

# Research on international publicity strategies of Gannan red tourism in the context of the belt and road

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**Abstract.** Cultural self-confidence and the going-global strategy of China's excellent traditional culture have given red culture new opportunities and higher expectations, accelerating red culture to go abroad following the times. Based on the overview of the development of red tourism, the article clarifies the present situation of red tourism international publicity in Gannan through SWOT, believes that the challenges and opportunities of red tourism in Gannan coexist, and further proposes several paths including updating the concept while telling a good story, clarifying the audience while accumulating talents, refining the spirit while upgrading technology, innovating channels while combining the internal and external, "casting the soul" with culture by joint cooperation, and enriching the routes besides "red and green". The foundation is laid for the continuation of red resources to open a new chapter in the era.

## 1 Introduction

In 2018, General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that "we should promote the construction of international communication capacity, tell the Chinese story, spread the Chinese voice, show the real, three-dimensional and comprehensive China to the world, and improve the national cultural soft power and Chinese cultural influence." This statement from the national strategic overall height indicates the significant way and performance of Chinese culture "going global". In 2018, the CPC Central Committee, the State Council announced "On the Implementation of the Revolutionary Cultural Relics Protection and Utilization Project (2018-2022)", pointing out that strengthening the work of the revolutionary cultural relics in the new era will give full play to the essential role of revolutionary cultural relics in carrying out, cultivating, and realizing the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation [1]. Undoubtedly, red resources are an indispensable part of China's excellent traditional culture, and red tourism in Gannan is a critical carrier to promote the "going global" policy of China's red culture, which has a high degree of coupling to promote comprehensive poverty eradication and rural revitalization. However, red culture is facing the problem of low popularity and low influence all over the world. Therefore, the active promotion of international publicity of red tourism in Gannan will not only the need to highlight the

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confidence of Chinese culture and building a global community of destiny, but also the core to promote the harmonious development of economy, culture and ecology in the Gannan.

## **2 The concept and development of red tourism**

In 2000, Jiangxi Province took the lead in putting forward the concept of red tourism. Red tourism, first and foremost, has both directional and specific value connotations, and thus has intrinsic, specific attributes in terms of specific contents. This is the value content attribute of red tourism. Therefore, from the perspective of culture, red tourism has educational value and humanistic value. Besides, red tourism has profitability and thus has the characteristics of income generation and poverty alleviation in terms of specific social attributes. This is the economic value and social value of red tourism. In this regard, domestic scholars have conducted extensive and in-depth research, with early studies focusing on the interpretation and development of red tourism.

Lei Zhaohai (2005) explored the concept, process and characteristics of red tourism and summarized the significance of developing red tourism [2]. Wei Zoguo, from the perspective of red tourism resource development and protection, proposed how to skillfully deal with the relationship between inheritance and innovation of red culture, tangible culture and intangible culture [3]. Liu Chunling and Song Baoping (2006) conducted research from the perspective of market competitiveness of red tourism products and proposed the development of red tourism in China and its development strategies with four basic stages of product marketing [4]. Wang Hui and Zou Dongsheng (2012) vertically explored the regional red tourism linkage development model based on circular economy and proposed the industrialization, clustering and low carbon development of red tourism [5]. Liu Hongmei (2013) conducted a study from the perspective of red tourism integration, advocating regional cooperation, integration of resources, and strengthening of brands [6]. Huang Jingbo and Li Chun (2015) conducted a study from the cross-regional coordinated development model of red tourism, taking the perspective that the participating subjects have their own roles to effectively coordinate the synergistic development of regional tourism, and building a development model guided by local governments, led by tourism enterprises, and participated by the community masses [7]. Since the popularity of the Internet, scholars have made a shift in the study of red tourism, and research such as Bi Geng (2016) mainly explored red tourism from the perspective of integrated media in the domestic all-media platform characterized by media fusion, striving to realize the conversion of the main channel of international publicity from traditional media to new media, optimizing the dominant role of traditional media and playing the complementary role of other media [8]. Jiang Fuyuan (2018), Ni Shiaoan (2020), et. al. explored the international communication of red culture and red tourism in terms of building brands, converting concepts and enriching communication channels [9][10]. Wang Yulong (2019), Zhang Huai Peng (2020), et. al. proposed to promote the integration of new media such as 5G and new technology VR/AR to enhance the interactivity of red culture international publicity [11][12].

