

# The Inheritance and Coordinated Utilization of Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei section of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal

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**Abstract:** The Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal is a river of history and culture. The coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei section of the canal cultural belt is a national strategy and a local task. Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei have a natural humanistic environment with the same blood ties. To some extent, the intangible cultural heritage coexists with the same origin, and its inheritance and coordinated development have achieved initial results. However, due to factors such as unbalanced political and economic development in Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region and weak cultural consensus, there are still obstacles in the road of non-genetic inheritance and collaborative utilization of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei section of the canal. It is urgent to put forward corresponding measures to integrate into the new development pattern and explore a win-win model to promote the high-quality development of non-legacy collaborative utilization in Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region and continue the vitality of canal culture.

## 1 Introduction

The Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal has recorded the splendor of the canal during the millennium and witnessed the changes along the Grand Canal. The Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal is divided into several sections, and the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei section is its source. This section not only has a profound historical and cultural accumulation, but its specific geography and humanities have also nurtured various shining cultural treasures, including colorful intangible cultural heritage, and its inheritance and revitalization are of great significance in promoting the innovative development of traditional culture. The Strategic Framework Agreement on the Coordinated Development of Cultural Fields among the three Regions of Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei in 2014 and the Outline of the Coordinated Development Plan of Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei in 2015 were issued successively, which are reflected in the two documents. The core of Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei cultural development is to develop as a whole, that is, to communicate and dovetail with each other in such fields as attaching importance to the protection of “intangible cultural heritage”, strengthening public cultural services, and promoting cultural performance and arts, so as to build and share, interconnect, and make comprehensive use of them to maximize their benefits. For the long-term development of intangible cultural heritage in the

Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, it is urgent to propose feasible measures for non-genetic inheritance and collaborative utilization, to create a better environment for it, to continue the vitality of the non-genetic heritage of the canal, to develop a new pattern of socio-economic and cultural synergy in Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei, and to meet the national development goals of “rural revitalization strategy” and “common wealth”.

## 2 Current situation and obstacles of collaborative utilization of intangible cultural heritage in Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei section of the Grand Canal

### 2.1 Status quo of collaborative utilization of intangible cultural heritage in Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region

The Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal is one of the three major canals in China. From north to south, it flows through Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei, Shandong, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang provinces, connecting the "Belt and Road", from the North China Plain to the Yangtze River Delta. The area along the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei section of the canal cultural belt is a specific cultural ecological circle.<sup>1</sup> There are many kinds of non-legacy projects, which have both similarities and their own cultural colors. In order to better reflect the value of the excellent culture of the

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Chinese nation and protect traditional cultural resources, from 2006 to 2022, with the approval of the State Council, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism published a total of five batches of national project lists, with a total of 1,557 sub-items and 3,610 sub-items nationwide. The national list divides intangible cultural heritage into 10 categories. The Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal Cultural Belt, the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region presents structural characteristics with traditional skills as the main body and traditional sports entertainment and acrobatic dance drama folk customs as the support. There are 933 representative projects in the canal basin, including 329 projects in Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei, including 120 projects in Beijing, 47 projects in Tianjin and 162 projects in Hebei, accounting for 9.11% of the national total and 35.26% of the total Grand Canal basin. It can be seen that the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region is rich in non-legacy resources and has. Since ancient times, the three places have been connected by blood and have profound historical origins. The objective environment is very similar. Economy and culture have merged and penetrated each other in the historical development. These factors have deepened their similarities in production, life, skills, society and culture. The intangible cultural heritage in Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region always conveys similar inheritance performance and cultural connotation, and is often "bundled".

In terms of policy, in recent years, when listening to the report on the coordinated development of Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized that to achieve the coordinated development of Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei, it is necessary to stand at the height of major national development strategies and accelerate a scientific and sustainable coordinated development path. In August 2021, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council issued Opinions on Further Strengthening the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage, proposing to enhance the vitality of intangible cultural heritage, make it serve the contemporary and benefit the people, and further exert its strength in the major strategy of the socialist modernized country. In addition, in order to promote the integration of the Grand Canal culture, Beijing and Tianjin Hebei established a collaborative consultation mechanism for the cultural protection, inheritance and utilization of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Grand Canal, and improved the infrastructure of the non-genetic inheritance and collaborative utilization system. Non-legacy related social affairs are mainly managed by the government in China, and they perform their duties in the evaluation of non-legacy projects, the identification of non-genetic inheritors and the management of non-legacy special funds. However, in some local departments, the principles and policies related to non-genetic inheritance and protection have not been actively implemented, and the emphasis on non-legacy inheritance and protection is not high. The implementation of relevant measures is not in place and the strength of the broad masses of the people cannot be united.

