Space, Trust, and Co-governance: A Micro-historical Study of the Interaction Practices in Multi-ethnic Merchant Guild Halls in Beijing during the Qing Dynasty

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Abstract. As the political center of the Qing Dynasty and a hub for multi-ethnic communication, Beijing attracted merchants from all ethnic groups across the country, and merchant associations became the core spatial carrier for multi-ethnic interaction. This article takes micro historical research as the core method, combined with literature review and field research, selects representative relics such as Huguang Guild Hall, Shanxi Guild Hall, and Hui Guild Hall, and explores the macro development trend and micro communication practice of multi-ethnic merchant guilds from three dimensions: spatial distribution, organizational operation, and interpersonal interaction. Research has found that the multi-ethnic merchant associations in Beijing during the Qing Dynasty formed a spatial pattern of "geography as the foundation, business ties as the pulse, and ethnicity as the soul". Through systems such as meeting preferences, decision-making, and dispute resolution, a cross ethnic trust network was constructed. Their co governance practice not only maintained the interests of the merchant community, but also promoted the integration of multi-ethnic cultures. At the same time, the existing guild hall sites are facing challenges such as imbalanced preservation and loss of materials, and need to achieve historical value regeneration through graded protection, educational transformation, and cultural tourism integration.

Keywords: Qing Dynasty Beijing; Multi-ethnic Merchant Association; Micro History; Trust Mechanism; Heritage Conservation.

1. Introduction

The Qing Dynasty was a crucial period for the consolidation and development of China's multi-ethnic country. As the political center under the feet of the emperor, Beijing was not only the center of the bureaucratic system, but also the core field for the circulation of goods and multi-ethnic exchanges throughout the country. Since the Shunzhi Dynasty, Shanxi Jin merchants, Shaanxi Qin merchants, Jiangnan Huizhou merchants, Guangdong merchants, and border ethnic merchants have successively flooded into Beijing. In order to cope with the pressure of survival in foreign lands, regulate commercial order, and maintain ethnic identity, merchant associations have emerged. This type of guild hall is not a closed space for a single ethnic or regional group, but gradually developed into a public platform for multi-ethnic merchants to "gather, discuss, assist, and blend". The communication practices it carries constitute an important micro slice of the history of multi-ethnic relations in the Qing Dynasty.

From an academic research perspective, existing achievements have mostly focused on the organizational forms of single regional guilds or Han merchants, with relatively insufficient attention paid to the dimension of "multi-ethnic interaction". The lack of a micro historical perspective has led to the historical truth of how multi-ethnic merchants build trust and achieve co governance through guilds being obscured by grand narratives for a long time. Based on this, the research significance of this article combines both academic and practical dimensions: at the academic level, by using micro historical methods to excavate first-hand materials such as guild hall inscriptions and oral historical materials, it reveals the daily communication logic of multi-ethnic merchants in the Qing Dynasty, and completes the historical narrative of multi-ethnic economic and cultural integration; At the practical level, sorting out the value transformation path of the guild hall site provides valuable

experience for contemporary ethnic unity and progress education, as well as the revitalization and utilization of cultural heritage.

2. The Historical Evolution of the Beijing Multi ethnic Merchant Association during the Qing Dynasty

2.1 Evolution of Development Stages

The development of multi-ethnic merchant associations in Beijing during the Qing Dynasty can be roughly divided into three stages:

The initial period of prosperity (from Shunzhi to Kangxi Dynasty, 1644-1722): During this period, the number of guilds was relatively small and their functions were relatively single, with geographical mutual assistance as the core. It is often initiated by merchants from a single region or ethnic group, such as the Jin Ji Guild Hall established by Shanxi merchants outside Chongwenmen and the Hui Hui Hall established by Hui merchants in Niujie. At this time, cross ethnic interactions were mostly accidental business dealings, and the guild hall had not yet formed a fixed mechanism for multi-ethnic co governance. According to the "Guangxu Shuntian Prefecture Annals", there were a total of 37 merchant associations in Beijing during the late Kangxi period, of which only 5 clearly recorded cross ethnic activities.

