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Research on the Role of Individual Artists and Facilitating Development —Taking the Chinese Dancer Yang Liping as an Example

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ABSTRACT

Art has a positive effect on regional development. This paper believes that as an important part of art, artists play an important role in regional development. As an individual artist, using their personal influence to form a brand effect is worthy of study on the promotion of regional economic development, art education, and national art internationalization. However, in the development based on personal influence, it is worthwhile to think about the shortcomings caused by personal factors and how to solve them.

1. Introduction

"Art as activity and as experience has a value that is beyond measure and therefore clashes with the form of money" (Klamer, 1998, 308).^[8] The artist's role in promoting social development is not only reflected at the profits to bring the economic development, but also influenced more social and cultural values of the community. This paper will examine Chinese dancing artist "Yang Liping ('杨丽萍' in Chinese)" and her representative work "Dynamic Yunnan" as the research object to analyze the influence of artists on the sustainable development of regional society.^[1,2] The paper will focus on the main aspects of development in Yunnan province, China of local economy, arts education, cultural communication and women's status. Also, it will explain the significant role the artist in facilitating development.

It will then move into the shortage of the case in terms of sustainable development. In the last part, it will suggest the alternative way to achieve long-term success.

2. Who Is "Yang Liping"?

Yang Liping is a Chinese traditional dancer and an important cultural heir of Chinese folk dance, who is famous for performing "Peacock Dance". The peacock representing one of the ethnic totems in Yunnan, China, so she is a symbol of the Chinese folk art as "The Peacock Princess of China". In early 1990s, Yang Liping performed solo dance "The Spirit of the Sparrow" which was awarded the gold medal of the 20th century dance classics of the Chinese nation. After the 1990s, her work shifted from a solo dancer to the director and performance of large-scale works based on ethnic dance.^[4]

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The artistic masterpiece, "Dynamic Yunnan", which is directed by her artistic director and chief editor, is a new stage integrating tradition and modernity. It integrates and reconstructs the original native singing and dancing essence and the classic new style of national dance Yunnan rich ethnic customs. 70% of performers are ethnic minorities famers coming from the local areas who never been trained for dancing professionally. The style of costumes also restored from Yunnan ethnic prototype.

As a female and a Chinese minority artist, Yang's successful doesn't go very well. She was born in a poor family in Yunnan province which is a remote and economically underdeveloped province in China. (Business Times 2002) Her hardship childhood made her feel the dark side of life. She changed her fate by learning dance which would become an important reason why she has been devoting herself using art to develop the circumstance in Yunnan's ethnic minority areas.

3. What Are the Outcomes of the Development in Yunnan Province?

The relationship between the art and development can be discussed in many ways. Development, which is guided by the specialist, has been considered as a technical working, especially, in term of economical aspect (Clammer, 2015).^[6] So the economic influence comes to the first.

3.1 Promoting the Local Cultural Economic Development

The "Dynamic Yunnan" directed by Yang Liping brought not only about local performance and tourism development in the short term, but also about the development of the cultural industry in Yunnan Province.^[3]

According to the Department of Culture of Yunnan Province, the added value of cultural industries in Yunnan Province has grown by more than 20% annually for 10 consecutive years. Among them, in 2012, the added value of cultural industries in Yunnan reached 63.5 billion yuan, accounting for about 6% of the GDP. Some main cultural enterprises exported more than 2014.06 million U.S. dollars. By 2013, the number of cultural enterprises in Yunnan exceeded 10,000 to achieve added value of more than 600 billion yuan, accounting for more than 6% of the province's GDP. Cultural industry has become a new economic growth point and pillar industry in Yunnan. (Department of Culture of Yunnan Province 2015)

The value brought by the art project is not only reflected in the economic income, but also an invisible asset to the protection and inheritance of the national culture.

