Hall, is located on Fenghuangdun, No. 90 East Yingchun Road, Haizhou District, Taizhou City, Jiangsu Province. It is a garden-style celebrity memorial hall with buildings of the Ming and Qing dynasties as the main body, displaying the artistic achievements and life stories of Peking Opera master Mei Lanfang. The historical materials exhibition area in the hall is divided into 5 major exhibition areas: "Plum Blossoms Bloom in China", "Plum Fragrance Spreads All Over the World", "Plum Bones Are Unyielding", "Plum Virtue Is Like Jade", and "Plum Roots in Taizhou". It condenses and refines Mei Lanfang's glorious life, reflects his noble personality, patriotic feelings, and his blood connection with Taizhou. It is a provincial patriotic education base and a famous tourist attraction in Taizhou City.

As a native of Taizhou, the author has visited Mei Garden several times since primary school, received education, and witnessed the development of Mei Garden. Today, the author has become a teacher, and when facing today's students, countless emotions arise. The author teaches a general course "Fundamentals of College Students' Innovation" in the university. During the course, she once guided young students studying in Taizhou to explore Taizhou's culture and think about the inheritance and innovation of culture. However, many students have little knowledge of Mei Lanfang's opera culture, basically have not been to Mei Lanfang Memorial Hall, and their understanding of opera mostly stays at the level of "cultural symbols", lacking in-depth participation.

2.2. Morning Tea Culture

Compared with the highbrow and alienating nature of Mei Lanfang's opera culture, the morning tea culture in Hailing District, Taizhou, is relatively vibrant. There is an old saying in Taizhou: "Wrap water in the morning, and wrap in water in the evening". In this "wrap water", the soup of fish soup noodles is indispensable, and fish soup noodles are a representative of Taizhou morning tea. A bowl of fish soup noodles and a plate of scalded shredded tofu start a refreshing day for Taizhou people. Since 2019, Taizhou Culture and Tourism Group has held the "Taizhou Morning Tea Fair" in Laojie Street (Old Street) every year. In addition to fish soup noodles, delicate shredded tofu from major morning tea shops, there are also various other dry noodles, wontons, snacks, and steamed buns, attracting citizens and tourists to check in and appreciate the unique charm of the slow life in the water town^[1].

The university where the author works is not far from Laojie Street. Young students are generally interested in Taizhou morning tea and have the experience of tasting it. Some graduated students still miss Taizhou morning tea and entrust teachers to buy and mail authentic Taizhou snacks on their behalf. However, the enthusiasm of young people for purchasing on behalf also reflects the

shortcomings of this industry: the “Taizhou snacks” mailed to students are mostly products from scattered shops, without standardized packaging, geographical certification, or traceability systems, falling into the situation of “having a good reputation but no brand”. Although the morning tea fair has been held for five consecutive years, it has not spawned a unified logo for “Taizhou Morning Tea”. Old brands operate independently (such as Guyue Tower and Haitangchun), the industrial aggregation is disorderly, and the grassroots world is difficult to form a galaxy fleet. The folk wisdom of “wrapping water” stops at dialect anecdotes and has not been upgraded to an international urban IP.

2.3. Salt Tax Culture

In Hailing District, Taizhou, there is a salt tax-themed museum, called “Jiangsu Salt Tax Museum”, which is the location of the Taiba Supervision Office in history. As the “world tax throat” of the Huaihe salt transportation in the Ming and Qing dynasties, its salt tax culture is deeply rooted in the genetic code of national governance. The Salt Tax Museum displays historical materials of salt tax systems in various historical periods, which is actually a historical heritage with profound “institutional trust capital”. The museum also uses digital technology to present salt tax stories across time and space, reproducing the magnificent scene of ancient salt boats passing through the sluice.

This could have become a “professional magnetic field” to attract talents in finance, taxation, law, etc. However, many local young people do not know the location of the Taiba site, let alone students from other provinces and cities studying in Taizhou. In 2023, the author conducted a survey among 97 students (from three majors: Financial Management, Internet Finance, and Logistics Management of Grade 23 in the School of Economics and Management in the university). Only 4 students had heard of Jiangsu Salt Tax Museum, and nobody had visited it. The desolate atmosphere of the Salt Tax Museum contrasts with the bustle of the morning tea fair: young students are willing to get up early and queue for crab roe buns, but few set foot in the fiscal and tax temple that carries the city’s economic genes. Perhaps the deeper disconnect lies in value transformation: while Yangzhou has transformed salt merchant gardens into a carrier for the “Canal Finance Summit”, Taizhou’s salt tax culture is still curled up in glass display cabinets, failing to implant the “salt merchant integrity system” into financial talent training. This delay has caused the “Tai You Yin Li” strategy to lose the attraction to the young talents.