Economically, Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region is one of

the three major urban agglomerations in China. The overall economy of the region is stable and improving, but the degree of economic ties and cooperation is relatively low. The development differences between Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei regions are obvious and have not yet formed a gradient industrial chain collaborative governance system. Intangible cultural heritage originates from social and economic development and serves social and economic development at the same time. According to the current direction and level of China's social and economic development, the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region integrates "non-legacy economy" into major national strategies, actively promotes the integration and development of non-legacy culture and regional economy, rural revitalization and tourism industry, explores and implements productive protection for non-legacy projects such as traditional art drama and folk customs, and jointly opens non-legacy exhibitions, establishes non-legacy productive protection demonstration bases, implements key projects of non-legacy protection and inheritance, and promotes common prosperity. The connotation of many non-legacy projects in Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region has not been deeply explored, and the core competitiveness of modern products is lacking. The revenue level obtained by relying on non-legacy related products is theoretically low.

The inheritance and development of non-legacy culture in social humanities has always been one of the contents of ideological construction in Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region. Cultural consensus is an important cornerstone for promoting non-genetic inheritance and dissemination. The cultural connotation and artistic expression of non-legacy in Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region are very similar and related. Many projects are jointly declared by the two places or even the three places. The element correlation and intercommunication between them is a non-genetic inheritor who changed and evolved in the innovative improvement of the original basic projects. In the vast history, exquisite products with different colors have been absorbed and integrated across categories, regions and time. The diversification of non-genetic inheritance methods in Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region is currently assisted by offline online channels. Over the years, the publicity activities of non-legacy projects have mainly been carried out in the form of offline activities, and in most cases, the content initiated for government organizations is mostly "expert lectures on non-legacy exhibitions displayed by folk artists inheritors on the spot". The rising prices and the improvement of residents' living standards make the life of non-genetic inheritors unsustainable. The loss of the essence of non-legacy is a huge crisis in the development of non-genetic inheritance in Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region.

## **2.2 Obstacles to the coordinated use of intangible cultural heritage in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei section**

The protection of intangible cultural heritage of the Grand

Canal cultural belt has been carried out in full swing. Under the strategic layout of the integrated development of Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei, the three regions have jointly stepped up to a new level, and the inheritance and utilization of intangible cultural heritage have ushered in new development opportunities. However, the real synergy is a long and arduous process. There will inevitably be some bottlenecks and obstacles on the way of the joint development of Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei, which will affect the continuous promotion and sustainable development of the collaborative use of intangible cultural heritage.

Firstly, the third places have different development steps, and the regional standard consciousness is heavier. There are great differences in both the starting point and the overall level along the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei section of the Grand Canal, and it is difficult to keep consistent in the pace of development. In the process of promoting the coordinated development of Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei, the habits of management mechanism, policy style and implementation means formed by Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei are still different. The effective docking of mutual assistance, support and linkage between places is less, and it has not reached a high degree of cultural consciousness and cultural mutual appreciation.

Secondly, the management effect is not good, and the coordinated development mechanism is not perfect. The coordinated utilization of non-legacy culture in Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei section is still in the exploratory stage for a long time. There are still many problems in the mining management system of non-legacy value, etc. The related development mechanism and laws and regulations need to be improved. First of all, some departments do not dig deep into the cultural value of non-legacy projects. Secondly, the management of non-legacy projects lacks pertinence, timeliness and scientificity.<sup>2</sup> Finally, the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region has not yet formed a set of perfect non-legacy laws and regulations and inheritor protection mechanism. In the process of promoting synergy, the unified legal system can not meet the diverse needs.

Thirdly, the "authenticity" of the modern market is difficult to guarantee. Combining intangible cultural heritage with economy, rural revitalization, industry and tourism are in the ascendant, and the competition in modern intangible market is fierce. There are some disharmonious situations in the coordinated utilization of intangible culture in Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region. On the one hand, some famous non-legacy is prone to over-exploitation and over-commercialization. In modern life, intangible cultural heritage has been transformed beyond recognition to cater to the market and lost its true colors. On the other hand, some non-legacy projects that lack modern market competitiveness are ignored. Mechanized batch industries popularize traditional crafts and gradually decline. In the process of integration and planning of non-legacy cultural resources in Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei, non-legacy projects with weak sense may face the result of rough integration.

Finally, the lack of development leads to insufficient

social participation. Promoting the coordinated utilization of non-legacy culture in Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region is a huge and complex project, which is led by the government. However, the limited strength of one party is not enough to promote the coordinated development of the region. Over the years, the focus of government governance has been on the inheritance and protection of intangible cultural heritage, lacking the support of public infrastructure and special funds, not fully mobilizing the initiative and creative enthusiasm of all sectors of society, and unable to provide a good foundation and platform for it.

