Cultural Tourism Attraction in Taiwan

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Abstract: Cultural tourism has become one of the fastest growing industries in the world. This research attempts to show the role of music and tourism as part of cultural tourism attraction in Taiwan in the last ten years. It explores the interrelation of music and tourism in Taiwan, especially aboriginal music and culture development. Based on the multicultural and aboriginal characters, historical background as well as geographic influences, it examines what tourism attraction can be an advantage of promoting Taiwan tourism to tourists. In addition, this research will help the residents and non-residents to participate in the tourism development process in some degree, and people who are often marginalised in conventional tourism development can be a centre of tourism.

Key words: Cultural tourism, Taiwan, Music, Aboriginal music, Austronesia, Oceania, Gaze

1 Introduction

Taiwan is increasingly being recognised as an interesting tourist destination which has much to attract tourists beyond its natural and cultural attractions. Taiwan has a wide range of culture importance: Austronesia and pre-colonial Oceania cultural assets including aboriginal sites and arts proposed to educate and welcome national and international tourists. As Gibson and Connell (2005) described in *Music and Tourism: On the Road Again*:

> Cultural tourism rapidly expanded in the last decades of the twentieth century, as art, literature, food, wine and music gained greater significance in shaping the evolving structures of niche markets….music tourism is largely a contemporary phenomenon, the outcome of new affluence and leisure time in the West, and in part of the nostalgia that has accompanied such affluence [1].

At present, cultural tourism has formed an important component of international tourism in our world [2]. It exhibits movements of people motivate by cultural intents such as "study tours, performing arts, festivals, cultural events, visit to sites and monuments, as enjoyment of the lifestyle of the local people, the local area and what constitutes its identity and character." [3]. Recently, most tourist guidebooks feature sections dedicated to various types of tourism attraction such as musical performance to be found in places and, increasingly, specialist guidebooks have been devoted to music tourism [4]. These above evidences have shown the tourism development, particularly music tourism, is getting more and more attention from the globe.

This is a preliminary work of investigating cultural tourism development and attraction, particularly aboriginal musical performance, in Taiwan in the last ten years. Taiwan is in a special position, among the Orient, and its political and economic conditions, where consist of Austronesia and pre-colonial Oceania heritage. It also has extraordinary natural senses and unique multicultural progress, merged from aboriginals, the Hans, foreigners and immigrants. There are numerous activities, particularly aboriginal events and exhibitions, happening in Taiwan all year round. As Gibson and Connell (2005) said: in many countries, music is

used in national tourism campaigns, as in Argentina, Cuba and Iceland [5]. Similarly, Council of Indigenous Peoples founded in 1996, Taiwan, is central to maintain and promote aboriginal's education, culture and value to Taiwan residents and outside tourists.

In this research, the definition of cultural tourism will be referred to Austronesia and pre-colonial Oceania in Taiwan who has various customs, unique forms of arts and distinct educational values that can be distinguished it from other cultures. It remains its own cultures and traditions, values and lifestyles, for instance, rituals, crafts and musical performance. According to tourist's attendance, the definition of cultural tourism here will include:

- Tribe festivals or performances;
- Performing arts or concerts;
- Museums, art galleries or exhibition centres;
- Aboriginal sites and cultural displays;
- Historic buildings;
- Sites important to aboriginal's history [6].

The following discussion of this research is an overview of cultural tourism development in Taiwan, particularly aboriginal music, in the last ten decade. It will focus on the information of aboriginal sites, cultural displays, performances as well as exhibitions and centres can be found in Taiwan.

2 Culture, Society and Tourism in Taiwan

A number of international tourists certainly have posted questions on the internet and asked whether they should plan to go to Taiwan for before they arrived in Taiwan. The answer is positive and recognised. There are a lot of questions will be asked and explored as followed:

- Where is Taiwan?
- What does *Ilha Formosa* mean?
- What I must see in Taiwan?
- Why does Taiwan have unique historical background?
- What kind of activity or performance I can attend while staying in Taiwan?