3. Innovative Paths to Enhance the Attractiveness of Cultural Resources

3.1. Opera Culture Breakthrough Action

3.1.1. Spatial Scene Reconstruction

Spatial reconstruction is not the isolated transformation of Mei Garden, but the linkage of Taoyuan and Liuyuan to form a cultural matrix. Highlight the differentiated positioning of the three spaces: Mei Garden (professional inheritance), Taoyuan (fashionable transformation), and Liuyuan (experimental exploration), and realize the transition from tradition to modernity through the linkage of physical spaces^[2]. Specifically for each space: Opera makeup experience to solve the problem of “touch feeling”. Young students feel that opera is “separated by a layer of frosted glass”, which requires strengthening the sense of physical participation. A “digital magic mirror” can be designed to instantly display the makeup effect, reducing the threshold for trying; costume shooting needs to provide designs from classic to cross-border to meet the sharing desire of Generation Z. Cross-border opera bars create “defamiliarization surprises”. For example, “Peking Opera DJ

mixing”, which incorporates vocal samples into electronic music while retaining the original melody of traditional operas such as "The Drunken Concubine", making traditional elements a "highlight" of fashion creation. Create an immersive small theater. The operas played in the memorial hall can set up links where the audience votes to decide the plot direction, triggering emotional involvement through ethical debates. Spatial connection requires guiding design: for example, after experiencing makeup in Mei Garden, you can enter Liuyuan Bar in Sanshuiwan at half price with the costume, and participate in plot interaction in the small theater with a wine list stamp - forming an “experience - consumption - co-creation” closed loop. Finally, make full use of the economic value of young people’s preference for nighttime activities. Bars and small theaters are open until 2 a.m., filling the gap in Taizhou’s nighttime culture.

3.1.2. Education System Innovation

With "youthful expression of opera culture" as the main line, we need to transform traditional opera into an emotional resonance point and career development resource for young talents. Specific innovative measures include: Cross-border integration of curriculum systems: development of “opera +” local characteristic optional courses, joint with local troupes to offer “Opera Digital Creation” and other local characteristic courses, and include them in the credit system, with supporting “Fengcheng Opera Talent Scholarship”. The Excellent students can obtain direct internship qualifications in Taizhou cultural and tourism enterprises. Construction of immersive teaching scenes: build an "opera laboratory" in the university, restore the stages of Mei Lanfang and other famous artists, students can participate in performance planning, develop a series of script killings, and integrate opera culture into situational teaching. Digital competitions empower cultural and creative industries: make full use of the opportunity of the “Internet +” College Students’ Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition and the opening of the school's innovation courses, teachers and students jointly create mobile games such as “Opera Tour in Taizhou”. Excellent works are recommended for competitions, and winning teams receive entrepreneurial incubation support. Incentives for short video creation: launch the “Taiyou Opera Attraction” challenge, encourage students to re-create opera clips on platforms such as Douyin/Bilibili, set up a million traffic support plan, and excellent creators are preferentially recommended for internship opportunities.

3.2. Morning Tea Culture Upgrading Strategy

3.2.1. Consumption Scene Revolution

We need to disassemble the morning tea consumption scene into a four-dimensional space of “taste layer (catering) - audio-visual layer (performance) - operation layer (skills) - emotional layer (memory)”, and realize the multiplication of consumption value through scene superposition. Select shops with architectural characteristics such as Laojie Street, Zhonglou Lane, and Daohe Ancient Street to launch the “morning and afternoon tea theater” model: develop the immersive performance “Twelve Hours of Taizhou Morning Tea”, where actors transform into waiters/tea guests to interact with the audience, and those with a basic consumption will be given a performance ticket. Open intangible cultural heritage workshop research: tourists can participate in experience courses on shredded tofu cutting and crab roe bun folding, and expand commercial transformation paths, such as the “My Morning Tea Works” live streaming channel, where students can distribute their own products.

3.2.2. Industrial Chain Extension

We need to develop “Taizhou morning tea pre-made dishes” gift boxes, enter channels such as

Hema Fresh and RT-Mart, and emphasize cultural empowerment. The gift boxes can be divided into different types, such as theme models: “Mei Lanfang’s Opera Rhyme Morning Tea” gift box, containing crab roe buns with opera facial makeup packaging; solar term models: “Qinhu Eight Fresh Seasonal Set”, with monthly updated lake fresh ingredients and snacks, etc. On the basis of Taizhou Morning Tea Fair, establish “Taizhou Morning Tea Culture Festival”, which can set up a “Morning Tea Master Competition” to attract attention and help build Taizhou's morning tea brand. The judges of the competition consist of professional chefs + citizen representatives + internet celebrity food bloggers. The Morning Tea Culture Festival also sets up other activities and live broadcast, taking this opportunity to open a “morning tea venture capital special session” to connect with pre-made dish equipment suppliers.