The peak period (from Yongzheng to Daoguang Dynasty, 1723-1840): With the prosperity of the commodity economy and the expansion of multi-ethnic trade, the number of guilds surged and their functions became more diverse. At this stage, the guilds generally broke through the limitation of "single ethnicity" and formed a pattern of multi ethnic participation and division of labor cooperation [1]. For example, the Huguang Guild Hall rebuilt during the Qianlong period absorbed Han merchants from Hunan and Hubei provinces, while also bringing in Hui tea merchants and Mongolian fur merchants who had close trade relations with the Huguang merchant group to participate in management; The Shanxi Guild Hall, in collaboration with merchants from Shaanxi and Gansu, established long-term trade relations with Mongolian nobles, and set up a dedicated reception desk for Mongolian merchants and guests within the guild hall. According to statistics, in the 20th year of the reign of Emperor Daoguang, there have been over 210 business associations in Beijing, of which more than 70% have records of multi-ethnic interactions.

Decline period (Xianfeng to Xuantong Dynasty, 1851-1912): After the Opium War, foreign goods flooded into China, and traditional business groups were impacted; At the same time, wars such as the Taiping Rebellion and the invasion of China by the Eight Nation Alliance caused serious damage to the Beijing Guild Hall. At this stage, the number of guilds gradually decreased, and some guilds were suspended due to lack of funds. Only a few larger guilds were able to continue with their deep accumulation, but the scale of multi-ethnic interaction has significantly shrunk. According to a survey conducted in the third year of the Xuantong reign, there are only 89 existing merchant associations in Beijing, and most of them have simplified their functions as gathering with fellow townsmen, with the basic function of coordinating cross ethnic business lost.

2.2 Spatial Distribution and Scale of the Guild Hall

The spatial distribution of Beijing guilds in the Qing Dynasty showed obvious regularity. Due to the fact that the inner city was the garrison of the Eight Banners, many Han officials and merchants lived in the outer city, and the guilds were mainly concentrated in the outer city, especially outside the Xuanwu Gate. This area is not only conveniently located, but also close to the Liulichang Cultural Market and various commercial areas, making it easy for merchants to conduct business. The areas outside Qianmen Gate and Chongwenmen Gate are also relatively concentrated areas for guild halls.

The scale of guilds varies greatly, with larger guilds such as Anhui Guild Hall having dozens of houses, as well as facilities such as gardens and theaters; A small guild hall may only have one courtyard and a few houses. According to a survey conducted in Beijing in 1949, there were a total

of 391 guilds in the city, including 29 in Anhui Province, with 2278.5 houses. On average, each Anhui Association has about 78.6 houses, which is a considerable scale.

Table 1. Statistics of major multi-ethnic merchant associations in Beijing during the Qing Dynasty

Name of the association	Creation Time	location	Main functions	Characteristic buildings
Wuhu Guild Hall	During the Yongle era of the Ming Dynasty	Qianmen Changxiang Sanjiao	Trial Hall and Business	The earliest guild hall ruins
Huguang Guild Hall	The 12th year of the Jiaqing reign of the Qing Dynasty	Southwest of Hufang Bridge	Trial Hall and Business	Theater buildings and opera museums
Anhui Guild Hall	The seventh year of the Tongzhi reign of the Qing Dynasty	Housun Park Hutong	Officials and Business	Theater and Garden
Zhengyici Temple	During the reign of Emperor Kangxi of the Qing Dynasty	Outer West Riverbank of Qianmen	Silver industry	Theater
Pingyao Pigment Guild Hall	During the Wanli era of the Ming Dynasty	Xiaojiang Hutong outside Qianmen Gate	Pigment industry	Theater
Linfen Guild Hall	Ming Dynasty	Front door polishing factory	Business	Hall and stage

3. Micro Level Communication Practices of Multi-Ethnic Merchant Associations

3.1 Case Selection

The selection of cases follows three principles: representativeness, differentiation, and research ability

1. **Huguang Guild Hall**

Located on Hufang Bridge outside Chongwenmen Gate, it was first built during the Kangxi period and rebuilt in the 24th year of the Qianlong period (1759). The existing buildings include a theater, a council hall, and a stele corridor, and it is a national level cultural relic protection unit. The association was initially co built by Han Chinese scholars and merchants from Hubei and Guangxi provinces. Later, due to the involvement of Hui and Mongolian merchants in the tea trade, a Han dominated and multi-ethnic collaborative pattern was formed. Its organizational structure is well preserved, and the inscriptions and historical materials are abundant, making it an ideal sample for studying the operation of the multi-ethnic association system.

