

A Preliminary Study on the Integration Path of Shadow Puppet Theater Culture and Tourism in Min-Tai Region

Jiayi Liu^{1,a,*}, Dongsong Ye^{1,b}

¹*School of Design & Innovation, Xiamen University Tan Kah Kee College, Zhangzhou, Fujian, China*

^a*se7em25925@hotmail.com*, ^b*448758293@qq.com*

^{*}*Corresponding author*

Keywords: Culture and Tourism Integration, Min-Tai region, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Shadow Puppetry

Abstract: Shadow puppetry in the Min-Tai region (including: southern Fujian Province, eastern Guangdong Province, and Taiwan Province) boasts a long-standing history and a profound popular foundation. Due to its unique cultural heritage and belief systems, it has become a focal point for research for both cultural and tourism integration. In the Min-Tai region shadow puppetry is not merely a form of traditional art; it is also a vital bridge connecting a diversity of cultural beliefs. This article will explore and analyze the historical evolution and current status of shadow puppetry, examining its role and significance in cross-strait cultural and tourism. The potential influence of shadow puppetry in fostering cultural exchanges and tourism development across the strait will be analyzed by presenting the current state of research, identifying issues of significance, and outlining development trends. Moreover, it will discuss models for understanding and interpreting cultural tourism integration based on shadow puppetry in the region.

1. Introduction

In March 2018, the first session of the 13th National People's Congress voted to approve the decision on the State Council's institutional reform plan, sanctioning the establishment of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China [1]. Under the guidance of promoting tourism through culture and invigorating culture through tourism, Min-Tai region promoted the deep integration of culture and tourism development and entered the strategic stage of deep integration. This aligns closely with the socioeconomic mainline of high-quality development, playing a significant role in preserving and inheriting China's outstanding traditional culture, advanced socialist theory, and revolutionary culture [2].

In 1895, the Qing government ceded Taiwan and the Pescadores Islands to Japan through the Treaty of Shimonoseki. In August 1949, after Japan's defeat, Taiwan briefly returned to the embrace of the motherland. However, following the Nationalist government's retreat to Taiwan, the two sides once again found themselves in a state of division. At the end of 1987, the Taiwanese authorities allowed residents to visit the mainland for family reunions and sightseeing, marking a new chapter in cross-strait relations and initiating civil tourism and cultural exchanges. In recent years, with the

number of cross-strait visits increasing annually, tourism has become a vital opportunity for promoting integration between the two sides.

*In the 1970s, Robert W. McIntosh introduced the concept of cultural tourism in his book *Tourism: Principles, Practices, Philosophies* [3]. Culture imparts profound meaning and enduring allure to tourism, while tourism provides a platform and avenue for the dissemination and exchange of culture. *Culture and tourism are inseparable and complementary; culture is the soul of tourism, while tourism serves as the carrier of culture. Only by endowing tourism products with rich cultural significance can they possess enduring vitality* [3]. *Intangible cultural heritage serves as a vital carrier of traditional Chinese culture. Due to its rich diversity in form and content, intangible cultural heritage itself constitutes unique tourism resources* [4]. *As cultural and tourism integration enters a more profound stage, leveraging intangible cultural heritage as a resource and driving force holds significant importance in constructing a tourism development system* [5].*

Shadow puppetry in the Min-Tai region, as a unique intangible cultural heritage resource, possesses both allure and market potential. With inherent advantages in providing a strong foundation for cultural and tourism integration, shadow puppetry can become a vital cultural resource for the tourism industry, and it is poised to serve as a significant area of development and as a model for the integrated development of shadow puppetry tourism in China.

2. The Foundation and Advantages for Developing the Integration of Shadow Puppetry Culture and Tourism in the Min-Tai Region

Shadow puppetry, sometimes known as donkey leather shadow, shadow play, or lantern shadow play, is a collective term for shadow puppetry, shadow figures, props, and shadow scrolls. In 2006, it was included in the first set of national intangible cultural heritage items. Chinese shadow puppetry was listed in 2011 on a UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. *Reinhard Bachleitner (2002), through his research on material cultural heritage tourism and religious site tourism, found that integrating the cultural industry with the tourism industry can enhance the attractiveness of tourist destinations* [3].