The cultural industry is a model that provides long-term sustainable growth for local economies, which has been called "deep economy" (McKibben, Bill. 2007).^[11]

3.2 Promoting the Art Education and Heritage

A major feature of "Dynamic Yunnan" is that 70% of the actors come from ethnic minorities villages in Yunnan which is most ethnically diverse province. Yang personally goes to the villages to select the actors who are the most native villagers and trained them to become professional dancers. Instead of using professional dancers trained by art academies, she prefers restoring and demonstrating the villager's movements through the most authentic and instinctive artistic dance from their daily life. If the local villagers are required to be standardized as professional dancers, the whole performance will be lost of meaning. If she chooses a professional dancer to perform, it will lack the unique local flavor of life. However, before Yang participated in orchestrating the dance, the local villagers never realized that the dance which they perform everyday could be called art, and even could be brought onto the stage and show to the world.

Not only has she made ordinary local villagers dancers who can perform on stage but also, she has cultivated many potential young dancers and changed their lives. Before getting artistic training, a lot of dancers they just imitated their parents singing and dancing. After Yang's excavation and cultivation their lives has undergone great changes. From the previous life wedged between mountains and looks like lost to the modern world have now become the dancers who can travel around the world. Art education not only changed their economic source, but also affected their fate. (Barbozamarch. 2005)

3.3 Promoting the International Communications by National Culture

For many years, Yang has visited many countries for artistic exchanges and successively held special dance parties in the Philippines, Singapore, Russia, the United States, Canada, Taiwan, Japan and other countries. She also wrote a self-directed film "Sunbird" and won the jury prize at the Montreal International Film Festival. After she become famous on the international, she turns to focus more on the communication of the national culture. In 2009, "Dynamic Yunnan" began its annual tour of the world, which makes Chinese art enter to the world's top PBS brand series "GREAT PERFORMANCE" for the first time. "Dynamic Yunnan" had been shown in the United States Cincinnati for two consecutive weeks of promotional performances with 16 exciting shows. The Mayor of Cincinnati spe-

cifically named the date that the performance shown the "Dynamic Yunnan" Day. That is the first time "Dynamic Yunnan" has become a special Anniversary of Cincinnati history. Yunnan culture has not only been spread and popularized in China, but also has gone abroad to allow the world to appreciate the charm of the mysterious Yunnan's art.

3.4 Promoting Women's Status

After the performance of "Dynamic Yunnan" entered to the Yunnan province, it provided many employment opportunities for ethnic minority women. This not only changed their economic income and life style what is more important is that the project influenced their ideological concepts. And with the increase of the local women's economic income, the traditional status in the family has also changed, a new understanding has been given to one's own gender roles, and social status has also been significantly improved. Among the dances, women can feel more than just movements, but a desire for the spiritual world beyond the secular and the pursuit of freedom. This pursuit can be understood as a continuous, never ended feeling. In this process, they can discovery and transcendence themselves (Sawicki. 1991).^[12]

4. What Are the Artist Roles in Facilitating Development?

4.1 Creating a Cultural Symbol from Her Personal Value

Yang Liping became famous as "The Peacock Princess" in China. The "Spirit of the Sparrow" let the world know Yang Liping's achievement. After "Dynamic Yunnan", the whole world is paying attention to the national culture of Yunnan. Undeniably, the personal influence of Yang Liping helped the "Dynamic Yunnan" break the market barrier and successfully entered the mainstream of tourism consumption. Even in the current screen and paper propaganda, Yang's image still occupies a large space. Her influence in the Chinese dance industry is self-evident. Yang is not only the legal representative, chairman and actual controller of the art enterprise of Yunnan culture, but also the best and most powerful propaganda business card. At the same time, she is also the symbol of company culture and the backbone of the development of the project. Her artistic, spiritual, lifestyle, and the fashion taste affect the audiences in all aspects. Now Yang Liping has long been transformed into a symbol, an artistic symbol, a fashionable symbol, a symbol of perfect crossover, and a spiritual symbol of being unconvinced.