Firstly, Taiwan locates between Mainland China, Japan and Philippines, where has formed its own special culture and custom. Secondly, Taiwanese culture is an amalgam of civilizations, each from different backgrounds, but together constituting Taiwan. For instance, in the sixteenth century, Taiwan was named *Formosa* by the Portuguese sailors who were fascinated by its beauty [7]. In 1622, it was ruled by the Netherlands and established Zeelandia in Tainan; in 1626, it was occupied by the Spanish; and from 1895 to 1945, Taiwan was ruled by the Japanese. In the last four hundred years, these cultural combination and racial invasion have formed Taiwan's unique multicultural customs including Chinese civilisations. In addition, Chinese civilisation is based on southern Fujian, Hakka immigrants and the recent immigrants from mainland China. Indigenous has been in Taiwan for a long time, who also held on to their respective customs and traditions. These cultural developments, influences and aboriginals, they establish interesting tourism attractions in Taiwan.

Aoki (2002) explained that musical and cultural tourism can become an engine to promote the tourism industry with a competitive advantage in a niche market (p. 120) [8]. In Taiwan, aboriginal's performance and festivals certainly can be regarded as one of significant cultural tourism attractions in Taiwan. Each aboriginal tribe of Taiwan forms the northern branch of the Austronesian language group. At present, there are thirteen different tribes that have their own languages, traditions, and tribal structure can be distinguished: the Atayal, the Saisiyat, the Bunun, the Tsou, the Rukai, the Paiwan, the Puyuma, the Amis, the Yami, the Thao, the Kavalan and the Truku [9]. Each tribe has its own language, festivals and ceremonies that are opened to the public. It provides great opportunities to tourists who can appreciate and understand the significance of aboriginal culture development in Taiwan. For instance, Amis's Harvest Festival is to celebrate the males entering the new age of manhood. It normally is held in July or August every year [10].

3 Cultural Tourism attraction in Taiwan

Tourists are interested in many different kinds of attractions all over the world, Aoki (2002) categorised tourists interests into five sections: 1) geographical beauty; 2) artificial constructions;3) biological diversity; 4) technological advances; 5) cultural diversity [11]. These unique characteristics must be emphasised when the culture or music was formed in a specific place such as Austronesia and Oceania culture in Taiwan. Taiwan locates in such specific position and its unique aboriginal music and culture must be emphasised. For example, the song of *Elders Drinking Song* [12] has demonstrated these dimensions. To a modern audience, Enigma's

Return to Innocence or the theme song of 1996, the Atlantes Olympics probably can recall his/her memory back to 1990s. The original melody was sung by Difang and his Malan Choir. Difang [13] was one of Taiwanese musicians, who have been highly recognised in the world. In 1988, Difang and his group, Malan Choir, were invited by the *Maison des Cultures du Monde* [14] to perform in France. In 1993, the Enigma, a German-based music group, retrieved the original sound of *Elders Drinking Song*. It was used as the Olympic Games promotional song. In 1996, it was first broadcast on Taiwan television as part of a short film promoting the 1996 Atlanta Olympics [15]. It caused the attention all over the world confronting for the copyright of the music and the song. The original song of *Elders Drinking Song* still can be found and heard through the internet today. It is a way of understanding the authenticity of Taiwan-based aboriginal music in such contexts today.

As Urry (2002) stated in *The Tourist Gaze*:

> Places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures, either on a different scale or involving different scale or involving different senses from those customarily encountered. Such anticipation is constructed and sustained through a variety of non-tourist practise, such as film, TV, literature, magazines, records and videos, which construct and reinforce that gaze.
>
> The tourist gaze is directed to features of landscape and townscape which separate them off from everyday experience. Such aspects are viewed because they are taken to be in some sense out of the ordinary [16].

National Geographic Traveler Magazine and the Lonely Planet have demonstrated tourists how to explore and "gaze" a new place. For example, Tarako National Park, as known as Tarako Gorge, where has magnificent natural scenery. It also maintains the authenticity of aboriginal cultures and manners and original and reflecting the intentions of the performers. For instance, The Tribal Performance and Canyon Concert attract a lot of performers and musicians to participate these events. Since 2002, these performances are also supported by non-government agents such as the Taiwan Mobile [17].