2.1. Geographical location advantage

Chaozhou city was established in the 11th year of the Kaihuang era of the Sui Dynasty (591 AD), with its capital located in Haiyang (now Chaoyang). During the Sui Dynasty, the areas east of Pingyuan, Meixian, Fengshun, Puning, and Huilai in present-day Guangdong Province were within the jurisdiction of Chaozhou. Zhangzhou, on the other hand, was established in the second year of the Chui Gong era of the Tang Dynasty (686 AD), with its capital located in Xilin. Haifeng, Lufeng, Shantou, Huilai, Chaozhou, as well as Zhao'an, Yunxiao, Dongshan, and Pinghe, were all referred to as Zhangzhou. Although these two regions are now divided between Guangdong and Fujian provinces geographically, historically and culturally, they have formed an inseparable Zhang-Chao cultural circle.

Taiwan Province, formerly known as Yizhou and Ryukyu, is located in the southern part of the East China Sea, facing Fujian Province across the Taiwan Strait. Before the Qing Dynasty, both Taiwan and the Penghu Islands were under the administrative jurisdiction of Fujian. *In 1684, after the Qing government unified Taiwan, it established the Fujian-Taiwan Circuit and the Taiwan Prefecture, both under the jurisdiction of Fujian Province. In 1885, following the Sino-French War, the Qing government, in order to strengthen coastal defense, designated Taiwan as a single province...*[6]. The aforementioned regions have close geographical proximity, unique natural environments, and convenient transportation, which are conducive to cross-regional exchanges and cooperation of cultural resources and talents. This provides ideal conditions for cultural and tourism

integration.

2.2. Rich Historical and Cultural Heritage

The Min-Tai region boasts a long-standing historical and cultural tradition, including a rich tapestry of folk traditions and arts. As one of China's intangible cultural heritages, shadow puppetry incorporates local elements which include history, folklore, and legends. In the process of cultural and tourism integration, this traditional artistic culture plays an important role in enriching the tourist experience. Folk stories, customs, and folk arts are showcased in the inheritance of shadow puppetry, providing visitors with opportunities for deeper understanding of local history and culture.

2.3. The Foundation for the Development of the Cultural and Creative Industries is Robust.

The Min-Tai region has a historical foundation in cultural and creative industries, supported by a number of creative and influential cultural enterprises and organizations. These organizations are able to leverage shadow puppetry as a medium which can develop innovative cultural products and experiences, thereby attracting increased tourism and consumer activity.

2.4. Folk beliefs and cultural identity

The Min-Tai region shares many common folk beliefs, forming a rich and diverse religious and cultural landscape. Stuart Hall, in his work *Culture, Media, Language*, proposes that cultural identity is an evolving process influenced by various factors such as society, history, politics, and economy. The construction and maintenance of cultural identity plays a crucial role in cultural exchange and integration. As an ancient theatrical form, shadow puppetry in the Min-Tai region carries rich cultural values by serving as a significant link to the region's folk beliefs.

Min-Tai region shadow puppetry is closely linked to the local Tian Gong belief, and forms a unique cultural phenomenon. Deng Qiying (2012) explored the legend of the Chaozhou shadow puppetry god Tian Gong and its inheritance in various local drama genres in Fujian, Guangdong, and Taiwan, forming a Tian Gong belief cultural circle. Taiwanese shadow puppetry scripts, as well as observations regarding the relationship between shadow puppetry and folk magic, and also with Buddhism, provide a window into Taiwanese religious beliefs, ritual activities, and folk traditions. Min Tai region local cultural content is valuable in promoting cultural and tourism integration between the two sides of the strait.

3. An Overview of the Inheritance and Development of Shadow Puppetry in the Min-Tai Region

3.1. The Origins and Evolution of the Chaozhou Shadow Puppetry System

Shaanxi Province shadow puppetry originated during the Han Dynasty. The earliest recorded mention of shadow puppetry dates back to the Tang Dynasty, and by the Song Dynasty its performances were flourishing. It reached its peak during the late Qing Dynasty, *...it survived and developed in folk culture through oral transmission, making it a typical example of oral and intangible cultural heritage* [7].

Chaozhou shadow puppetry originated in the Ming Dynasty when it spread southward from Jianqiao, Hangzhou and combined with local folk tunes, forming the Chaozhou shadow puppetry system, which is characterized by the use of the South Min dialect. *In addition to the Chaozhou*

shadow puppetry called Raoping, there are other branches such as Lufeng shadow puppetry, Zhangzhou shadow puppetry, and Taiwanese shadow puppetry [8].

The Chaozhou style of shadow puppetry spread to the Southern Fujian Province region, gradually forming its own distinctive style and characteristics and giving rise to Southern Fujian Province shadow puppetry.

The art of shadow puppetry first arrived in Taiwan during the Ming Dynasty, in the Zheng period. After being introduced from the Zhangzhou and Chaozhou areas, it later settled in Mituo Township, Kaohsiung County. From then on, shadow puppetry took root in Taiwan and spread from the south to the north.