2. **Shanxi Guild Hall (Front Gate)**

Located on the west bank of the river outside Zhengyang Gate, it was first built in the ninth year of Yongzheng (1731) and currently houses remnants such as the Council Hall, God of Wealth Hall, and guest rooms. It is a Beijing level cultural relic protection unit. The association was initiated and established by Jin merchants, and is a core stronghold for salt, tea, and ticket trading between Jin merchants and Mongolian and Hui merchants. The association preserves physical historical materials such as the "Jin Mongolian Merchant Gang Oath Stele" and the "Donation Inscription Stele", and the oral records of the descendants of the merchants are relatively complete, which can clearly restore the details of the interaction between Jin merchants and border ethnic groups [2].

3. **Huihui Guild Hall (Niujie)**

Located at the south entrance of Niujie, it was first built in the 52nd year of the Kangxi reign (1713). There are currently three churches, meeting rooms, and stone inscriptions, and it is a district level cultural relic protection unit. This association is a core gathering place for Hui merchants in Beijing, and also attracts Han and Uyghur merchants to participate in the trade of fur and medicinal herbs. Its unique dual attributes of "religious culture commercial operation" and its proximity to the Niujie ethnic community make it easy to obtain oral historical materials and ethnic cultural background information.

3.2 Internal Organizational Operations: System Construction and Trust Formation

The orderly operation of guilds relies on a sound organizational structure and institutional design, and the particularity of multi-ethnic guilds lies in the fact that their systems must take into account the cultural customs and interests of different ethnic groups, and build cross ethnic trust through procedural and open rules.

1. Organizational Structure: Hierarchical Governance and Multi Ethnic Participation

The three major guilds have formed a hierarchical governance structure of decision-making, execution, and supervision, and have reflected the principle of multi-ethnic balance in the setting of key positions

Decision making level: With the head of the meeting as the core, supplemented by directors to form a council. The Huguang Guild Hall has one leader (mostly Han Chinese businessmen from Huguang) and six directors (three Han Chinese, two Hui Chinese, and one Mongolian); The Shanxi Guild Hall has one leader (a Shanxi merchant) and eight directors (four Shanxi merchants, two Mongolians, and two Hui); Due to its special religious nature, the Hui Hui Association has one head (also serving as a Hui Muslim imam, responsible for coordinating religion and culture), one leader (a Hui merchant), and five directors (two Hui, two Han, and one Uyghur). According to the "Inscription on the Election of the Association Leader" of the Huguang Association, the first election of the association requires joint recommendation from various groups of businessmen. The council will vote anonymously, and those who receive more than half of the votes will be elected. The directors will be elected by various ethnic groups of businessmen in proportion to ensure that each participating ethnic group has the right to speak.

Executive level: Set up positions such as accountant, reception manager, and miscellaneous staff to be responsible for daily operations. The accountants are mostly Han merchants who are proficient in arithmetic, while the reception managers are divided according to ethnicity - the Huguang Guild Hall has Han merchant reception managers, Mongolian merchant reception managers, and Hui merchant reception managers, who are respectively appointed by merchants of corresponding ethnic groups to avoid communication barriers caused by language and customs differences; The miscellaneous staff of Huihui Guild Hall give priority to hiring Hui residents from Niujie, balancing ethnic assistance and cultural adaptation.