In summary, scholars have conducted a large number of compacted vertical and horizontal studies on red tourism from multiple perspectives, but there is little research on the path selection for promoting high-quality international publicity of red tourism, and the relevant research on the focus points for promoting efficient international publicity strategies for red tourism is also relatively insufficient. Most of the relevant studies stay at the early stage of phenomenon observation and case studies under the detachment from commonality, thus over-emphasizing the typicality of red tourism in different places and neglecting the deeper discussions on the totality and common attributes of red tourism, so the current research in this direction lacks systematic and holistic view.

### 3 Present situation of international communication of red tourism in Gannan

With tourism in full swing, China is turning into the world’s largest tourist destination country. Foreign travelers have shown great interest in China’s long history and culture and the evolutionary revival of Chinese civilization. Reflected in tourism, interest in various types of theme-based tourism is extremely strong. As the country continues to pay attention to red tourism, it has achieved notable success in the domestic market; however, its international visibility is still low and the number of overseas tourists visiting the country is not satisfactory.

SWOT analysis is a dynamic analysis method that will synthesize and profile all aspects of the internal and external conditions of the research target, and then analyze its strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunities and threats it confronts. SWOT analysis helps the research target to gather resources and actions on its own strengths and opportunities, and make its development direction clearer and more scientific [13]. This paper summarizes the data through literature review and field research, and uses the systematic analysis method to categorize the factors of red tourism resources in Gannan, and then draws the conclusions in the following Table 1 as a basis for the strategy to explore and disseminate red tourism resources in Gannan.

**Table 1.** SWOT analysis of red tourism resources in Gannan.

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
1. Unique geographical advantage of being adjacent to Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao Bay Area	1. Red resources are scattered, and the single investment on red tourism is insufficient.
2. Rich red resources with profound connotations	2. Red culture as a subculture is on the periphery of global culture, and is difficult to be accepted by European and American culture owing to its obvious heterogeneity.
3. National and local attention to the protection, development and utilization of red tourism resources	
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
1. National strategic layout such as the B&R and “Community of Destiny”	1. The global tourism market is sluggish due to the COVID-19.
2. Initiatives of Chinese culture “going global”, cultural confidence and telling the Chinese story, etc.	2. Red culture development time is short, and the product line is relatively single.
	3. Red resources require urgent innovation.

Based on SWOT analysis, it is not difficult to find that the red culture tourism of Gannan itself has unique advantages and opportunities, but also confronts a number of shortcomings and challenges.

#### 3.1 Strengths

The first is the obvious advantages of red cultural tourism resources in southern Jiangxi, located at the junction of Hunan, Fujian and Guangdong provinces. With the advent of the “era of high-speed trains”, it has turned into a bridgehead connecting the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. The unique geographical advantage is a prerequisite for the foreign dissemination of red cultural tourism resources in Gannan. The second is the uniqueness and richness of red resources. As the red capital, Gannan is the founding place of the Central Revolutionary Base and the starting place of the 25,000-mile Long March of the

Central Red Army, which is rich in the spirit of the Soviet Union and the spirit of the Long March. In particular, there are up to 180 red resources in Ruijin alone, and up to 30 national cultural relics protection units [14]. Besides, the surrounding places such as Huichang, Yudu, Xunwu, Xingguo and Ningdu are rich in red resources and of high quality. The unique red resources is a solid foundation for external communication. The third lies in the great importance attached by the government. From the national to provincial, municipal and county governments at all levels annually invest a lot of human and financial resources in the protection, development and utilization of red cultural resources, mainly in the construction and restoration of red historical and cultural sites and the development and innovation of red resources.

