

Thoughts on the Construction of Experimental Zone for Cultural Ecology Protection

—Taking the Experimental Area for Cultural Ecology Protection of Tujia and Miao in Wuling Mountains (Southwest Hubei) as an Example

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Abstract—The construction of cultural ecology reserves is a tentative exploration to inherit and develop excellent traditional culture, aiming to promote the overall living normality protection of the intangible cultural heritage. Based on the consideration of the protection status of the Tujia and Miao cultural ecology protection areas in Wuling Mountain (Southwest Hubei), this paper proposes the following strategies to promote construction: implementing the coordinated construction of all levels of government and relevant departments, avoiding the market-oriented operation of culture, improving and innovating the evaluation mechanism, strengthening the protection of talents, and paying attention to the ethics in the process of protection, to promote the construction of experimental areas to a new level. Meanwhile, the protection of intangible cultural heritage must adhere to its integrity, originality and vitality in order to achieve more scientific and effective protection. The construction of the cultural ecology protection zone for Tujia and Miao Nationality in Wuling Mountains (Southwest Hubei) is undoubtedly conducive to the harmonious coexistence of multi-culture in southwestern part of Hubei, and is good for the exchange and integration of ethnic groups and the construction of the Chinese Community.

Keywords—Wuling Mountains, Southwest Hubei, Experimental Zone for Cultural Ecology Protection, overall living normality protection, construction strategy

I. INTRODUCTION

Different from the previous scattered individual cultural heritage protection, the construction of cultural ecology reserves aims to accelerate the overall living normality protection focusing on integration. How to protect this new protection model to achieve the expected results? The academic circle has not explored a good solution so far. Can productive protection be the main path for the construction of the experimental areas for cultural ecology protection? At present, the academia has not paid enough attention to this kind of problem or even this field, which deserves to be explored and discussed. The experimental area for cultural ecology protection of Tujia and Miao in Wuling Mountains (Southwest Hubei) has the honor to be approved as a national cultural and ecological protection experimental area. However, the research results on the experimental area for cultural ecology protection

of Tujia and Miao minorities in Wuling Mountains (Southwest Hubei) are rare. This paper attempts to analyze the current situation of the experimental zone for cultural ecology protection of Tujia and Miao in Wuling Mountains (Southwest Hubei), hoping to benefit the exploratory construction of cultural ecology reserves.

II. THE PROPOSAL AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EXPERIMENTAL ZONE FOR CULTURAL ECOLOGY PROTECTION

In contrast to the natural ecology, cultural ecology is inspired by the concept of animal protection. As the habitats on which animals depend for their survival are decreasing, the species of animals are declining sharply. Therefore, we must pay attention to protecting the ecological homeland on which animals rely. Similarly, the construction of the experimental zone for cultural ecology protection learned from the experience of animal protection, that is, to protect the relevant cultural and ecological environment.

Some scholars regard Stewart's concept of cultural ecology as the theoretical origin of the construction of experimental zone for cultural ecology protection. According to Stewart's concept of cultural ecology, different natural environment, social and historical development and changes shaped different cultural characteristics of each region, and then he put forward the development law of multi-line evolution of culture. It can be seen that Stewart's concept of cultural ecology is different from the theory of cultural ecology in the construction of experimental areas. Some scholars emphasize the relationship between culture and living space when interpreting cultural ecology. The external natural and social environment has an important influence on the development and change of culture. Some other scholars regard cultural ecology as a system, that is, the integrity of culture. Under the guidance of this concept, to explore the planning and construction of experimental zone for cultural ecology protection.

The introduction of the National Experimental Zone for Cultural Ecology Protection has undoubtedly aroused high attention of people from all walks of life to the protection of cultural heritage. It has been more than a decade since this measure was implemented with time quietly flies away.

“ National cultural ecology preserve zone refers to the specific areas established with the approval of the Ministry of Culture, which take the protection of intangible cultural heritage as the core, and carry out overall protection of cultural forms with rich historical and cultural accumulation, good survival status, important values and distinctive characteristics. ¹” The national construction of cultural ecology reserves aims to implement overall protection of the areas where the intangible cultural heritage projects are concentrated, that is, to protect the intangible cultural heritage and its related cultural space. It is important to protect cultural heritage, because it is a social memory that bears witness to the development of human civilization and contributes a lot to maintaining the diversity of human culture and enhancing China's cultural soft power. The construction of preserve areas can help cities become more inclusive and creative and inject vitality into urban development. It is of great significance to expand excellent traditional culture, to build socialist culture with Chinese characteristics, to enhance national self-confidence and consolidate national unity, to promote the harmonious development of Chinese society, and to show the power of the country and to improve the image of the country.

