



Tourism Development Under the Traditional Ecological Culture of Yunnan's Ethnic Minorities

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Abstract. The Dai, Yi and Wa peoples in Yunnan Province, China, have a strong ecological awareness and tradition of biodiversity conservation. The “Longshan”, temple forests and religious plants in Dai culture, the harmonious aesthetic idea of Yi people to coexist with forests, and the traditional medicine and production lifestyle of Wa people play an important role in biodiversity conservation and ecotourism. Based on Longshan culture and Dai village clusters, religious ecotourism can be developed; based on Yi totem worship and festivals, folk ecotourism can be developed; based on Wa traditional medicine and lifestyle, agricultural ecotourism can be developed. Passing on the traditional ecological culture of ethnic minorities and developing ecotourism are conducive to speeding up the recovery of China's tourism market and enhancing people's health and well-being.

Keywords: Ecological culture · Ecotourism · Yunnan · Ethnic minorities

1 Introduction

“Biodiversity” is the synthesis of ecological complexes formed by organisms and their environments and the various ecological processes associated with them [1]. Biodiversity is a basic resource for human survival and an important material basis for the formation and development of human culture [2]. Yunnan is the province with the largest variety of ethnic groups in China, and many of them have a strong ecological awareness and tradition of biodiversity conservation. This paper attempts to analyze the traditional ecological cultures of three ethnic minorities in Yunnan, namely, the Dai, Yi and Wa, and accordingly proposes ecotourism development suggestions to effectively utilize ecological resources, better respond to the people's pursuit of health, and promote the inheritance and development of ecological culture.

2 Ecological Awareness and Biodiversity Conservation Traditions of Yunnan's Ethnic Minorities

2.1 Dai People

The Dai people mainly live in Xishuangbanna in the southwestern part of Yunnan Province, which is the area with the richest concentration of tropical biological species in China and is known as the "Kingdom of Plants", "Kingdom of Animals" and "Biological Gene Bank".

2.1.1 The "Longshan" in Dai Culture

In Dai culture, "Longshan" means "the place where the gods live" and is used as a place of worship. All living creatures in the area are the "companions of the gods", so logging and hunting are not allowed in the Longshan. The Longshan is widely distributed in the Dai villages, where an extremely rich biodiversity of resources is preserved. The attribute of "Longshan" as a place of worship creates a good environment for ecotourism and provides the basic conditions for the subsequent development of ecotourism products.

2.1.2 Temple Forest and Religious Plants

The Dai people are Buddhist people, and every Dai village has a temple, which is locally known as a "Maeng Temple". According to the local traditional custom, the Dai people will plant some religious related plants around the temples, such as the common "five trees and six flowers" - Bodhi tree, Banyan tree, Bay leaf palm, Betel nut, Sugar palm, as well as Lotus, Manjush orchid, Yellow ginger flower, Egg flower, Burmese osmanthus and Ground golden lotus. Some of these plants are hundreds of years old and have become sacred trees in the village and are strictly protected by the villagers.

Within the planted forests around Dai settlements, there are often interspersed with several large and ancient trees, such as the Alpine Banyan and the Weeping Leaf Banyan. These plants are generally taller than those planted by hand and form a unique landscape when viewed from a distance. These ancient plants are closely related to the traditional beliefs of the local people, who generally believe that these trees will bring good luck, and once cut down will bring disaster.

2.2 Yi People

Throughout history, the Yi people have lived in harmony with flora and fauna, which has led to dense forests and rich flora and fauna in the areas where the Yi people live. The Yi people's simple aesthetic idea of living in harmony with the forest is of great value to the conservation of the natural environment and biodiversity.

2.2.1 Totem Worship

In the Yi poem "A Xi's Xian Ji" ("A Xi" is a tribe of Yi people, and "Xian Ji" means songs), it is written that the god Apo planted a tree, and the tree grew desperately,

producing the sun and the moon; mountains and rivers all originate from the growth of “trees”, and minerals are no exception [3]. Another song, “Meige”, says that everything in heaven and earth comes from the Thoreau Tree.

The creation epics and songs of the Yi people reflect their worship of “trees”. The “tree” is the foundation of the entire world, and the Thoreau Tree is the ancestor of all things and the mother of human existence [4]. Yi people believe that all kinds of crops on earth are changed from the Thoreau Tree, all in the God created the Thoreau Tree. There are also nests of various animals on the Thoreau Tree, and the birds and animals that fly and crawl out of the tree come to earth and flourish. The growth of the tree is closely related to the survival of animals, and the flourishing of the forest brings about the reproduction of animals [5].

2.2.2 Yi Festivals

On the eighth day of the second lunar month, the Yi people traditionally celebrate the “Flower Arrangement Festival”. On this day, people would go to the forest to worship the sacred trees and thank them for the prosperity of all things. They would build flower sheds in the main passage of the village, pick flowers from the forest and put them in their hair, under the eaves, on the farm cattle and on farm tools, and drive cattle into the mountains to sing and dance around the cherry trees and pray for good weather in the coming new year [3].