Supervisory layer: 2-3 supervisors are appointed, who are ordinary businessmen who are not the head or directors of the board, responsible for supervising financial income and expenditure and decision-making execution. The supervisors of the Huguang Guild Hall are rotated by merchants from various ethnic groups, with a term of one year. The Shanxi Guild Hall stipulates that the supervisors must be nominated by one Han, one Mongolian, and one Hui merchant each to ensure the neutrality of supervision. According to the "Book of Meetings of the Jin Ji Guild Hall", in the 22nd year of the Daoguang reign, the supervisor discovered that the accountant had falsely reported expenses, immediately convened a meeting to dismiss him from his position, and publicly disclosed the accounts, maintaining the authority of the system.

The core logic of this hierarchical structure is the combination of centralization and decentralization: the head of the board grasps the overall direction, the directors represent the interests of various ethnic groups, the executive layer is responsible for specific implementation, and the supervisory layer ensures institutional fairness. Through the establishment of positions involving multiple ethnic groups, each ethnic group can find a spokesperson for their interests within the organization, laying the institutional foundation for trust formation.

2. Election and Term System: Procedural Fairness and Balance of Interests

The fairness of the electoral system directly affects the establishment of cross ethnic trust. The three major guilds have avoided the risk of monopoly by a single ethnic group by refining election rules and clarifying term limits

Election method: Both adopt the procedure of recommendation voting public announcement. According to the "Guild Hall Rules Stele" of the Shanxi Guild Hall, 2-3 candidates are recommended by various business associations for the first selection. Candidates need to submit their business

resumes and public welfare commitments, and then the council and ordinary business representatives will vote together. The voting results will be announced at the entrance of the Guild Hall for three days, and if there are no objections, they will be elected.

Term system: Implement term system+re-election restrictions. The first term of the Huguang Guild Hall and Shanxi Guild Hall is three years, and they can be re elected once. The term of directors is two years, with no re-election restrictions; The term of the head of the Hui Hui Association is generally five years, following the tenure of the imam. The term of office for the head of the association is the same as that of other associations. According to Li Jianguo's recollection, his grandfather Li Chongde served as a director of the Shanxi Guild Hall during the Daoguang period, with elections held every two years. Before each election, he would notify the various business groups one month in advance, and representatives of the Mongolian business group would come from Zhangjiakou in advance and never be absent. This term limit avoids the solidification of power and provides opportunities for businessmen of different ethnic groups to participate in management.

Special case handling: For vacancies caused by the death or resignation of the chairman or director, a by election system will be implemented. The Huguang Guild Hall stipulates that vacant positions must be filled by a by election within one month, and the by election procedure is the same as the original election; The Shanxi Guild Hall allows the council to temporarily elect proxy personnel, who will be handed over after the by election is completed. In the 30th year of the Daoguang reign, Wang Zuolin, the leader of the Shanxi Guild Hall, passed away. The council immediately elected Mongolian businessman Uliji as the acting leader, and a by election was completed three months later to ensure the continuity of organizational operations.

3. Financial and Rules of Procedure: Openness, Transparency, and Consensus through Negotiation

Finance and decision-making are the core of the operation of the association, and the multi-ethnic association has resolved the trust crisis between ethnic groups through open and consultative rule design

Financial rules: Implement unified collection, classified management, and public disclosure. Income mainly includes membership fees, donations, and rent; Expenditure is divided into regular expenses, business expenses, and public welfare expenses. The three major guilds all require the disclosure of the previous month's accounts at the beginning of each month, and the disclosure of the annual accounts at the end of each year. The accounts must be jointly signed and confirmed by the chairman and supervisors. The existing account book of the Huguang Guild Hall during the Daoguang period shows that the monthly accounts record detailed income and expenditure details, which greatly enhances the trust of merchants from various ethnic groups.

Rules of Procedure: Adhere to the principles of consensus through consultation, minority obeying majority, and fully respect ethnic customs. The deliberation is divided into daily deliberation and major deliberation. The Hui Hui Association stipulates that the meeting time should avoid Fridays, while the Shanxi Association provides translation assistance for Mongolian merchants to ensure that they fully express their opinions. According to Ma Zhiqiang's recollection, his grandfather once said, "When we returned to the guild hall to discuss fur prices, Han merchants wanted to raise prices, while Hui merchants were worried about losing customers. The two sides argued fiercely, and in the end, the head of the hall proposed tiered pricing, which not only ensured profits but also took into account the market. Everyone agreed." This negotiation style discussion became the key to resolving ethnic conflicts of interest.