The so-called experimental areas indicate that the construction of cultural ecology reserves in China is at the experimental stage, and it has not yet explored a relatively good protection plan or model, which still needs further study.

In August 2014, the experimental area of cultural ecology protection of Tujia and Miao nationalities in Wuling Mountains (southwest Hubei) was approved by the Ministry of Culture as a national experimental area for cultural ecology protection. Since then, the southwestern part of Hubei has become the first region that was listed in the National Experimental Zone for cultural ecology protection in Hubei province, and the 16th National Experimental Zone has been established. The protection of cultural heritage in Hubei Province has shifted from he scattered protection of individual heritage in the traditional sense to the regional integrated protection mode.

The experimental areas of cultural ecology protection of Tujia and Miao nationalities in Wuling Mountains (Xiangxi) and in Wuling Mountains (southeast Chongqing) were respectively approved by the Ministry of Culture in May 2010 and August 2014, which means that the intangible cultural heritage protection of the whole Wuling mountain area has orderly advanced a new high height.

III. CURRENT SITUATION OF EXPERIMENTAL AREA FOR CULTURAL ECOLOGY PROTECTION OF TUJIA AND MIAO NATIONALITIES IN WULING MOUNTAINS (SOUTHWEST HUBEI)

A. *General Situation of the Experimental Area for Cultural Ecology Protection of Tujia and Miao in Wuling Mountains (Southwest Hubei)*

The experimental area for cultural ecology protection of Tujia and Miao nationalities in Wuling Mountains (southwest Hubei) covers the whole territory of Enshi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture, including Enshi City, Lichuan City, Jianshi County, Xuan'en County, Xianfeng County, Hefeng County, Badong County, Laifeng County, as well as

Changyang Tujia Autonomous County and Wufeng Tujia Autonomous County in Yichang City, a total of 10 administrative areas. According to the representativeness of regional cultural characteristics and the concentration of intangible cultural heritage, it can be divided into core areas and non-core areas. Among them, Enshi City, Lichuan City and Changyang County of Yichang City in Enshi Prefecture are the core areas of cultural ecology protection. Non-core areas include the remaining seven counties such as Jianshi County. We can highlight the construction of the characteristic cultural inheritance system of Tujia and Miao with Enshi City, Lichuan City and Changyang county as the core.

“In August 1983, Enshi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture was established. In the sixth census in November 2010, there were 3975,661 registered residents in Enshi Prefecture, and ethnic minority population accounted for 54% of the total population, of which Tujia was about 46%, and Miao was about 6.5%. In July 1984, Changyang Tujia Autonomous County and Wufeng Tujia Autonomous County were established. In 2009, the registered population of Changyang was 420,000, among which the Tujia population accounted for 51%. During the same period, the registered population of Wufeng was about 208,000, of which 84.77% were ethnic minorities dominated by Tujia nationality. ” [2]

The experimental area in southwest Hubei is one of the areas where Tujia, Miao and other ethnic groups have long been intertwined and lived next to each other for a long time, which is one of the regions where the complex characteristics of national culture are more evident. The living environment determines the close economic and cultural exchanges and blending among the ethnic groups in this region. In the long-term interaction between the Tujia and Miao nationalities, the culture of Wuling mountains with the characteristics of southwest Hubei has been formed.

The experimental area for cultural ecology protection of Tujia and Miao nationalities in Wuling Mountains (southwest Hubei) has rich cultural connotations and primitive and simple ethnic customs. The intangible cultural heritage basically covers all major fields and has high historical and cultural values. By the beginning of 2018, the experimental area had 15 national intangible cultural heritage projects, such as Flesh-patting Dance, South Play, Enshi dulcimer, River Songs, Tujia Slipper, Tujia Waving Dance, Lantern Drama, Nuo Opera, Three Rod Drum, Skills for the Construction of Stilted Buildings, and 63 provincial intangible cultural heritage projects, such as Enshi Five-sentence Ballad, Mason's Song, Xuan En Characterized Folk Song and the Sentence Folk Song. There are 37 national traditional villages in the experimental area with good status, which is the area with the largest number of ancient villages in the province. The national key cultural relics protection units are as follows: Tangya Chieftain Relics in Xianfeng County, Shizhou Town Sites in Enshi, Wuliping Revolutionary Bases, Ancient Architecture Group of Big Well in Lichuan City, Xianfosi Grottoes in Laifeng County, Yumu Village, Rongmei Chieftain Relics in Hefeng County, Homo erectus Sites in Jianshi County, Pengjiashai Ancient Buildings in Xuan'en County. The above-mentioned Tangya Chieftain Relics has been successfully declared as a World Cultural Heritage in 2015. The Lichuan folk song "Dragon Boat