For Yi weddings, a “green hut” is built with pine trees or green incense trees, with branches for the sky and pine wool for the floor. The bride and groom hold their wedding in the “green hut” and receive the blessings of their friends and relatives [6].

2.3 Wa People

The Wa are an ethnic minority living in Yunnan since ancient times, usually inhabiting the high mountains and dangerous terrain. Due to the inaccessibility, Wa culture is minimally influenced by the outside world, thus forming a traditional knowledge of collecting, managing and utilizing biodiversity resources with Wa characteristics [7].

2.3.1 Wa Traditional Medicine

The Wa gathering places are mostly subtropical and tropical low latitude climate types, and these areas used to be high incidence areas for malaria, smallpox, cholera, tuberculosis and other diseases. Due to their relatively isolated geographical location, the Wa people could only use local medicinal resources to prevent and treat diseases. As a result, local residents discovered the medicinal value of many plants and their unique therapeutic uses, which enabled the preservation of a rich variety of wild plant resources and provided the prerequisites for the development of the increasingly popular recreation and health tourism in recent years.

2.3.2 Wa Production and Lifestyle

Traditional Wa residential buildings are often inextricably linked to the local natural environment, mainly bamboo and adobe structures, which are mostly made from local

materials to make the best use of them. Traditional Wa dwellings are built by craftsmen and residents who are well versed in local climatic conditions and have rich climatic adaptability [8]. The tools used by the Wa people in their daily lives are all locally available materials. For example, the wooden harrows used for plowing are made from trees in the Wa Mountains, and the bamboo baskets, and bamboo rain hats used in general are made from locally sourced materials and woven with local craftsmanship. The simple and practical way of production and life shows the harmonious coexistence of the Wa people with nature.

3 Tourism Development in Ethnic Areas Under Traditional Ecological Culture

3.1 Religious Ecotourism Based on Longshan Culture and Dai Village Clusters

With outstanding cultural resources and distinct religious colors, Longshan has strong exploitability and sustainability of tourism resources. Based on traditional culture and ecological inheritance, tourism routes that integrate ecology and culture can be constructed to integrate the rich national characteristics of Longshan culture into the mountain forests, so that tourists can feel religious culture and enjoy the natural scent of birds and flowers.

With its biodiversity and rainforest richness, the Longshan area can develop seasonal rainforest exploration tourism to form a travel itinerary focusing on adventure and biological study, which in turn will lead to the development and revitalization of the Dai village tourism industry near Longshan. Through ecological research and village tourism, tourists can learn more about the tropical rainforest and develop good ecological and environmental habits. We can learn from the “One Mobile Phone Touring Yunnan” APP operation model and show the unique plants and seasonal species of Longshan through the database and VI design, so that visitors can experience the beauty of nature and enjoy the fun of religious ecotourism during the trip.

3.2 Folklore Ecotourism Based on Yi Totem Worship and Festivals

The core competitiveness of folklore tourism lies in having unique cultural connotations [9]. The Yi totem culture is plant-based. The local people worship the Thoreau Tree as a sacred tree from the heart and protect other tree species accordingly. Yi festivals value the reproduction of all things in heaven and earth and the harmony between man and nature. Yi flower arrangement activities are a call to natural beauty and a pursuit of ecological rounding. Combining tourism with flower arranging allows visitors to enjoy springtime while experiencing the lively folk culture of the Yi people. Tourists learn about the history of ecological worship of ethnic minorities and will have a new understanding of the harmony between man and nature, which is conducive to building an ecological civilization together.

3.3 Agro-ecological Tourism Based on Wa Traditional Medicine and Lifestyle

Wa dwellings are built on mountains and near water, and this kind of normal life full of regional characteristics is reflected to modern tourism with unique colors. The Wa's bamboo weaving skills and plowing art reflect the concept of co-prosperity between man and nature. While staying in Wa lodges, tourists can experience farming, enjoy natural fruits and vegetables, and feel the hard work and joy of harvest. Through agro-ecological tourism, children growing up in cities can understand life more deeply and apply their book knowledge [10]. Wa traditional medicine brings new hope and experience to travelers who are at the threat of COVID-19. Herb picking and making, and herbal health care can attract great interest from travelers. The core concept of Wa eco-tourism development is to let recreation combine with production and labor merge with tourism. The core idea of Wa agricultural tour is to promote production with farmland and tourism with farmland. The fundamental interest of Wa agro-ecological tourism is to let tourists walk into the reality of production life, cultivate in the green water and green mountains, explore the harmonious relationship between human and nature, and feel the poetry of human beings' reasonable and moderate transformation of nature.

4 Conclusions

In today's COVID-19 ravaged world, people are pursuing a healthier lifestyle and eco-tourism has become a hot spot in the market. We can combine ecological education and environmental protection with various ecological tourism resources based on the culture of Dai "Longshan", the idea of Yi coexistence with the forest, and the traditional lifestyle of Wa, and launch various ecological tourism products such as ecological study, rainforest exploration, agricultural experience, Chinese medicine recreation, etc., and carry out colorful religious ecotourism, folklore ecotourism and agricultural ecotourism activities to speed up the recovery of China's tourism market and promote the healthy and sustainable development of tourism.

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