3.2. The Current Situation of the Inheritance of the Chaozhou Shadow Puppetry System, Its survival Challenges, and Development Bottlenecks

Lufeng shadow puppetry is the sole remaining legacy of the Chaozhou shadow puppetry system, one of the three major shadow puppetry systems on the mainland of China, thus possessing irreplaceable value [9]. Lufeng shadow puppetry is relatively well-preserved, and has the only state-owned shadow puppetry troupe in China. Since the late 1980s, with the rise of the market economy, the Lufeng Shadow Puppet Troupe, relying on government funding, has faced significant challenges. The troupe's performers dispersed, leading to its virtual disbandment. *Amateur shadow puppetry groups only perform a few shows each year, relying on elderly artists for support, with a lack of successors, making their future uncertain* [9].

In the 1970s, shadow puppetry was lost in Zhangzhou and Quanzhou, with only one artist, Chen Zhengxuan, remaining in Xiamen. In 2007, Zhuang Yanhong was accepted as Chen's first apprentice, and she subsequently passed on her skills to the second generation of apprentices. In recent years, she has been promoting the popularization and inheritance of shadow puppetry and puppetry through various means.

In modern times, Taiwanese shadow puppetry has experienced the Japanization movement during the Japanese colonial period, and the influence of the Nationalist government's anti-communist and anti-Russian stance. However, with the rise of new media, shadow puppetry has faced challenges such as audience loss and the loss of traditional techniques. Many shadow puppetry performers have had to find other jobs to make a living. But despite some setbacks, it has remained resilient.

In recent years, the Taiwanese government has established shadow puppetry museums and passed down the art to children and teenagers. Moreover, a new generation of shadow puppetry artists has innovated by combining shadow puppetry with cartoons and audiovisual technology, using new short plays and martial arts performances to attract audiences.

While the current status of shadow puppetry inheritance varies across these regions, they all face challenges in preserving traditional culture amid modern societal developments. Alongside protection and inheritance efforts, it is necessary to find development paths that suit the needs of the times, innovate traditional cultural forms, expand the audience market, and promote the sustainable development of shadow puppetry.

4. The Integration Strategy of Shadow Theater in Min-Tai Region Under the Perspective of Cultural and Tourism Integration

Currently, the definition of cultural and tourism integration is not yet unified. Most scholars believe it is the integration of industries, encompassing the fusion of concepts, functions, resources, markets, products, and technologies [2]. In fact, there is no clear boundary between culture and tourism. Essentially, tourism is a significant form of cultural experience, cultural cognition, and

cultural sharing. Culture is the core and soul of tourism, while tourism itself serves as the carrier and means of disseminating culture. It's role in promoting the prosperity of cross-strait cultural endeavors and the development of cultural industries is essential.

4.1. The Significance of Promoting Cross-strait Shadow Puppet Theater Cultural Tourism Integration

4.1.1. Enhanced Understanding and Friendship

Cultural exchange through tourism is an important way to enhance understanding and mutual acceptance of each other's cultures between the people on both sides of the strait. Through cultural exchange, mutual unfamiliarity can be overcome, fostering friendship and trust and helping to reduce misunderstandings and differences.

4.1.2. Promoting Peaceful Development

Cultural exchange is an important foundation for maintaining peaceful development across the strait. By strengthening cultural exchange, trust and cooperation between the two sides can be enhanced, awakening shared cultural memories among compatriots on both sides and creating a conducive atmosphere for peaceful development.

4.1.3. Promoting Economic Prosperity

Cultural exchange can promote the prosperous development of the economy on both sides of the strait. The cultural industry is a significant driver of economic growth, and strengthening cultural exchange can stimulate the development of cultural and creative industries, providing new growth points and momentum for economic cooperation across the strait.

4.1.4. Promoting the Protection and Inheritance of Cultural Heritage

Tourism activities can provide economic support and elevated social awareness to the issue of preserving shadow puppetry on both sides of the strait, contributing to the preservation of its cultural inheritance. The preservation of Chaozhou shadow puppetry in Taiwan is far better than on the mainland. *By comparing and contrasting with Taiwanese shadow puppetry with Lufeng shadow puppetry, a comprehensive representation of the historical development and current situation of shadow puppetry in China is possible* [10].

4.1.5. Expanding Cooperation Fields

Cultural exchange can open up new fields and opportunities for cross-strait cooperation. In addition to traditional cultural and artistic exchanges, cooperation can be strengthened in areas such as shadow puppetry education, digitization, tourism, and promote the joint development of intangible cultural heritage across the strait.