¹Reference to “*Guidelines on Strengthening the Construction of National Cultural Ecology Reserves*”

²Data from 360 encyclopedias

Melody" won the reputation of the excellent folk song in the world. Intangible cultures such as singing, dancing, drama and opera performances have been integrated into people's daily life and become cultural and recreational activities to build their spiritual home.

The experimental area is situated in a mountainous area with high mountains. Its economic foundation is weak and lagging behind. Its development still has a long way to go, but its cultural resources are abundant. The construction of the experimental area of cultural and ecological protection of Tujia and Miao nationalities in Wuling Mountains (southwest Hubei) is conducive to the promotion and development of excellent traditional culture, and the regional cultural resource advantage can be transformed into economic endogenous motive force, thus promoting the overall economic and social progress.

B. Implementation of the Construction of Experimental Zone for Cultural Ecology Protection of Tujia and Miao in Wuling Mountains (Southwest Hubei)

Based on the understanding of the great significance of the construction of the experimental area, the Hubei provincial government attaches great importance to the construction of the experimental area of cultural and ecology protection of the Tujia and Miao nationalities in the Wuling Mountains (southwest Hubei), and tries to build a scientific and effective cultural ecology protection area, thereby continuously promoting the economic and social development in southwestern part of Hubei.

Determine the scope and focus of protection. The two cities and eight counties under the jurisdiction of the experimental area in southwest Hubei are protected areas. The objects of protection are the natural ecology, cultural relics and historic sites related to Tujia and Miao cultures in the region, especially all kinds of intangible cultural heritage. The protection focuses on the four-level intangible cultural heritage project system and its representative inheritors. At present, there are 15 national intangible cultural heritage projects and 63 provincial intangible cultural heritage projects in the experimental area. According to the representativeness of regional cultural characteristics and the concentration degree of intangible cultural heritage, it is divided into core areas and non-core areas. In the core area, the residents' consciousness of subjectivity will be fully stimulated, and they will consciously participate in the protection of cultural heritage. In particular, the intangible cultural heritage will be fully integrated into the production and life of people and enrich their spiritual and cultural life. In this way, the cultural tourism not only brings about the increase of people's income and the improvement of people's life, but also realizes the authenticity and living inheritance of intangible cultural heritage. In the non-core area, while improving the residential living environment, it should keep the harmony of the overall style in the cultural space. On the basis of the protection of cultural ecology, we should properly intervene in the market mechanism, develop tourism, especially make use of intangible cultural heritage resources to create characteristic cultural products and even cultural industries, and meanwhile promote the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage.

Establish regulations and security mechanism. All sectors of society have deeply realized the importance of legislation to protect traditional culture. On September 29, 2012, Hubei province issued the "*Regulations on the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Hubei Province*" and also formulated the "*Ten One*" Action Plan for the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Hubei Province, which attaches particular importance to the construction of intangible cultural heritage halls. This is enough to show that the province has the determination and perseverance to do a good job in intangible cultural heritage protection. The provincial government revised and improved the "*Joint Meeting System for the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Hubei Province*", clarified the responsibilities of each department, and stipulated the working rules and requirements, aiming at coordinating efforts of multiple departments to protect intangible cultural heritage and providing solid mechanism guarantee for the protection of intangible cultural heritage, aiming at multi-sectoral coordination and commitment to non-legacy protection work. Non-legacy protection provides a solid mechanism guarantee. These regulatory mechanisms play an instrumental role in the process of heritage protection, which undoubtedly provides strong support for the protection of experimental areas.