### **3.2 Weaknesses**

The first is that the red resources are scattered, and the single red tourism resources are not invested enough to form an industrial chain. At present, the red tourism route in Gannan is mainly concentrated in Ruijin, with very limited routes to choose from, and does not echo with similar red tourism places in the surrounding areas such as Ningdu, Huichang and Xingguo. The red resources with other provinces such as Shaoshan, Yan'an, Zunyi, etc. are lack of extension and connection, and the resources, information and development are disconnected from each other [15]. In addition, due to insufficient capital investment, some attractions in Ruijin with high red culture and tourism value have not been developed in depth. Besides, ignoring the unique Songcheng culture, Hakka folk customs and green ecology of Gannan, a "red - ancient - green" all-round multi-chain linkage has not yet been formed, resulting in the short stay of tourists and low consumption level of disadvantages.

The second is that the red culture of Gannan is on the fringe of the mainstream world culture. Hegemonic countries forcibly filter Chinese voices and use their strong cultural advantages to make misleading interpretations of Chinese culture. The loss of voice of Gannan red culture in the international arena, coupled with its cultural heterogeneity, exacerbates the resistance in the foreign dissemination of Gannan red culture. In the process of going abroad, Gannan red culture is spread across time and space and languages without the local and source language environment, and the slightest inaccuracy in grasping the communication strategy and communication channels of the red culture that has been precipitated through history will certainly suffer from the cultural resistance of others. Therefore, how to overcome the cultural differences of the foreign context to meet the aesthetic expectations of others without losing the beauty of red culture itself is a tricky bit for international communication.

### **3.3 Opportunities**

The first is the national strategic layout and policy support. In 2018, General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that "we should better promote Chinese culture to go out, to express the moral in words, to spread the voice with the words, to educate people through the words, to explain to the world to promote more excellent culture with Chinese characteristics, embodying Chinese spirit, and harboring Chinese wisdom." [16] Red tourism is an essential way for foreign tourists to understand China's red culture, and its communication path is growing increasingly important for promoting local red culture, deepening the development of tourism and comprehensively promoting rural development. Red culture international publicity not only helps develop the international market of Chinese tourism, but also helps foreign friends understand the core values of socialism, break the prejudice of Westernism against red culture, and enhance the international popularity of red culture. Guided by the

national strategy of the B&R construction and the building of a global community of destiny, there is great potential for China's red culture to go global.

The second is the opportunity of marketization of red tourism in Gannan. The formation of global integration and the use of network big data make the countries of the world closely interconnected. Since ancient times, winner takes all, and the same is true in cultural games. When a strong culture is in a high position, subcultures are bound to play the role of being infiltrated and marginalized. As a significant branch of Chinese traditional culture, Gannan culture has accumulated the valuable experience of China's Red Revolution, the spirit of the times of sacrificing life and death, and the Chinese philosophy of winning the hearts of the people to make the world a better place. In the context of "cultural confidence" and the deepening of technology, the proliferation of new media and the increasing popularity of mobile network, it is expected that the red culture of Gannan will be spread to all over the world and break the western cultural blockade.

### **3.4 Threats**

The first is the devastation and uncertainty brought about by the COVID-19. Since the outbreak, the global tourism market has suffered a devastating impact, the tourism industry in various countries has been sluggish, and the international tourism market in particular has been nearly paralyzed. Although the epidemic in China has been properly prevented and controlled, the Chinese tourism industry has not been spared from this natural and man-made disaster. Be it as may, the best time to cultivate inner strength is during a severe situation. When the epidemic fades and the spring flowers bloom, the red tourism in Gannan that accumulates grains to prevent hunger will surely attract "butterflies".