4.2. Exploration of the Cultural and Tourism Integration Model in the Min-Tai Region

Whether tangible or intangible cultural heritage, it should enter the market as much as possible, ensuring the preservation of cultural heritage without damage, and assuring the protection and development potential of cultural heritage through practical market operations [9]. Looking ahead, with the continued improvement and development of cross-strait relations we can expect deeper interaction and cooperation between the two sides within the framework of cultural exchange.

Through cultural and tourism integration, new momentum will be injected into the long-term stability and prosperity of cross-strait relations.

The practical models of cultural and tourism integration are diverse. Various integration and development approaches can be formed, based on factors which include different resource types, regional characteristics, and tourist demands.

4.2.1. Event-based Model

Enhancing the attractiveness of tourist destinations through cultural festivals, performance exchanges, and utilizing festivals and cultural events to attract tourists. This not only expands the influence of shadow puppetry, but also leverages the brand effect of local traditional festival with ethnic characteristics. Organizing culturally immersive activities with strong public participation can effectively promote the development of the tourism industry.

In particular, the region shares many common folk beliefs, especially the cultural veneration of Mazu, which is an important part of Chinese traditional culture. It not only holds a significant position domestically but also plays a crucial role in connecting compatriots across the strait. By leveraging important cultural nodes such as Mazu's birthday, large-scale exhibitions and cultural activities can be organized to provide a platform for cultural and religious interaction between the two sides.

4.2.2. Theme Park Model

Constructing a cultural park or scenic area dedicated to shadow puppetry, to attract visitors for sightseeing by creating a tourist destination with local characteristics and cultural heritage. The park or scenic area should integrate elements such as performances, exhibitions, and interactive experiences, providing visitors with a comprehensive shadow puppetry cultural experience.

① The theme park promotes the cultural park/scenic area + amusement/theater/performing arts entertainment model to enrich the visitor experience and enhance the attraction and competitiveness of the park.

② The theme park supports the development of high-tech tourism and entertainment enterprises, promotes the collectification and internationalization of local theme park enterprises, enhances the tourism functions of theme parks, builds shadow puppetry theme parks, and supports the cultural enrichment of the people and tourism development.

③ The theme park builds a cultural tourism complex to provide tourists with multi-cultural experiences such as shadow puppet-themed tourism products, shadow play performances, shadow play craft production experience, and shadow play cultural education. In this way the needs and interests of a diverse variety of tourists can be accommodated.

④ The theme park uses virtual reality technology to develop new functional cultural tourism and create virtual reality experience project opportunities for shadow puppetry. Users can immerse themselves in the VR experience through headsets, glasses and other immersive devices, enhancing their sense of participation and increasing the experiential effect. This will further promote the dissemination and development of the cultural preservation and tourism through shadow puppetry culture.

4.2.3. Embedded/Nested Model

On one hand, it is possible to integrate entertainment parks with scenic resources, promoting the nested structure of amusement parks. Diversified tourism products can be created based on shared resources, exploring models such as scenic area + shadow puppetry experience, scenic area +

shadow puppetry theater, and scenic area + shadow puppetry performance. On the other hand, shadow puppetry can be embedded into existing scenic areas or established in nearby locations of other scenic areas. This may include providing shadow puppetry performances and workshops within hotels, resorts, or other scenic areas to enhance tourists' travel experiences.

4.2.4. Red Study Tour Model

In this region, shadow puppetry has a deep-rooted red gene, i.e. the revolutionary spirit and history of the Chinese Communist Party as a political and cultural inheritance. During wartime multiple shadow puppetry cultural education teams transformed puppet storylines and performed stories about the Sino-Japanese conflict using traditional folk art and resistance songs, rallying the people and serving to unite the hearts and minds of the nation.

In the new era, the red gene of shadow puppetry deserves greater historical re-appreciation and re-evaluation to enrich tourism resources and promote the in-depth development of genuine red tourism. To achieve this, we can promote study tours at sites and scenic spots which are significant to the revolutionary spirit and history of the Chinese Communist Party, develop red shadow puppetry study tour projects in collaboration with school education, and provide students with experiential learning opportunities. This not only promotes recognition and understanding of revolutionary spirit and historical culture, but also helps the younger generation to understand and inherit the art of shadow puppetry.

4.2.5. Diversified Product Development Model

Firstly, within the context of cultural and creative industries, there should be a focus on innovative design for tourism products to enhance their cultural significance through value-added features. This includes developing cultural and creative products related to shadow puppetry, to enrich visitors' cultural consumption and shopping experiences.

