The Problem of the Preservation of Cultural Heritage

A huge fire broke out in the world-famous building Cathédrale Notre Dame de Paris at 6:50 pm on April 15, 2019, with some treasures burned down. It hurts the feelings of people all around the world, for the great classical cultural heritage was damaged accidentally. Though the Paris government decided to repair those damaged treasure artificially, the original marvelous heritage has disappeared forever. This accident set us the alarm of the problems of the preservation of culture heritage. For China, the condition is even worse. Of the entire damaged cultural heritage in China, almost 90 percent was damaged manly. Only a few of their destruction was caused by natural disasters (*Chinese Heritage*, 2005, p.140). **However, there still exist some problems when it comes to the preservation of Chinese cultural heritage, including the contradiction from the economic development, as well as the weak consciousness of preservation of the citizens.**

First, in order to develop the economy of the city, the government sometimes has to tear down some ancient buildings and replace them with modern ones. As a result, some important cultural treasures will disappear. For example, in 2007 in Guangzhou Province, local government has sold the area of ancient buildings in the Republican period, which has been “legally” dismantled in 2013 (Tang, 2013). In the eye of the local government, the revenue of dealing lands is much more attractive to them than the preservation of cultural heritage. The contradiction between preserving cultural heritage and developing economy has been troubling the authorities for many years. But we should keep in mind that what makes a nation impressive in the world is not how much money it could make, but how brilliant its culture could be. Tearing down ancient buildings means deleting the ancient memories of our own culture, and when our own culture has fallen down, our nation will lose the cohesive power and become weaker and weaker.

Moreover, our citizens’ awareness of preserving and appreciating cultural heritage is somewhat weak due to the education pattern of our country. For high school students, they will only be asked to remember the certain historical events to get through exams, but never to understand the true values of them. Also, art and music classes are cut down due to the low percentage of students’ final grades, which makes students’ abilities to appreciating arts drop sharply. It is a pity that some of our intangible cultural heritage is facing the situation of dying out because no one is able to inherit those folk crafts. For example, one type of Chinese folk opera called “YueQiang” in Henan Province is hard to survive, with the youngest actor already over 50 years old (2018).

To conclude, though China is a country with great culture heritage, we should still be aware of the possibility of the disappearance of our culture treasure. Only when we value our own culture heritage can we become a strong and cohesive nation.