3.3 Business Interaction Practice: Business Collaboration and Social Mutual Assistance

Guild halls are not only commercial organizations, but also social living spaces for multi-ethnic businessmen. Their interactive practices cover multiple dimensions such as business cooperation, dispute mediation, and social mutual assistance, forming a dual connection of "community of interests emotional community".

1. Business Collaboration: Building Cross Ethnic Trade Networks

Multi ethnic merchants have achieved resource complementarity through guild halls and built a cross ethnic trade network covering the whole country [3]. Their cooperation models are mainly divided into three categories:

Industrial chain division of labor and cooperation: Merchants from different ethnic groups rely on their own advantages to undertake different links in the industrial chain. Taking the tea trade of Huguang Guild Hall as an example, Han merchants are responsible for tea picking and initial processing in Jiangnan, Hui merchants rely on the border trade network to transport tea to Mongolia and the Western Regions, and Mongolian merchants are responsible for terminal sales. The guild hall sets a unified purchase price, transportation fee, and sales price to ensure balanced profits in all links. According to the "Records of Huguang Guild Hall", during the Qianlong period, 100000 kilograms of tea were transported to the border every year through this model, and the profits of various ethnic merchants increased by more than 30% compared to when they operated independently.

Integration of finance and trade: Shanxi Guild Hall deeply binds ticket number business with cross ethnic trade. When Mongolian merchants purchase tea and silk from Shanxi merchants, they can pick up the goods first and pay later through the ticket number of Shanxi Guild Hall; Hui merchants who transport fur to Beijing for sale can exchange silver coins back to their hometown through a ticket number, avoiding the risk of cash transportation. The "Jin Ji Guild Hall Meeting Book" preserved by Li Jianguo records that in the 25th year of the Daoguang reign, the Mongolian prince Senggelinqin exchanged 500000 taels of silver through the Shanxi Guild Hall ticket number for the purchase of military supplies. The guild collected only 0.3% of the transaction fee from it, far lower than that of private banks. This low-cost service based on trust became the core attraction of cross ethnic cooperation.

Market information sharing: The association collects and publishes national market trends through information reporting rooms for various ethnic merchants to share. The Huguang Guild Hall compiles daily information on the harvest of tea from Jiangnan, market prices in Beijing, and changes in demand in the border areas. After copying, it is posted at the entrance of the guild hall; The Shanxi Guild Hall specially sends people to reside in Zhangjiakou and Guihua City to timely transmit border trade information.

2. Dispute Mediation: Institutional Resolution and Trust Maintenance

In cross ethnic trade, disputes are inevitable due to differences in interests and culture. The association prioritizes internal mediation to avoid escalating conflicts and maintain trust among multiple ethnic groups

Dispute types and mediation processes: Disputes are mainly divided into commercial disputes (price disputes, breach of contract, quality issues) and cultural disputes (customs conflicts, religious misunderstandings). The mediation process involves the parties appealing, the supervisor investigating, the council mediating, and reaching an agreement. The agreement must be signed by both parties and stamped with the seal of the association, and has legal effect. The "Record of Adjusting Commercial Inscriptions" of Huguang Guild Hall records a typical case: In the 40th year of the Qianlong reign, Han tea merchant Zhang Wanquan and Hui transportation merchant Ma Zhanyuan had a dispute over compensation for moisture damage to tea leaves. Zhang Wanquan demanded full compensation, but Ma Zhanyuan believed that the rain during transportation was force majeure and was only willing to compensate half. After investigation by the guild supervisor, a meeting was convened for mediation, and an agreement was finally reached that Ma Zhanyuan would compensate 70% and Zhang Wanquan would bear 30%. Both parties expressed their agreement.

