Ecomuseum or Ethnic Cultural and Ecological Village?

The Case of Safeguarding ICH in Monkey Lake Sani Village, Yunnan, China
Mosuo People
Lugu Lake
Yunnan Province
Stone forest county
Sani People
Myanmar
Vietnam
Laos
Facts about Monkey Lake Village

• It is surrounded by karst mountains with a 86% forest coverage. There are hundreds of big trees over 100 years old inside the village.
• The village is known as “Stone Village” because all the traditional houses are made of stones got from the village.
• The pillar industry is agriculture (tobacco, corn, potato planting) and livestock raising. Tourism is the new industry. 8 family hostels have been opened.
• There are 247 households with a population of 993.
• 99.8% of the population are Sani people.
Who are Sani People?
An Introduction to Sani People

- **Identity:** A subgroup of the Yi Ethnic Minority
- **Population:** About 90,000
- **Distribution:** Stone Forrest County and the neighboring counties in Yunnan Province
- **Language:** Spoken Sani language are commonly used and the Yi script are mastered by few people, mainly indigenous shaman, Bimo.
- **Religion:** Primitive Religion (sacred mountain, holy forest, ancestry worship) and Roman Catholic
- **Some traditional culture are still in practice:** (worship sacred mountain, holy forest, Bimo, dancing and singing, bull fighting. Some have been lost (commune house, ancestry hole)
- **Possible ICH Items:** Rituals, Bimo belief, Yi script, performing arts and embroidery
Summary of the background introduction:

- Local distinctiveness (both nature and culture)
- Sense of Identity and place
- Long history of interaction with the outside world
- Local distinctiveness is challenged by globalization and modernity
Questions faced by scholars and government:

- **Scholars**: How to conserve traditional ethnic culture in rural areas and at the same time make it develop harmoniously and sustainably with local environment, economy and society under the background of globalizations and modernity?

- **Government**: How to further develop local tourism and thus accelerate development of local economy in a sustainable way, especially that of the rural ethnic minority communities?
“Ethnic Cultural and Ecological Village”
--Exploration of the Researchers

Concept:
Based on the ideas of ecomuseum, the concept of ECTV was raised by Prof. Yin Shaoting, an anthropologist from Yunnan University.

“Ethnic cultural and ecological village” is a development model seeking ethnic culture and local culture conservation, and ecologically, socially and economically sustainable development in rural areas, especially ethnic minority areas prone to the impact of globalization and modernity.

Practice:
In 1997, the project of establishing “ethnic cultural and ecological village” was proposed to Ford Foundation.

From 1998, 5 pilot villages in different areas and of different ethnic groups were chosen as models of the “ethnic cultural and ecological village” project in Yunnan Province and the project started. The Moon lake Sani Village in Stone Forest County was one of them.
Principles of the ECEV and Ecomuseum

See the recommended reading material
Comparison between Ecomuseum and Ecovillage

- **Similarities with ecomuseum:**
  - In situ conservation
  - Emphasis on the community and the culture bearer and right and participation of local residents
  - Emphasis on the holistic conservation of both natural environment and lifestyle, both tangible heritage and ICH
  - Museum as a tool of community development

- **Differences with ecomuseum:**
  - Different social and economic background and condition
  - Emphasis on the joint effort of stakeholders including the government, the scholars and the local residents rather than the bottom up policy and the full participation of the local residents in all processes
  - A sustainable development model rather than a museum
The practice in Moon Lake Village, a Ecovillage in Stone Forest Country

- Organize project team consisting scholars, cadres from the county government and villager administrators. Field work was conducted and documentaries were made..
- Senior’s association of the villager was set up with support from the project team.
- Encourage retired teachers from the village primary school to carry out investigation on the traditional culture and compiled an indigenous textbook.
- Investigation on culture relics and artefacts
- Organize a singing and dancing competition
- Reinforce the sacred mountain and holy forest area as an exhibition area of Culture and environment
- Renovate the ancestry worship hill and try to restore the practice
The practice in Moon Lake Village, a ECEV Stone Forest Country Country

Reinforce the sacred mountain and holy forest as an exhibition area of culture and environment

Renovate the ancestry worship hill and try to restore the practice