

Comparative Analysis of Cultural Diversity between Hong Kong and Japan

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Abstract. When it comes to the cultural situation in Hong Kong, "diversity" has always been an inescapable topic. As a former British colony and a port city, Hong Kong has to embrace cultures from all over the world, and the existence of diverse cultures is inevitable. Meanwhile, as a former militarist country, Japan also needed to open its doors to foreign cultures after its defeat in order to accelerate the development of capitalism. Japanese scholar Shuichi Kato also defined his country's culture as a kind of "multiculturalism". This article hopes to use Japan's multiculturalism as a reference and, in combination with relevant textual cases, conduct a comparative analysis to gain a clearer understanding of the diversity of Hong Kong's culture.

Keywords: Cultural Diversity; Hong Kong; Analysis.

1. Research Background

Multiculturalism is a culture with obvious hybrid nature. It combines different cultural forms from various regions, including elements such as art, literature, architecture, and even lifestyles in daily life. Through a long process of mutual integration, it forms a unique and local cultural type that can represent the region. Compared with the Western world, the formation of multiculturalism may have greater potential and development space in Asia. In both Hong Kong and Japan, multiculturalism has become the cultural identity representing a region or a country. Therefore, there should be an "intercontinental" perspective, using representative different regions in Asia as reference points for mutual learning to form a parallel and equal reference system, which can help us broaden our thinking and form more targeted and effective thinking on the issue. Therefore, using the cultural diversity of Japan as a reference for Hong Kong is more conducive to our understanding of the particularity of Hong Kong in the process of forming a multicultural society, and then helps us to face up to the "diversity" of Hong Kong's culture. Meanwhile, as a port city, Hong Kong and Japan, an island country in the sea, both have the attribute of ports and have developed rapidly due to different historical conditions and other factors since modern times.

2. Similarities and Differences in the Causes of Diversity

First of all, regarding the gradual formation of the multiculturalism in Hong Kong and Japan, there are actually some similarities in the causes in these two regions. As mentioned above, both have a close connection with the ocean and water transportation. Such a geographical location means that the cultural habits from different regions will inevitably come to the port along with the population of different cultural groups, thus promoting the formation of a multicultural attribute in the port area. Meanwhile, both Hong Kong and Japan gradually entered the "fast lane" of economic development after the middle of the 19th century. After becoming developed regions, the consumer demand for culture has been continuously increasing, which naturally brings about the motivation for cultural reproduction, providing a prerequisite for the development of multiculturalism. Therefore, the coexistence of different cultures and the conscious cultural production behavior of mutual integration are important prerequisite conditions for the formation of multiculturalism, and both Hong Kong and Japan have such a background. Secondly, in terms of the particularities of the two regions, the cultural diversity of Japan is more oriented towards national development. After the Meiji Restoration, Japan put forward the development slogan of "Enrich the Country, Strengthen the Military, Promote

Industry, and Foster Civilization". After World War II, the concept of "Strengthen the Military" in the slogan was weakened, but to this day, Japan's national development concept oriented towards "Enrich the Country, Foster Civilization" is still in operation. It can be said that Japan has a tradition of continuously integrating cultures and producing excellent multiculturalism in history. Just as a line in the song of Emperor Meiji goes, "It is good to adopt the good and discard the bad in the hope of becoming a country no inferior to foreign countries" [1]. Therefore, the ideological liberation of the Meiji Restoration and Japan's difficult situation after the war both require the stimulation of foreign cultures to help promote the country's development. However, the cultural diversity of Hong Kong did not deterministically originate from the purpose of promoting its own development, or in other words, it did not come from the promotion of its colonial power during the colonial period. During the colonial period of Hong Kong, British colonizers only regarded Hong Kong as a commercial center in Asia and even in a larger area. Whether Hong Kong's culture developed or not would not greatly affect the economic development goals of the UK. Naturally, the cultural needs of the local people in Hong Kong were not the focus of the colonizers. In contrast, the cause of the cultural diversity in Hong Kong comes more from its marginal position and the cultural production style derived from this position. Hong Kong's marginality is twofold. Geographically, it is on the border of China, and after becoming a colony, its marginal political position was further aggravated. Therefore, Leo Ou-fan Lee described Hong Kong as the "marginal of the marginal" and suggested examining the culture of Hong Kong from such a perspective [2]. It seems that intellectuals in Hong Kong may have more "down-to-earth" characteristics. Then their cultural reproduction will have the ability to be inclusive and can carry out interactive cooperation with cultural producers from all sides.