The second is that the development time is short and the product line is single. China's red culture tourism began in the 1950s, and compared with other types of tourism industries, it started late, with a short development time and a single product line. Compared with other red tourism of the same type, Gannan red tourism started in a relatively shorter time. Besides, although the red resources in Gannan are very rich, the excavation is not deep enough, and the development of food, clothing, housing, transportation, travel, shopping and entertainment is not coordinated; the transportation support is to be perfected, and there is no convenient ride and exchange transportation between the attractions. Tourism pastime business is single, missing the connection with Hakka characteristics, and lacking a complete sustainable development of the industry chain business concept.

The third is the imbalance between the protection and innovation of Gannan red culture. The preciousness of red culture lies in its classicality and irreversibility, so its creative content, expression and creative techniques are relatively programmed and fixed. This is both an important way to inherit and protect red culture and an obstacle to its innovation in contemporary times [17] (Jiang Hui 2018, 78). This is the dilemma of Gannan red culture between classics and inheritance. Under the initiative of carrying forward and inheriting excellent traditional culture, the idea of preserving Gannan red culture is deeply rooted in people's hearts, and the measures for preserving Gannan red culture are increasingly standardized, but the move to innovate Gannan red culture is difficult.

## **4 Principles and strategies for the international publicity of red tourism in Gannan**

Based on the above situation, in the context of The Belt and Road, red tourism of Gannan needs to make certain strategic adjustments and ideological changes in the process of publicity full of reefs and rapids.

#### **4.1 Updating the concept while telling a good story**

The culture of “tools” is more easily spread and accepted than the culture of “Tao”. The “Tao” of Chinese culture refers to the social ideology, values and beliefs embedded in Chinese culture. Various cultural industries, cultural commodities and cultural services based on social ideologies, values and beliefs are the “tools”. Therefore, when spreading Gannan red culture, we should avoid directly and hastily spreading “Tao”, but turning “Tao” into “tools”, vigorously creating cultural and creative products [18] (Xu Wen 2013, 101), and combining Gannan red tourism with other cultural industries. Film and television dramas, books and food are the best “tools” to carry the “Tao”, which have the natural attributes of easy dissemination and acceptance. For example, American movies such as Toy Story and Marvel series as well as English novels such as Harry Potter have successfully entered China and are highly appreciated by Chinese people. Another example is the fast food culture represented by domestically popular KFC and McDonald’s. The U.S. has used its moral, life and living habits to influence the Chinese people with the help of “tools”, which has been very effective. The concept of red tourism communication in Gannan can learn from the diverse communication skills of American cultural carriers, and design a cultural “tool” that is creative, easy to spread, and easy to accept.

#### **4.2 Clarifying the audience while accumulating talents**

Due to the differences in audience ideology, cultural background, language system and acceptance ability, Along the "the belt and road initiative", the dissemination of Gannan red tourism should be based on segmentation of the research audience, abandoning the ambiguity of communication objectivity, carrying out differentiated communication, changing the traditional Chinese “me-oriented” didactic and indoctrination type of official-oriented communication. We should actively encouraging unofficial media, as a pioneer in the dissemination of Gannan Red Tourism, to cultivate a group of talents who can speak foreign languages as well as overseas curators who are well versed in international cultural communication mechanisms. The spirit of selfless dedication, hard work and service to the people in the red culture of the Gannan Soviet Union is in conflict with the Western view of life in which pleasure comes first and the individual comes first, so training a group of cross-cultural foreign language professionals is an important means to avoid the conflict of consciousness. And for one of the core concepts of red culture, peaceful development is a value of universal significance and the basis for China to spread Gannan red tourism to other countries. Respecting ideological differences and seeking common ground while reserving differences on the basis of non-confrontation will make the dissemination of Gannan red tourism twice as effective with half the effort.

#### **4.3 Refining the spirit while upgrading the technology**

The first is to bring forth the new through the old in form, integrate culture with music, integrate the red spirit with the sense of the times, and form a brand that is attractive to the audience and competitive in the market. We can design expansion games in red tourist attractions, such as crossing the grassland, building bridges to cross the river, sending chicken letters and other red games full of fun, or provide foreign tourists and local residents to eat, live and work together, and experience the hard life of the Red Army when they used the local area to fetch water and cultivate the land together, and the hard life of marching and fighting. It will not only let foreign tourists experience Chinese red village culture, but also increase local people’s income and help revitalize the village economy and culture.