Pierre Bourdieu has argued that when an artist becomes a symbol of specific art, it does not only show the personal values, but also represents a cultural identity and the high standard of the art (Johnson. 2011).^[7]

4.2 Flourishing National Culture by Teaching the Value of Art to Local People

Art is the label of national culture. A nation permanently uses a certain set of symbols of artistic symbols, thus making the symbol of the arts habitually become the cultural label of the nation.

Leading by the famous artist Yang Liping, the "Dynamic Yunnan" created based on the traditional dancing of ethnic minorities in Yunnan province. Now it has become a famous cultural business card for Yunnan and has become an art piece with a distinctive character of regions and ethnic groups. Masterpiece relies on the national culture. If there is no such platform as the original village, there is no vivid existence of rural folk art. Without those from all ethnic groups in the country native artists, it is impossible to form this masterpiece of art with a strong native ethnic and unique style. It is impossible to cultivate natural artists without all nationalities with natural flavor and earthy atmosphere to spread dance art either.

The most important role that an artist plays in art education is the inspiration to ordinary people. Dancing or other forms of art originally existed in the unique national culture, but the local people did not realize that their daily behavior could be called art. Thus, the enlightenment function of the artist was reflected. She made ordinary people involved in the work of art and realized that some of their behavior is a valuable work of art. This effect has far-reaching implications for children. Young adults who do get involved in arts will benefit in terms of their social and emotional intelligence (Hughes & Wilson, 2004).^[5] National dance contains more than just body movements, more importantly; it carries a national identity, dignity, artistic and the story. When young generation learns how to dance they know the national culture itself (Woodley. 2013).^[15]

One of the most representative actors is a 17-year-old cattle farmer named "Xia GA". Ten years after being discovered by Yang Liping, he has become a professional dancer and has also been the torch bearer for the Olympic torch relay in St. Petersburg, Russia. What is more meaningful is that his daughter has already begun to participate in the "Dynamic Yunnan" performance, which shows that the artist's influence on people is not only reflected in a single individual, it has a stronger Infectivity and continuity (Life Week Kai Wang. 2015).^[9]

4.3 Using Art Works to Spread National Culture to the World

The most important thing of the international communications of national culture is to arouse the audience's sympathy. Though "Dynamic Yunnan" is a nationally distinctive piece of dance, it apparently appears to be quite small on the surface. After Yang Liping explored the emotional factors that resonated with the people in different countries makes it easier to understand. The perception of art comes from the connecting role of communication between artists and spectators and cultural contexts. In this process, not only can cultural transmission be carried out, but new understanding and explanation of art can sometimes come into being. This is a phenomenon often found in artistic activities, which manifests itself more clearly in foreign art forms (Hans-Otto, Ekaterina. 2015).^[14]

Firstly, most of the internationally acclaimed works have unique national characteristics can be attractive. Each part of "Dynamic Yunnan" reflects the people's awe of nature. And the religious beliefs and infatuation are very similar from the western cultural.

Secondly, the similarities of the artistic expressions. Western began to pursue the aesthetics of human beings since the renaissance of the Renaissance. As a dance art work, "Dynamic Yunnan" starts with the beauty of limbs through the dance movements. And then through the performance of tattoos, muscles and bones highlighting the respect and pursuit of the beauty of the human body, this point in Yang's solo part of the "Moon" plays most vividly.

Finally, the universal values behind the art work that the artist wants to convey are important. The values reflected in "Dynamic Yunnan" are about the human perspective, a personality of positive life, loves nature, which is consistent with the common pursuit of mankind. It also shows that the unlimited inclusiveness of Chinese culture matches the diversity of world cultures.

