

Cultural Heritage Protection and Development in Guizhou from a Cultural Anthropology Perspective

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Abstract: Cultural anthropology, as a core branch of anthropology, provides a theoretical foundation for understanding cultural diversity and offers theoretical support and methodological approaches for the protection and development of cultural heritage. This article takes cultural anthropology as a theoretical framework and uses the practice in Guizhou as a case study to systematically explore the intrinsic connection between the discipline and cultural heritage protection, and proposes effective paths for promoting the sustainable development of cultural heritage.

Keywords: Cultural anthropology; Cultural heritage preservation; Guizhou

1. Cultural Heritage of Guizhou from a Cultural Anthropology Perspective

1.1 Types of Cultural Heritage in Guizhou

"Cultural anthropology begins with local knowledge, understanding and learning local cultures through observation, documentation, listening, and participation, thereby uncovering the essence of humanity and the possibilities of life within cultural diversity."^[1] Through this process, it explores human essence and the possibilities of life within cultural diversity. This disciplinary orientation establishes an intrinsic and close connection between cultural anthropology and human cultural heritage. Cultural heritage, as a precious accumulation of history encompassing significant artifacts, historical sites, and artistic expressions, holds profound cultural, artistic, and scientific research value. Any destruction of heritage not only hinders the advancement of cultural anthropology but also inflicts significant losses upon the humanities, social sciences, and even the natural sciences.

Cultural anthropology, as a core branch of anthropology, provides a theoretical foundation for understanding cultural diversity and offers theoretical support and methodological approaches for the protection and development of cultural heritage. This paper takes cultural anthropology as its theoretical framework and uses Guizhou practices as a case study to systematically explore the intrinsic connection between the discipline and cultural heritage protection, and proposes effective pathways to promote the sustainable development of cultural heritage.

1.2 Characteristics and Causes of Guizhou's Cultural Heritage

Guizhou, as a multi-ethnic province in southwest China, possesses a rich cultural diversity rooted in its ethnic pluralism. This diversity has made it a significant subject of study in ethnology, anthropology, and related humanities and social sciences. This diversity is particularly evident in numerous traditional ethnic crafts, such as the Shui people's Jiuzhen wine brewing, the Miao people's sour soup fish preparation, and the Bouyei people's glutinous rice food processing techniques. These traditions reflect the cultural characteristics of a multi-ethnic society from various dimensions. They serve as indispensable material and intangible cultural heritage samples in anthropological research, bearing witness to the historical accumulation of the Chinese nation while also acting as a spiritual driving force for the development of all ethnic groups. Their protection and transmission hold profound significance.

Guizhou's profound historical and cultural heritage endows its cultural assets with deep meaning, constituting a key factor in the formation of its cultural diversity. Among its many legacies, revolutionary culture holds a prominent position. The Red Army's Long March through Guizhou—including the Four Crossings of the Chishui River and the Zunyi Conference—left behind rich historical legacies such as memorial halls and conference sites housing extensive collections of artifacts and documents. These tangible relics not only recreate historical scenes and facilitate public engagement with history to understand China's revolutionary journey but also reinforce patriotic education.

Guizhou's diverse ethnic groups have jointly created a rich cultural heritage. From the perspective of cultural anthropology, this diversity

is not only a valuable asset of Chinese culture but also provides important resources for the development of the discipline. However, in the process of modernization, many heritage sites face destruction and inheritance crises, which constrain the in-depth development of related research. Therefore, achieving their scientific protection and sustainable inheritance has become an urgent task.

2. The Relationship Between Cultural Heritage Preservation and Cultural Anthropology

Cultural heritage provides rich material and fieldwork resources for cultural anthropological research. For instance, video interviews and oral histories on horsehair embroidery production, gathered through fieldwork in Miao communities, not only document the technical details of this craft but also preserve its cultural context and social practices, offering crucial material for studying the transmission mechanisms of intangible cultural heritage.

Numerous theoretical frameworks underpinning cultural heritage conservation and development originate from cultural anthropology. Take tourism development at World Heritage sites as an example: achieving sustainable development requires addressing numerous sociocultural challenges, such as maintaining indigenous community stability, rebuilding impacted local identities, and preserving cultural traditions. Drawing on deep insights into cultural heritage, cultural anthropology offers critical and constructive perspectives that advance the formation and refinement of conservation theories.