The second is the update in the technology. By virtue of IVR/ARE technology, we can construct a red tourism cultural resources dissemination platform supported by the Internet of Things and virtual technology. We can adopt 3D modeling and other virtual reality technologies to digitally record the original appearance of the red homeland and related historical style, and guide the Gannan red tourism to go abroad with the help of modern digital technology platforms. With the help of new technologies such as roaming, interaction, and 3D stereo, the information receiver is immersed in the scene, and the virtual historical event reproduction scene can be visited according to the route plan. The exhibition content and methods are updated and upgraded, and modern sound and light equipment is used to provide an immersive experience for visitors on the ground.

#### **4.4 “Casting the soul” with culture by joint cooperation**

We should join hands with colleges and universities to make concerted efforts to seize the critical period of establishing Confucius Institutes in Jiangxi universities around the world and seize the opportunity of Confucius Classroom and Chinese Culture and Art Week to display and spread Gannan red culture. Confucius Classroom and Chinese Culture Week held regularly by Confucius Institute is an essential position for Chinese culture export. International Chinese teachers in Jiangxi universities can make use of this position to seamlessly disseminate Gannan Red Culture as well as local specialties such as Hakka Round House, Gannan Tea Opera and Xingguo Mountain Song. For one thing, it can increase the richness and interest of learning contents, and besides, it also plays a role in the international publicity of Gannan’s excellent traditional culture. Further to that, in recent years, Jiangxi universities have undertaken a large number of overseas students, and the external communication can penetrate into the daily management and teaching activities of international students. Different forms of activities such as regularly organizing visits to red spots, holding red lectures and showing red movies and dramas are effective forms for international students to experience the charm of Gannan red culture. When the international students return home after their studies, they will be more familiar with the local culture and habits, so they will naturally evolve into the most direct and effective unique communication carrier for spreading Gannan red tourism.

#### **4.5 Enriching the routes besides “red and green”**

Gannan is not only rich in red resources, but also rich in Hakka traditional folk customs and green ecology, so we can explore the integration of culture and tourism, build a new mode of “tour + play + learn + do”, and try to open up a special product line of “ancient red and green” (Hakka round house+ red tourism + ecological tourism) + folk art (such as Yu Du Suona playing, Gannan tea opera, etc.) + experiencing the characteristic cultural and creative product line. In addition to deep development of the region’s content, we can also integrate similar resources across regions and explore a cross-regional or even cross-provincial red tourism alliance. For example, red tourism in the Soviet area of Gannan can be combined with the Jinggang Mountain Revolutionary Base, and can even unite with Zunyi, Yan’an, Shaoshan and other provinces that contain rich red culture for interconnection, resource sharing and building red special lines to transmit red culture to the audience in a more comprehensive and systematic way.

## 5 Conclusions

The dissemination of Gannan Red is a critical part of the current “going global” of China’s excellent traditional culture. Gannan red tourism is not only the combination of Gannan red culture going out and industrial revitalization of Gannan region, but also a significant carrier for developing and spreading Gannan red cultural resources. The international publicity of Gannan red tourism is both theoretical and practical. Although red tourism has been developing rapidly in China in recent years, it lacks systematic mechanism and theory in the process of external communication. In this paper, we analyze the present situation of international communication of Gannan red tourism with SWOT as the research framework, explore the crux of the current difficulties of Gannan red tourism to go abroad, explore the realization path, and attempts to promote the smooth “going abroad” of Gannan red tourism. This paper proposes several strategies, involving multiple participants. Their coordination and cooperation are the keys to realize the implementation of the strategy. Therefore, in the next research, it is the trend and focus of the research to promote the scientific and effective coordination and cooperation of multiple participants of Gannan red tourism.

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