Implement a series of specific measures. First, as tools of protection, the four-level directory system of intangible cultural heritage and the corresponding inheritor system have been established, and rescue protection work has been carried out for representative inheritors of intangible cultural heritage at or above the provincial level. Second, it has established inheritance training bases, such as Enshi Dulcimer, Nuo Opera inheritance training bases, and Lichuan City Lantern Songs Training Institute in Lichuan City. The protection of intangible cultural heritage lays stress on the living heritage, and the protection of the representative inheritors relying on intangible cultural heritage projects and inheritance bases is the fundamental. Third, the development momentum of productive protection is encouraging. For example, the "inheritor + inheritance base + enterprise" model has been exploratorily implemented. Fourth, the mode of educational inheritance, such as the introduction of opera into campus activities. Fifth, traditional culture is embedded in our daily lives, stimulates people's cultural consciousness and cultural self-confidence, and maintain the continuity of intangible cultural heritage and the vitality of our communities. In 2016 and 2017, there were two public performances of "targeted poverty alleviation and culture benefit to the people", from which people experienced the infinite charm and appeal of the cultural feast. It is conducive to realizing people's cultural subjectivity status, enhancing the sense of national cultural identity, and realizing the originality and integrity of cultural heritage protection, which is directly related to the effect of the construction of protected areas. Sixth, cultural tourism can play a positive role in the construction of experimental areas, and appropriately transform the advantages of cultural heritage resources into economic values. Seventh, strengthen measures to protect key cultural relics and historical sites. For example, the construction of Tangya Chieftain Sites Museum has been started, and unremitting efforts have been made for the evaluation of scenic spots.

At present, the construction of the experimental area for cultural ecology protection of Tujia and Miao minorities in Wuling Mountains (Southwest Hubei) is still in its initial stage. It has generally formed the mode of key areas protection, inheritors protection, projects protection, bases protection and productive protection. At the same time, the cultural ecology protection of Tujia and Miao in Southwest Hubei is guaranteed by legislative protection and mechanism protection.

IV. PROMOTION STRATEGIES OF THE EXPERIMENTAL AREA OF CULTURAL ECOLOGY PROTECTION IN WULING MOUNTAINS (SOUTHWEST HUBEI)

Based on the protection status of the experimental area, the following more scientific and effective strategies can be adopted to promote the construction of the experimental area for cultural ecology protection of Tujia and Miao in Wuling mountains (Southwest Hubei).

A. *Implementing the Coordinated Construction of Governments at All Levels and Relevant Departments*

The experimental area covers the whole territory of Enshi Prefecture and Changyang County and Wufeng County of Yichang City, which obviously increases the difficulty in the protection and construction of the experimental area. Establishing and improving the communication and coordination mechanism between the municipal and county governments and relevant departments is directly related to the effectiveness of the construction of the experimental area. After intensive investigation and scientific and comprehensive evaluation, the general plan for the construction of the experimental zone of cultural ecology protection in Wuling Mountains (Southwest Hubei) has been formulated. Based on the overall plan, each city and county in the experimental area worked out specific plans and implementation plans with cultural characteristics in the region. On the premise of fully exploiting the cultural heritage resources' deposits, values and local characteristics, we should build cultural ecology protection projects. In order to ensure the overall protection of protected areas, the development and utilization of cultural heritage resources should be coordinated with the natural ecology of the region. It is worth noting that the cities and counties in the experimental area are not competitive, but cooperative. They should strive to highlight their own characteristics and avoid vicious competition for homogeneous resources. Good communication and coordination among cities and counties are the original intention of the construction of experimental zone for cultural ecology protection. Under the coordinated management of the provincial government, a construction team for the experimental zone of cultural ecology protection in Wuling Mountains (Southwest Hubei) can be set up. The leaders of departments in charge of culture, such as the Department of Culture, are the group leaders or deputy group leaders, and the leaders and experts of relevant departments in Enshi Prefecture, Yichang City and other counties and cities, such as intangible heritage protection center, cultural bureau and other departments are the members of the group. The construction team organizes meetings on schedule to supervise the progress of construction and feedback on relevant situations, while concentrating the people's wisdom and strength to solve

the major and difficult problems encountered in the construction process.