The principle of cultural equality advocated by cultural anthropology profoundly shapes the ethics and practices of cultural heritage conservation. Distinct cultural heritages, shaped by historical, ecological, and economic differences among ethnic groups, all hold significant value for human civilization. This discipline emphasizes the equal worth of all cultural values, opposing differential treatment of heritage based on economic or environmental disparities. It thus provides theoretical support for equitable heritage protection and global sharing.

Conversely, the state of cultural heritage preservation constrains the development of cultural anthropology. Heritage tourism is viewed as a bridge between cultural heritage and contemporary society, often serving as an anthropologist's lens for observing cultural change and interactions with modernity^[2]. However, excessive tourism development may lead to cultural heritage destruction and loss of authenticity. For instance, in her study of Lijiang Ancient Town, Zong Xiaolian noted that tourism-driven cultural change manifested as the displacement of indigenous residents, commercialization, and spatial structural alterations, resulting in a complete transformation of the town's functions and appearance^[3]. Such changes not only damage the heritage itself but also limit the sources of material and field conditions for cultural anthropological research, hindering in-depth academic work and theoretical reflection.

3. Measures for Cultural Heritage Protection

"Preservation is a systematic cultural endeavor."^[4] With economic and social development, an increasing number of cultural heritage sites are being unearthed and valued. Some heritage sites fully leverage their educational functions, serving as educational bases or teaching case studies, playing a crucial role in raising public awareness of preservation, strengthening cultural confidence, and sustaining national sentiment. Other heritage sites, such as the Forbidden City in Beijing and the Great Wall, are transformed into vital resources through tourism, satisfying the public's spiritual and aesthetic needs while promoting sustainable economic and cultural development.

Guizhou boasts abundant tangible and intangible cultural heritage resources, yet many face severe damage during development. The conflict between preservation and development has become increasingly prominent. Acts such as tourist graffiti, littering, and excessive development pose significant threats to heritage conservation. These issues not only hinder the healthy development of tourism but also challenge the long-term survival of cultural heritage, presenting an urgent practical problem for cultural anthropology to address. Against this backdrop, leveraging cultural anthropological theories to effectively protect and transmit ancestral wisdom has become particularly crucial.

The principles of authenticity, integrity, and sustainability proposed in Introduction to *Intangible Cultural Heritage form the fundamental guidelines* for broad cultural heritage preservation^[5]. Authenticity, originating from the *Venice Charter*, emphasizes maintaining the original appearance, cultural significance, and historical context of heritage sites, opposing the excessive introduction of contemporary elements for economic gain that compromise their authenticity and integrity. Integrity requires a holistic perspective that balances the cultural, historical, social, and aesthetic values of heritage, avoiding undue emphasis on any single category or economic value. It necessitates diverse conservation measures to sustain the environment for heritage survival and development, fostering a harmonious cultural ecosystem. Sustainability further underscores the systematic and long-term nature of conservation efforts, demanding coordination between heritage, ecology, people, and society to maintain organic connections with their original contexts. This approach aims to achieve harmonious and stable development among humanity, society, and nature^[6]. Together, these three principles form the theoretical framework and practical pathway for the scientific protection of cultural heritage.

Cultural heritage protection is an urgent and systematic undertaking requiring multi-stakeholder collaboration and comprehensive measures. Individuals should enhance their awareness of conservation, consciously recognize heritage value, and resist destructive actions. At the

national level, regulations must be improved, enforcement strengthened, and public discourse guided. Technological tools such as 3D modeling and drone aerial photography should be leveraged for heritage restoration and digital resource development, while new media should be effectively utilized to boost public participation. As a multi-ethnic province in western China, Guizhou should leverage its cultural diversity, incorporate cultural anthropology theories, promote ethnic equality concepts, and advance interdisciplinary integration with localized practices. It must promptly restore damaged heritage while strictly implementing "conservation first" for well-preserved sites. Cultural anthropologists and related professionals should consistently dedicate their expertise to preserving and transmitting cultural heritage, providing both theoretical and practical support for sustainable conservation.

4. Conclusion

The protection of cultural heritage in Guizhou is a systematic project that requires government support and academic participation, as well as the conscious involvement of the public. Only through diversified collaboration and social co-governance can the sustainable inheritance and utilization of cultural heritage be achieved. Currently, the protection and research of cultural heritage, as well as the exploration of relevant theoretical methods, still face challenges but also hold rich academic potential. This paper, from the perspective of cultural anthropology, analyzes the characteristics and current status of cultural heritage in Guizhou, proposes protection strategies based on its unique regional cultural traits, and provides academic evidence and theoretical references for regional practices.

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