3.3. Salt Tax Culture Activation Project

3.3.1. Education Value Chain Integration

We need to develop the school-based course “Salt Tax Wisdom”, cooperate with the university's School of Economics and Management to offer a practical module of “History of China's Fiscal and Taxation System”, and build a teaching case database: transform the “historical salt introduction ticket system” into supply chain finance teaching plans, and set up the “Taizhou Salt Tax Special Scholarship”: reward papers that combine historical wisdom with innovation in fields such as supply chain finance and tax compliance.

3.3.2. Industrial Application Transformation

We need to establish a “salt tax culture venture capital fund” to focus on supporting scientific research projects related to salt tax culture and Taiba government office. The museum provides historical data prototypes, entrepreneurial teams carry out technology incubation, and the museum can enjoy part of the technical equity. We need to create the “Taizhou Salt Tax International Forum” to enhance Taizhou’s international reputation, and set up a characteristic session: taste Taizhou morning tea at Taiba government office in the morning, and hold an open-air meeting “Canal Fiscal and Tax Night Talk” at the Taiba site in the evening, with holographic projection restoring the scene of boats passing through the sluice.

4. Guarantee System: Building a New Ecosystem of Cultural Governance

4.1. Mechanism Innovation

We need to select business backbones from cultural and tourism, commerce, education and other departments to serve as full-time commissioners^[3], stationed in key places such as Mei Garden Theater, famous morning tea shops, and Salt Tax Museum, and implement the “five ones” project: one grass-roots research per week, one cross-border salon per month, one innovation project per quarter, one assessment and evaluation every six months, and one development suggestion per year, focusing on policy propaganda, resource connection, brand incubation and other functions; at the same time, recruit intangible cultural heritage inheritors, university scholars, cultural and creative designers, etc. as part-time commissioners, set up expert workstations, and form a collaborative network of “government guidance + professional support + market feedback”.

4.2. Policy Empowerment

We need to construct a comprehensive assessment framework for cultural and tourism

enterprises from “four dimensions” as the basis for capital support: first, the activation degree of cultural resources, focusing on evaluating the effectiveness of protective development such as intangible cultural heritage inheritance and historical building utilization; second, the popularity of cultural participation, assessing social participation indicators such as the coverage rate of mass cultural activities and the participation rate of cultural voluntary services; third, the activity of cultural innovation, focusing on the achievements of innovative practices such as cultural and creative product research and development and digital cultural applications; fourth, the influence of cultural brands, measuring the market awareness and reputation of characteristic cultural IP. Through the introduction of multiple evaluation methods such as third-party evaluation, big data monitoring, and public satisfaction survey, a mechanism combining quarterly dynamic evaluation and annual comprehensive assessment is formed, and the assessment results are taken as an important basis for cultural project approval and capital support, so as to realize the visualization, quantification and optimization of cultural development benefits.

4.3. Talent Revitalization

4.3.1. "New Craftsman" Training Program

Universities cooperate with social talents, adopt the inheritance model of “master studio + modern apprenticeship system”, where senior social inheritors systematically teach students core skills, and at the same time introduce a “cultural and creative tutor group” composed of cross-border talents such as designers and on-campus digital technology experts to guide students in product innovation, brand operation and digital communication practice. A dual evaluation mechanism is established, where students who master the essence of traditional skills are awarded inheritor qualifications, and students who successfully realize the innovative transformation of skills are given innovation and entrepreneurship support. A “new craftsman incubation base” is built to provide creative space and promote the transformation and upgrading of traditional skills, cultivating a new generation of cultural inheritors who are rooted in tradition and face the future^[4].

4.3.2. Cultural Maker Support Policies

For cultural and creative studios, intangible cultural heritage workshops, independent design brands and other entities settled in historical blocks, launch attractive stepped rent reduction policies: for example, cultural and creative enterprises settled in enjoy full exemption of venue rent in the first year and significant reduction in the second year, greatly reducing the operating costs in the start-up period. At the same time, supporting services such as basic operating cost reduction, shared incubation space, professional tutor guidance and copyright protection are provided. We need to attract diversified high-quality cultural and creative forces to take root in historical blocks, make full use of their unique cultural heritage, and form an organic integration of “old space + new creativity”^[5].

5. Conclusion

In the process of “taking culture as the core and enhancing attractiveness”, the development of Taizhou City not only requires explicit changes such as spatial reconstruction and industrial upgrading, but also relies on the reshaping of the deep governance ecosystem. Its ultimate goal is to build a dynamic cycle of “cultural context nourishes talents, and talents feed back the city”. Young people can perform their own version of “The Drunken Concubine” on the stage of Mei Garden, incubate standardized brands in the morning tea market of Laojie Street, and transform the ancient system into modern supply chain solutions in the Salt Tax Museum. Culture is no longer a static

heritage, but becomes the soil where talents take root and the source of innovation.

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