### 3 Conclusions

Driven by the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei integration development strategy, the collaborative utilization relationship of intangible cultural heritage in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region has formed a foundation in history, formed a demand in practice, and formed a thrust in future development, which is an important proposition related to promoting the cultural identity of the three places and achieving the sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage. Taking the inheritance and collaborative utilization of the intangible cultural heritage of the three places as the fulcrum, adhering to the concept of integrated development, making closer use of common historical conditions and regional elements, exploring new thinking on the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, and exploring the door of multi-party cooperation and diversified development are the path choices for the development of intangible cultural heritage in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region for a long time in the future.<sup>3</sup>

#### 3.1 Enhance the sense of synergy and play a nepotistic role

The vigorous development of an overall region is inseparable from the awareness of synergy in various regions. Strengthening the cultural consensus concept of non-genetic inheritance and synergistic utilization will help to enhance the cohesion of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region and become the psychological basis for the coordinated development of the overall region. The relevant government departments in the three regions should reach a certain level of cultural consensus as soon as possible, overcome the ideological concepts of local protectionism and cultural enclosure, and change their development thinking. Not only should we pay attention to the development of intangible cultural heritage in backward and remote areas, integrate relevant projects with the characteristic resources along the way, provide special assistance, and promote "common prosperity", but also play a crony role, making appropriate use of urban orientation and "strengthening the weak with the strong". " function, popularize the knowledge of intangible cultural heritage, strengthen the concept of protection, and narrow the cultural differences between regions. From the perspective of cultural integration, scientifically plan the

common intangible cultural heritage wealth, create and spread the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei intangible cultural heritage cultural brand, and promote the common prosperity of the canal culture.

### **3.2 Improve relevant mechanisms and implement them in accordance with law**

The protection and inheritance of the intangible cultural heritage in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei section is a social issue, and the national management functions play a leading role in the protection of intangible cultural heritage.<sup>4</sup> At the level of government policy, the governments of Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei should effectively integrate resources from all parties, research and formulate corresponding reasonable and operable cooperation plans, comprehensively optimize project management ideas and protection operation mechanisms, and combine the characteristics of space, refined to each link of the project. At the level of laws and regulations, rationalizing the regulation mechanism and strengthening legislation is the focus of intergovernmental cooperation in the three places. The similarities and differences in the protection of intangible cultural heritage in the three places, as well as the obstacles in the level of collaborative utilization, should be fully considered, and the formulation and adjustment of relevant laws should be vigorously promoted. From the perspective of legislation, give a protective cover to the intangible cultural heritage project, give the inheritor a booster, and give a reassurance to the coordinated development. At the implementation level, the three places need to make overall planning, learn from each other's strengths and complement their weaknesses, clarify the legal responsibilities of each region, improve supervision, incentives, and safeguard measures, pay attention to and promptly resolve the lack of intangible cultural heritage protection laws and regulations in some places, and effectively ensure that regional intangible cultural heritage cooperation is effective.

### **3.3 Promote the integration of business formats and activate the utilization of intangible cultural heritage**

The collision and integration of intangible cultural heritage and modern life has made the vision of non-genetic inheritance and collaborative utilization in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region broader, the way more diverse, the roads richer, and the ideas more novel, and we must actively explore the multi-pronged development path of preserving the intangible cultural heritage tradition and innovating and developing. From the perspective of regionalization, it is necessary to follow the regional market economy system and mechanism, grasp the characteristics and inherent laws of the socialist market economy, inject economic vitality into the intangible cultural heritage in a legal and compliant manner, and create a situation of self-reliance. Integrate the market resources of intangible cultural heritage, promote industrial optimization and upgrading, dock

issues such as modern life, industrial integration, and talent exchange, and make full use of places relying on intangible cultural heritage to achieve smooth communication between the intangible cultural heritage cultures of the three places. It is necessary to pay attention to maintaining the original ecology of traditional culture, but also to innovate and avoid excessive commercialization. Attach importance to the "unpopular" intangible cultural heritage, which is difficult to directly show its economic value, expand diversified online and offline communication channels, seek suitable markets for intangible cultural heritage projects, explore new development paths, and gradually narrow the gap in the development of intangible cultural heritage in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region through revitalization and industrialization.

### **3.4 Attach importance to the contingent of intangible cultural heritage and enhance the strength of the people**

While the government plays a leading role in the management and development of intangible cultural heritage projects, it should also take measures to encourage the participation of non-government forces. In particular, the inheritors who carry the heavy responsibility of intangible cultural heritage have an irreplaceable role. The nature and characteristics of the intangible cultural heritage project determine its hand-to-hand and oral transmission method, and the inheritance requirements are high, difficult and time-consuming. Every inheritor should be respected, cherished and encouraged, the non-genetic inheritors should be actively cultivated and reserved in a planned way, and the cultural self-confidence and social status of the non-genetic inheritors should be improved. In addition, other sectors of society are also the backbone of intangible heritage inheritance work. They can attract specialized institutions, social groups, and cultural enterprises to participate in the protection work through subsidies, funding, and encouragement, and at the same time integrate their characteristic intangible cultural heritage along the way. Project resources, focus on the construction of areas with backward infrastructure such as Hebei, set up special venues such as museums and exhibition halls for them, increase publicity efforts, and combine the cultural connotation of intangible cultural heritage with the historical value is better played out.

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