Tourism using cultural education and exhibitions as other major attractions also offers benefits to tourism industry. Since 2000, local government and non-government organisation in Taiwan attempt to conserve Austronesia unique culture, to educate descendants and to attract outside tourists. Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines and Ketagalan Culture Center of the Indigenous People Commission, Taipei City Government are examples of this. They conserve a number of aboriginals' relics such as musical instruments and clothes. Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines was established in 1994. It was the first private organisation exhibited and explored native aboriginal cultures [18]. It highlights Austronesian people from native Taiwan-based aboriginals to across Oceania indigenes. This museum exhibits Taiwan aboriginal's handy crafts, pottery, wood carvings, musical instruments and colour costumes [19]. Ketagalan Culture Center of the Indigenous People Commission was the first government-based aboriginal organization established by the Taipei City Government in 2000 and opened in 2002 [20]. It not only discovers Taiwan's aboriginal culture but also performs aboriginal music and dance [21]. They also have various exhibitions, performances and educational programs that attract many tourists and researchers to attend any of scheduled activities every year.

In Taiwan, music and tourism certainly have strengths of cultural tourism attractions, particularly aboriginal culture and their unique historical value. Many tourists regard their experiences of watching or joining Aboriginal music performance can be the best part of visiting Taiwan, for instance, participation of aboriginal harvest festival, taste of local cuisine and self handmade crafts. In Taiwan, various tribe festivals held by different tribes all year round. Therefore, cultural tourism certainly has strengths that must be maintained properly in Taiwan.

All of these attractions are interesting to potential tourists, yet these are not included in their travel plans as much as we expect. These cultural attractions often neglect by tourists due to a lack of translated information, understanding of the cultural differences and the use of the diverse language in each aboriginal tribe. A lot of aboriginal sites are in rural areas. It is very important to assist with described and translated information when tourists are in the early planning stage of their future trip. We need to provide translated information and printed materials in different language to these potential tourists. Internet is an important tool for

information providing which can be used widely to interest seekers regarding travel. However, lots of information can be found on the internet only written in Chinese with very little English or Japanese translation. The language expression has become a serious issue which must be solved urgently. We should improve the standard of language expression, knowledge of Taiwan culture and related information in the official or published documents such as brochures and advertisements.

4 Conclusion

Gibson and Connell (2005) state that tourism has boomed in recent decades and a key component has been the rise of cultural tourism. Cultural tourism, particularly music tourism, is one part of that and one that has hitherto never been documented in comprehensive form [22]. Music and tourism have formed an important component of cultural tourism in Taiwan and elsewhere today. There are numerous activities, performing arts and musical performance, happening in Taiwan all year round that can be found from various engines.

This research is a beginning work of investigating cultural tourism development and attraction in Taiwan in the last ten years. As discussed above, it is a summary of cultural tourism development in Taiwan through several examples. It demonstrates that examples represent the outcome of cultural tourism in Today's Taiwan. Today's tourists could look at this island from different ways as well as researchers. Aboriginal music and performing arts provide a great opportunity for researchers and tourists to understand and discover the heritage of Austronesia and pre-colonial Oceania. This challenge is demanding, adventurous and exciting.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, cultural tourism has been highlighted by many people and countries. Taiwan has the heritage of Austronesia and pre-colonial culture that has not been fully explored and examined yet. Researchers could aim to discover this ongoing and incomplete journey. Inclusion of such investigation in the field of cultural tourism should be explored deeper and further in the future. This research has emerged several significant problems which have become obstacles in the aspect of attracting national and international tourists. It deserves to be discussed and to be solved in the future research.

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[12] The *Elders Drinking Song* is a very solemn and respectful song. It is normally sung from the beginning of the Harvest Festival. The eldest of the tribe get together in the Festival and sing this song. The concept of the song is to evoke the bliss from the God and the festival will proceed successfully.

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