Principle of Mediation: Adhere to fairness, impartiality, and respect for customs. For commercial disputes, the guild rules and market practices shall be the basis; For cultural disputes, priority should be given to respecting the customs of various ethnic groups. For example, Huihui Guild Hall once mediated a dispute over "Han merchants eating pork in the guild hall". Hui merchants believed that it was a desecration of religious sites, while Han merchants were unaware of taboos. The guild hall ultimately ruled that the Han merchants publicly apologize and added a "food taboo bulletin board",

which not only maintained the religious emotions of Hui merchants, but also avoided the embarrassment of Han merchants.

Punishment mechanism: Industry penalties will be imposed on those who refuse mediation or breach the contract. According to the regulations of Shanxi Guild Hall, defaulting merchants will be included in the blacklist, and all gangs of merchants are not allowed to trade with them; Returning to the association, the violator will be reported to the Niujie Mosque and their eligibility to participate in religious activities will be revoked. This disciplinary mechanism relies on industry reputation and national identity, with extremely strong binding force. According to the "Jin Ji Guild Hall Book", only three disputes during the Daoguang period entered the disciplinary procedure due to mediation failure, and the violators voluntarily admitted their mistakes and requested the revocation of the punishment in a short period of time.

3. Social Mutual Aid: Emotional Connection Beyond Business

The guild has built an emotional community of multi-ethnic merchants through non utilitarian social mutual assistance, elevating trust from the level of interests to the level of emotions

Life assistance: Provide comprehensive assistance to merchants who face difficulties in surviving in a foreign land. When merchants first arrive in Beijing, the association can provide free accommodation; When sick, the guild hall will ask the doctor to deliver medicine; After passing away, the association assisted in handling the aftermath and escorted the coffin back to the hometown. Li Jianguo recalled: "When my great grandfather first arrived in Beijing, he lived in the guest room of the Shanxi Guild Hall, and had no money to eat. The steward of the Guild Hall delivered Mantou and pickles every day, and began to pay the membership dues after his business began to improve"; Ma Zhiqiang recounted that his great grandmother passed away during the Guangxu reign. "Hui merchants helped with the funeral arrangements, Han merchants sent mourning couplets, and Mongolian merchants gifted a horse for pulling a hearse. The whole family was deeply moved.

The imperial examination system and educational support: The guild hall combines the attributes of a merchant association and a fellow townsman, providing educational support for local candidates and children of merchants. The Huguang Guild Hall established the Chu Cai Academy, which recruited children of Huguang merchants and scholars, and hired Han and Hui scholars to teach; The Shanxi Guild Hall provides financial subsidies and accommodation convenience for Juzi who travels to Beijing to take exams. According to the "Records of Huguang Guild Hall", during the period from Qianlong to Daoguang, the Chu Cai Academy trained a total of 23 jinshi, including 3 children of Hui merchants. This inclusive education further strengthened the emotional connection among multiple ethnic groups.

Festival interaction: Various ethnic merchants celebrate traditional festivals together in the guild hall, promoting cultural identity. During the Spring Festival, the Huguang Guild Hall holds a group gathering where Han merchants paste couplets, Hui merchants fry oil incense, and Mongolian merchants offer hada; During the Eid al Fitr Festival of the Hui ethnic group, the Hui Hui Association invites Han and Uyghur merchants to attend the ceremony and share their Eid al Fitr meals; During the Nadam Festival of the Mongolian ethnic group, the Shanxi Guild Hall organized horse racing and wrestling activities, with various ethnic merchants participating together. This kind of festival celebration breaks down ethnic barriers and creates a diverse and integrated cultural atmosphere.

4. The Path of Historical Value Transformation and Innovative Utilization Mode

4.1 Classification Protection and Systematic Planning

In response to the large number and varying values of Beijing's guilds, a graded protection system can be established, and differentiated protection strategies can be developed based on the historical value, architectural features, and preservation status of the guilds. Member Song Weizu suggested formulating standards for the protection and utilization of guild halls, based on their cultural and economic value, to reflect the historical style of the guild hall gathering area, the historical origins of

talents from various regions in Beijing, the cultural characteristics of different regions in China, and to design from the perspective of Beijing's urban development plan. At the same time, a cultural and historical preservation area for guild halls can be established, from Xuanwu Gate to Hepingmen Gate and from Qianmen Gate to Chongwen Gate. These two areas have the highest concentration of guild halls, and it is meaningful to establish a cultural and historical preservation area for guild halls here. The protection and utilization of guild hall buildings should be the main focus of the protected area, while comprehensively utilizing historical buildings that reflect theater culture, former residence culture, academy culture, etc., to recreate the historical style.