The work of art itself is a carrier of communication. With the deep popularity of the work, its influence will be further deepened. The expression of the development is not only limited to the influence of local area, culture can be preserved by communication. Only when the more people understand the culture that is unique to the region the better they can be developed. For international communications of national culture, the artist has given audiences who live in different cultural background a chance to recognition of the most primitive and ethnically Chinese culture. In this way promoted the international influence of Chinese traditional arts. Secondly, it has

caused widespread concern of Chinese culture, which also led other ethnic cultures to be actively motivated. Finally, as an outstanding piece of dance art, it contributed a force to the development of the world's dancing development. This influence has not been limited to a certain area, good artists or art works, can promote the development of the world culture.

4.4 Representing the Image of an Independent Woman

Yang Liping devoted her whole life into dancing but without children, which is incomplete in Chinese traditional culture for the standard of women. But her appearance shows the women in Yunnan another possibility of women's life. Before Yang most of women in Yunnan focus just on the families. Although caring for their families was a way of enjoying their life, they did not know that life could have another option. The appearance of Yang not only brought dances to their lives, but also gave them an idea of other ways of life attitude besides marriage and childbirth. Women learn the pride comes from being aesthetic while learning and participating in art activities. At the same time, art is a learning tool that fosters creativity and expressiveness (Leona. 1963).^[10]

The girl who named "Yue Pei" was taken out by Yang Liping from the mountain when she was 14 years old. She was dancing for the harvest in rural areas when Yang Liping found her talent of performing. Yang sponsors her secondary school tuition fees and taught her how to dance on the stage. Her life is no longer just get married, raised child, worked in the farming but danced in the stage. This not only allows her to have financial income, to support her family through her own ability, what more importantly, her self-worth has been affirmed.

4.5 Establishing a Distinctive Business Model

After becoming a cultural symbol, Yang Liping is not only satisfied with her personal accomplishments. She is not only limited to the artist's superiority, but also has a very commercial-minded and establishment the art enterprise named "Yang Liping Arts & Culture Co., Ltd". Her development from her own value to cultural projects and then develop as a company. It is a worthy of our discussion of the characteristics of business models.

A valuable art piece often embodies the irreplaceable feelings of the artist, her blood and tears, her hate and love, which help to save precious things that including more value than the art work itself. This kind of feeling is shared by mankind experience of all. Yang Liping's re-enlightenment on society and culture by dancing art is

revealed to the audience through the true and non-kitsch feelings. Once such the dance language resonates between the artist and audiences, the tension in art has its real social significance (Sohu News 2006).^[13]

5. How to Continue the Sustainable Development of the Art Enterprise without the Original Artist's Influence

As a strong symbol to the art enterprise Yang Liping is now nearly sixty years old. It will inevitably make people to be worried about how the art enterprise survives without the "Peacock Princess". A complete value chain and inheritance system has not yet been formed to support the sustainable development. Therefore, the next problem facing by "Yang Liping Arts & Culture Co., Ltd" is the construction of reserve personnel influence of the business. Although there are many talents performers in the tourism entertainment market, but not many of them are as famous and influential as Yang Liping. So, for the "Yunnan Yang Liping Culture Communication" should not just rely on Yang Liping's personal market competitiveness. The training of the new generation who can be more attractive is particularly important.

It is worth mentioning that Yunnan culture has targeted the field of art training the younger generation. According to the annual report the company has taken Kunming which is a famous city in Yunnan province as the starting point and radiated all over China. (Annual report 2015) At this point, Yunnan culture still has comparative advantages in developing art education and forming a continuous renewal mechanism. On the one hand, achieve training young actors for other companies. On the other hand, it can also meet its own needs for selecting and providing more excellent compound talents for its own company.

6. Conclusion

This paper takes Yang Liping and her representative art work "Dynamic Yunnan" as the case study to evaluate the artist role in facilitating development from four aspects including local economic development, art education, international spread of national culture and women's status. What's more, this paper analyzes how an artist-centered art enterprise can promote regional development. It provides reference for the development of other art enterprises with same as the artist as the core. At the same time, by analyzing the shortcomings of the art enterprises, this paper puts forward the corresponding strategies and then enables the art enterprises to carry on the sustainable development to the local areas.

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