3. Similarities and Differences in the Process of Diversification

3.1 Strategies for Dealing with Traditional Culture

Starting from the strategies for dealing with traditional culture, the hybrid cultures in Hong Kong and Japan have a common feature, that is, they both retain a certain amount of traditional culture. As an independent country, Japan originally has its own relatively strong native culture. The native culture in Hong Kong should be understood here as the traditional Chinese culture that entered and was preserved in Hong Kong along with the population flow between Hong Kong and the China's mainland and several immigration waves, as well as a small part of the culture generated by the indigenous people in Hong Kong before the British invaders entered Hong Kong. Of course, these cultures are still closely related to the traditional culture on the China's mainland. The reason why multiculturalism is called "diverse" is that its hybrid nature determines that it must retain and inherit some traditional cultures. However, Japan's inheritance and emphasis on traditional culture are deeper and more active than those in Hong Kong. As Masao Maruyama believed, preserving the country's traditional culture is conducive to better introducing foreign cultures. The reason why Japanese multiculturalism has a closer connection with traditional culture is that if we count from the emergence of the first emperor in Japan, it originally has a history of native culture of more than 2,600 years. Meanwhile, as analyzed above, at the beginning of the development of Japanese multiculturalism, the state was the dominant force. Then, for the protection of national identity, the state must attach greater importance to the preservation of traditional culture. And in the process of forming multiculturalism, such behavior must be conscious and active. Thus, even though the culture is diverse and mixed, it still retains a strong national identity. A very obvious example is the Japanese anime **The Great Whale** released in 1980. This is a science-fiction work that imagines the survival and development of mankind. There are two families in it. One is the Gimu family, which represents the pursuit of love and peace, and the other is the Atlantis family, which represents the pursuit of material and power. The story revolves around the Gimu family having to fight against the Atlantis family to protect the survival of the earth. From the perspective of naming and the images of the anime characters, it is easy to distinguish that the portrayal of the Gimu family represents the national spirit of Japan, while the Atlantis family symbolizes the powerful Western countries. Therefore, even

in an anime work with very obvious Western elements, its purpose still centers on the goal of establishing a more noble image that is more likely to arouse the national imagination of the Japanese people. Then it is easy to understand Japan's emphasis on inheriting traditional culture. As for Hong Kong, as Guanzhong Chen summarized, "Since Hong Kong has not been affected by the New Culture Movement of the Republic of China and the Cultural Revolution, it has retained more traditional Chinese elements and folk customs [3]." However, even though it has retained more traditional elements, in the process of the formation of Hong Kong's hybrid culture, there has been no such retention and inheritance of traditional culture dominated by national ideology as in Japan. For example, **Drunken Master** starring Jackie Chan and released in 1978. The content of this film conforms to the typical "early Jackie Chan style". The story always tells that a "useless" protagonist becomes a top master through hard practice. There are a large number of exaggerated and funny action shots in both the process of learning martial arts and fighting. This style has not stopped since then. So in the film **Kung Fu** directed and starred by Stephen Chow, a representative figure of Hong Kong comedy, in 2004, although there are still elements of traditional Chinese kung fu such as "palm techniques", "staff techniques" and "inner strength", the funny and nonsensical content has even surpassed the expression of traditional kung fu and has a certain satirical meaning. For example, the top masters all appear in funny and comical images at the beginning, and the protagonist's kung fu secret book is obtained from a typical "street swindler" and so on. Therefore, for this film, I think its comedic elements have overshadowed the traditional connotation it wants to express. The formation and development of such kung fu comedies are showing Hong Kong's hybrid culture's attitude of accepting traditional culture but not taking it seriously.