Secondly, utilizing modern technology to develop digital cultural experience products can provide additional channels for promoting shadow puppetry and enhance audience engagement and experience. This may include virtual reality shadow puppetry games, mobile applications, online streaming platforms, and more.

Thirdly, developing shadow puppetry products with local features is crucial in integrating local cultural characteristics. For instance, incorporating local traditional stories, folk elements, etc., to meet tourists' cultural demands as a way to promote the inheritance and development of local culture.

4.2.6. Developing a Cross-Strait Consumer Market Model

In Michel de Certeau's work *The Practice of Everyday Life*, it is proposed that a culture's production and consumption are intertwined processes. People participate in the creation and reproduction of culture through various means in their daily lives. Within this theoretical framework, the cultural consumption activity of shadow puppetry tourism can be better understood as a part of cultural dissemination and interaction in the context of cultural and tourism integration.

To cultivate consumption hubs for tourists, including cross-strait tourists, key tourist destinations cities with central cultural significance and can be leveraged. It is crucial to encouraging eligible cities to utilize market methods to enhance both the quality and level of various cross-strait, as well as international, cultural events, sports, and exhibitions. Additionally, promoting the joint development of international tourist routes with neighboring countries or regions can also facilitate the development of cross-strait cultural consumption.

4.2.7. Internet + Shadow Theater Model

With the widespread adoption of the internet, the application of the Internet Plus model for shadow puppetry not only promotes the development of this art form but also serves as a driver of the integration and development of cultural tourism industries. It expands markets and audience bases, innovates shadow puppetry presentational and experiential forms, and facilitates the dissemination and exchange of shadow puppetry works between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait.

① Live streaming shadow puppetry performances online: Utilizing online platforms for real-time live streaming of shadow puppetry performances breaks geographical barriers. It can attract more young people and overseas audiences, expanding the audience base for shadow puppetry and opening up new opportunities for the development of shadow puppetry across the Taiwan Strait.

② Digital shadow puppetry experience: Developing mobile applications or websites that offer digital shadow puppetry experiences allows users to participate in interactive shadow puppetry performances on their smartphones or computers, experiencing the rich cultural heritage of shadow puppetry. This approach combines modern technology with traditional culture, and is a way of attracting more participation from young people.

③ Online education and heritage: Establishing online platforms or courses related to shadow puppetry allows more people to learn about the history, craftsmanship, and performance techniques of shadow puppetry, promoting its inheritance and development. Additionally, promoting the knowledge and cultural value of shadow puppetry online can enhance its influence in the digital realm.

④ Promoting the integration of cultural and tourism industries: The application of the Internet Plus shadow puppetry model not only promotes the development of shadow puppetry art but also serves a driver of the integration and development of cultural tourism industries. Through online booking, electronic guides, and cultural product sales services, more convenient and richer experiences can be provided for shadow puppetry cultural tourism, thereby promoting the integration and development of cultural tourism industries across the Taiwan Strait and contributing to the prosperity and development of cultural tourism.

By integrating tourism with shadow puppetry through these modes, traditional culture can be better promoted, the influence of shadow puppetry can be expanded, more people can be attracted to participate, and the inheritance and development of shadow puppetry can be promoted.

5. Conclusion

Culture is the soul, and tourism is the carrier. Shadow puppetry in the Fujian-Taiwan cultural zone boasts a rich cultural and historical heritage, making it a crucial area of study for cultural and tourism integration. However, current research still faces some challenges and unresolved issues. For instance, there is no unified understanding of the inheritance and development models for shadow puppetry across the Taiwan Strait, and the balance between cultural preservation and economic interests in tourism development needs further exploration.

Future research should devote more efforts to delve deeper into these issues and propose appropriate solutions. This will provide theoretical and practical support for the sustainable development of shadow puppetry in the Fujian-Taiwan region and beyond, contributing to the integration of culture and tourism.

The flourishing development of tourism in a country or region is often a significant indicator of its cultural health and prosperity [11]. Ongoing globalization requires the adoption of a global perspective on cultural dissemination and internationalization strategies. With the evolution of industrial forms brought about by the development of worldwide technological progress, the

continuous enhancement of China's cultural soft power is urgently necessary. The integration and development of shadow puppetry culture and tourism would unleash the full potential in these areas and generate broad cultural and economic benefits.

Acknowledgement

This work was supported by Publication Funding Program for Popularization of Social Sciences in Fujian Province in 2022, FJ2022JHKP027.

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