B. *Avoiding Market-oriented Operation of All Cultures*

The development of tourism, which is globalized, market-oriented and inappropriate in mode, undoubtedly poses a certain challenge to the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage. If the traditional handicraft is reformed for the sake of economic benefit, it will not be the real inheritance of cultural heritage. Another example is that the rituals in many sacred occasions have become stage shows without any sense of awe. The construction of the experimental zone for cultural ecology protection provides proper excuses and strategies for the development of cultural tourism. During the construction of experimental areas, the main measures for the construction of each district and county are to develop and build cultural products and even cultural industries with national and regional characteristics by utilizing rich and colorful intangible cultural heritage resources and to create folk ecological tourism. Productive protection is an effective path for the construction of cultural ecology reserves. Indeed, the construction of intangible cultural heritage exhibition halls and training halls, especially in tourist attractions, can bring about the expansion of economic and social benefits. At the same time, it is possible to enter a situation where there is no difference between cultural ecology protection and tourism planning or industrial planning. The most ideal situation is certainly to realize the economic value of intangible cultural heritage on the premise of adhering to the original inheritance of intangible cultural heritage. However, it is sometimes difficult to handle the relationship between cultural protection and economic development properly. We should learn from international standards of ecotourism, strictly implement the norms of eco-experimental areas, and carry out the development model of eco-tourism. Only in this way can we solve the practical problems existing in mass tourism. Intangible cultural heritage projects, such as traditional handicrafts or performing arts, need to focus on productive protection, which can not only stimulate their own economic benefits, but also help enhance the vitality of the inheritance and development of intangible cultural heritage. Intangible cultural heritages, such as traditional folk literature, are more suitable for group inheritance and educational inheritance, because they have wide audience, fast propagation speed and better inheritance effect. Productive conservation is not necessarily well suited for all categories of intangible cultural heritage projects. Consequently, in the construction of the experimental area, the intangible cultural heritage projects should be classified and protected according to their own characteristics, and more appropriate protection methods should be preferred, supplemented by other means, to make the inheritance more scientific and effective.

C. *Improving and Innovating the Evaluation Mechanism*

Assessment is a key link in the construction of the experimental area, which can feedback the problems existing in the construction process and make timely adjustment and improvement. Cross-communication assessment is one of the effective methods worth promoting. It can set up national seminars and hold regular thematic meetings throughout the

country to exchange and share successful experience in the construction of experimental areas, and to study and solve specific problems in the construction. On such a communication platform, experienced government staff and relevant experts and scholars who have been involved in the early construction of the experimental area can be invited to the seminar for full discussion and communication on specific topics. Meanwhile, experts, scholars and working teams can also be organized to go to the experimental area with relatively mature construction experience for field inspection and observation. Such activities will undoubtedly provide some intellectual support for the construction of cultural ecology conversation in southwestern part of Hubei, and will benefit a lot in promoting the construction of experimental area.

D. Strengthening Talent Protection

In promoting the construction of the experimental area in Southwest Hubei, it is particularly important to give full play to the role of the think tank of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Research Center in Hubei (Southwest Hubei). We can also strengthen cooperation with universities such as South-Central University for Nationalities and Hubei Minzu University in the construction of experimental areas, including the training of professional and technical personnel in the protection of cultural heritage. Taking the advantage of intangible cultural heritage entering the campus, inheritors can enter the school to conduct extensive publicity and inheritance, cultivate the audience's interests and hobbies, and even train the inheritors with high intelligence and understanding. It should improve the talent introduction and incentive mechanism, assess and evaluate the working ability of new recruits on schedule. The results should be timely linked with personal salary and benefits, and constantly stimulate their creative thinking to improve their working efficiency.

E. Paying Attention to Ethics in the Process of Protection

The right of development is a primary and fundamental right of citizens. With the rapid development of productive forces, people's surplus labor time will be more abundant, and the integration of traditional culture into life naturally becomes people's voluntary and conscious cultural needs. At present, China as a developing country, its cultural inheritance is subordinate to development and is the basic requirement of human rights. If the protection of traditional culture in the original ecological conditions affects the development, the corresponding compensation mechanism must be involved, that

is, to ensure that the people in the protected area have a considerable income level and living standard.

V. CONCLUSION

The construction of the experimental area for cultural ecology protection of Tujia and Miao nationalities in Wuling Mountains (Southwest of Hubei) is a successful project that will benefit people for thousands of years. It is an important driving force for the economic and social development of southwestern part of Hubei, and it also provides inexhaustible resources for the development of human civilization. On the basis of the present situation of protection in the experimental area, we can adopt some strategies, such as implementing the coordinated construction of governments at all levels and relevant departments, avoiding the market-oriented operation of all cultures, improving and innovating the evaluation mechanism, strengthening talents protection, and paying attention to ethics in the protection process to promote the construction of the experimental area in Southwest Hubei to a new level. All ethnic groups have formed a complex culture in the long-term common life and communication, which laid the cultural foundation for the Chinese nation community, helped to build a common spiritual home, and then helped China to enter a new journey of modernization.

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