3.2 Strategies for Dealing with Foreign Cultures

In terms of the strategies for dealing with foreign cultures, the multiculturalism in Hong Kong and Japan has very obvious similarities in the process of formation, and they have a common and firm stance. That is, even though multiculturalism must absorb and accept diverse foreign cultures in the process of formation, these foreign cultures will ultimately only become the "nutrient" of their local cultural identity. For Japan, the adoption of foreign cultures is to promote the development of its own culture in a more positive and advanced direction. For Hong Kong, it is to meet the needs of Hong Kong people to establish a cultural identity that can represent them. As Guanzhong Chen [3] described the characteristics of typical multicultural products, "Although it will appropriate and mix from various sources, it still retains a strong subjectivity and ultimately achieves the local cultural identity." It can be seen that maintaining the subjectivity of one's own culture is of great importance in the process of facing and integrating with foreign cultures, and only in this way can the cultural identity of a region be achieved in the end. In terms of the ways adopted to maintain their subjective status, as mentioned in the previous subsection, Japan also roots in its own traditional culture. It can also be said that by protecting its traditional culture from being easily lost, Japan strengthens and maintains its national identity, and then forms a multicultural society on the basis of maintaining the subjective position of its original local culture. Therefore, when Japan is faced with traditional culture on one hand and foreign culture on the other, the method it chooses is a selective "addition method" rather than a blind "replacement method". Perhaps the famous Japanese anime **Naruto** can help to understand this "addition method" adopted by Japan. **Naruto** is a work with the characteristics of cultural diversity. It constructs a huge ninja village system, and different ninja villages are attached to different countries and exist as the image of "guardians" of the country. Among them, the ninjas in the Kumogakure Village of the Land of Lightning are more similar in appearance to the black ethnic groups in the West. They have dark skin and love to rap, and they also have combat power and economic level second only to those of Konohagakure Village. The Sunagakure Village of the Land of Wind is more similar to an Arab country. The environment where they live has strong sandstorm characteristics, and cultural elements of Arab such as veils and headscarves often appear in the character images. However, the absolute protagonist ninja village in the whole work is still Konohagakure Village, which is based on Japan. The main story line of the whole work revolves

around Konohagakure Village and its ninjas, and it is full of the characteristics of Japanese traditional culture such as kimonos, ramen and tatami. It should also be noted that even those other ninja villages with "exotic customs" will also occasionally show the characteristics of Japanese culture in various theatrical versions. Therefore, the significance of adopting this "addition method" instead of the "replacement method" is that Japan will add excellent foreign cultures that meet its "utilitarian" orientation to its local culture, but will never replace its own cultural traditions with foreign cultures. Meanwhile, its original culture should always be the "root" in the multiculturalism. For Hong Kong, compared with Japan, which has a strong local cultural identity in history, Hong Kong did not originally have a very complete and typical local cultural style. When facing foreign cultures, the way it adopts is more to combine its commercialized cultural market and gradually shape its own cultural identity through continuous secondary production and innovation of traditional and foreign cultures, and attach great importance to the gradually formed cultural identity. This continuous high-quality secondary production and innovation is the "blood" and "sweat" of Hong Kong people in the words of Guanzhong Chen [4]. In this process, continuous reproduction activities are carried out and the "labor value" created by Hong Kong people is added, so that the quantitative change accumulation of cultural identity can be formed, and finally a qualitative change is achieved, thus achieving "rebirth". What is reborn is the hybrid culture belonging to Hong Kong. It can no longer be classified as traditional culture or foreign culture, but is a new variety, completely independent and belonging to Hong Kong and the Hong Kong people who created it, and also representing them. The previously mentioned Hong Kong-style zombie films and Hong Kong-style kung fu comedies are all representatives of this kind of "rebirth". Whether they are combined with traditional folk stories or Western classic images, and no matter what forms of expression they adopt for traditional culture, they are all prefixed with "Hong Kong-style", the same as Hong Kong-style lemon tea, Hong Kong-style tea restaurants and even Hong Kong-style food stalls. Therefore, it can be found that the multiculturalism in Hong Kong is always closely related to the identity of its people. The multiculturalism generated by the Hong Kong people through their own efforts has helped them obtain a representative cultural identity, and the new generation of local young people can further strengthen their identity by participating in the local multiculturalism, whether it is participating in reproduction or cultural consumption.

4. Conclusion

Using the cultural diversity of Japan as a reference and through the comparative analysis of the causes and development processes of diversity, we can find that Japan's cultural diversity is oriented towards national development, involves a certain degree of ideology, and pays more attention to the survival of traditional culture. In other words, the purpose of actively pursuing diversification is to better develop its cultural traditions, thereby strengthening the national identity of the Japanese people and enhancing the worldwide dissemination of Japanese culture. For example, Japan's anime culture has become its cultural symbol in the world. It has many characteristics of diversity mixed with foreign cultures and now attracts a large number of international fans. In contrast, the multiculturalism in Hong Kong is not controlled by the state-dominated superstructure. Without control, there is no assistance either. It has developed difficultly from the "marginal of the marginal", relying more on the Hong Kong people's desire and efforts for cultural identity. These Hong Kong people are not limited to elite intellectuals, but also include the personal participation of more ordinary people. Although there is not much cultural accumulation that can be fully trusted, with the miscellaneous combination and splicing of all parties under the guidance of "blood and sweat", it has finally formed its own identity. Therefore, if we recognize the advancement of Japanese culture, there is even less reason to look down upon Hong Kong's culture.

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