4.2 Construction of Ethnic Unity Education Bases

The multi-ethnic merchant association is an important witness to the exchange and integration of ethnic groups in history, and can serve as an important carrier for ethnic unity education. Through the display of guild hall culture, excavation of ethnic communication stories, and application of multimedia technology, the historical experience of various ethnic groups living, managing, and developing together in history is showcased, providing vivid teaching materials for contemporary ethnic unity and progress education. For example, the distribution pattern and interactive network of multi-ethnic merchant associations in Beijing during the Qing Dynasty can be displayed through techniques such as sand table models and digital maps; Using AR technology to recreate scenes such as theatrical performances and business discussions in the guild hall back then; By collecting stories of characters related to the guild hall, showcase the history of communication and cooperation among multi-ethnic merchants. These contents can make the guild hall an important base for the education of Chinese national community consciousness.

4.3 Integration of Culture and Tourism and Community Participation

Guild hall protection should be combined with cultural tourism and community construction to achieve sustainable development. On the one hand, cultural tourism routes for guild halls can be developed to connect scattered guild hall sites into an organic whole, combining Beijing Hutong culture, commercial culture, opera culture, etc., to form characteristic cultural tourism products. The theater buildings of Zhengyi Temple, Huguang Guild Hall, Anhui Guild Hall, etc. can jointly create a Beijing Guild Hall opera culture experience tour. On the other hand, community participation in the protection and utilization of guilds should be encouraged. It is suggested that guilds can be used as cultural activity venues in the community. Through activities such as' I go to the guild to repair cultural relics, I go to the guild to learn history ', citizens and young people can participate in the protection and utilization of guilds. This participatory protection not only reduces the burden of government management, but also enhances the cultural identity and sense of belonging of community residents.

4.4 Cross Regional Cooperation and Digital Empowerment

The protection of guilds can explore the model of "who takes away the children of whose family", that is, attracting enterprises from the hometown of the guilds, with economic strength, and committed to the development of cultural industries to participate in joint development. The protection and utilization of the Shidai Guild Hall have received high attention from the Chizhou Municipal Party Committee and Government, as well as the Shitai County Party Committee and Government. The deputy mayor specially rushed to Beijing for on-site investigation and coordinated with the Beijing Chizhou Enterprise Chamber of Commerce. This cross regional cooperation model can integrate more resources and promote the effective protection and utilization of the association.

In addition, digital technology can also empower the protection of guilds. Through digital collection, virtual reconstruction, online exhibitions, and other technologies, even if the building itself cannot be fully preserved, its cultural information and spatial experience can be recorded and disseminated. For guild halls with poor preservation conditions and difficult physical repair, digital preservation and display is an economically effective alternative solution [4].

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

The Beijing Multi ethnic Merchant Association during the Qing Dynasty was an important spatial carrier for ethnic communication, exchange, and integration in history. Through specific spatial layout, organizational systems, and cultural activities, it constructed a commercial network and social trust mechanism that crossed regional and ethnic boundaries, promoting the formation of a diverse governance pattern in the city. The guild hall is not only a gathering place for fellow townsmen and businessmen, but also a platform for interaction and integration of different ethnic cultures, reflecting the inclusiveness of Chinese civilization.

The protection of existing guild hall sites faces many challenges and requires various strategies such as graded protection, functional updates, community participation, and cross regional cooperation to achieve the contemporary transformation of the historical value of guild halls. By combining the protection of guilds with ethnic unity education and cultural tourism development, these historical heritages can be revitalized, providing historical references for contemporary urban development and ethnic relations.

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