

Cultural Landscape Characters and Evaluations on Hani Settlements in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan

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Keywords: Hani; Settlements; Cultural Landscapes; Evaluation; Xishuangbanna; Yunnan

The concept of 'cultural landscape' was proposed in the 1920's, mainly refers to the natural scenery, buildings, factories, villages, fields, city, traffic facilities and road, and the complex cultural phenomenon of characters and costumes. As the representative of 'the collaborative works by human and nature', 'cultural landscape', which is independent of world cultural heritage and natural heritage, became a new type of the world heritage in 1992. Compared with other heritage types, the most prominent feature of cultural landscapes is to emphasize the coexistence of humanity and nature, material and non-material. Settlement cultural landscape is an important category of cultural landscape. And it epitomizes a variety of ways of interacting between human and natural environment.

This article summarizes the cultural landscape characteristics of Hani settlement group in the Xishuangbanna, Yunnan province, based on the concept of 'cultural landscapes' and 'cultural landscape inheritance', the classification and standard of 'cultural landscape inheritance'. The core feature of this cultural landscape is "vertical-distributed eco-system", which formed by three sub-ecosystems based on forest, village and terraced field. The completeness of the forest-based ecological subsystem should be the pre-condition for the existence of all other spatial elements below. The magic woods in Hani settlement is the most sacred and strictly protected area. It reflects that Hani people believe in Animism. The scenic forest provides material resources for Hani people. Residence-based living subsystem is the main living space of Hani people. The site selection of village gates, open spaces and

residential houses can show the traditional values of Hani people. The open spaces between the houses are used as domestic field for feeding poultry and growing vegetables. These fields are helpful to both the agricultural production and waste digestion of the village. Terraced field productive subsystem is the typical representative of Chinese farming culture. Terraced fields is not only for survival, but it is also the culture core of Hani people. Over the past 1,300 years, Hani people have developed a complex system of channels to bring water from the forested mountaintops to the terraces. They have also created an integrated farming system that involves buffalos, cattle, ducks, fish and eel and supports the production of red rice, the area's primary crop.

This article evaluates Xishuangbanna Hani settlement group by the standard of world cultural landscape heritage, points out that it is formed of nature elements and humanity elements, which represents a masterpiece of human creative genius in natural environment. Xishuangbanna Hani settlement group belongs to continuing landscape of organically evolved landscapes and reflects the Outstanding Universal Value with integrity and authenticity.

First, Xishuangbanna Hani settlements witness Chinese traditional cultivation culture. Responding to the difficulties and opportunities of their environment of high mountains, narrow valleys crisscrossed by ravines, extremely high rainfall (around 1400mm) and sub-tropical valley climate, Hani people have created out of dense forest an extraordinarily complex system of irrigated rice terraces that flows around the contours of the mountains. The Hani terraced fields demonstrate an extraordinary harmony between people and their environment in spiritual, ecological and visual terms, and is based on a spiritual respect for nature and respect for both the individual and the community, through a system of dual interdependence known as the 'Man-God Unity social system'.

Second, Ganlan Architecture (Pile-supported building), including Yongge, Yongya, Yongsha, demonstrates the architectural culture of Xishuangbanna Hani settlements. Hani people's daily life reflects the the original belief, cultural festivals, music and dance culture, costumes culture and traditional food and medicine culture.

The UNESCO's World Heritage Committee inscribed China's cultural landscape of Honghe Hani Rice Terraces onto the prestigious World Heritage List on June 22, 2013, which makes Honghe Hani Rice Terraces emerging in the world spotlight. However, in recent years, the traditional Xishuangbanna Hani human settlements has experienced significant changes under the pressures of modernization, marketization and urbanization. Generally speaking these changes are so profound, which not only reshape the traditional appearances of the Hani villages, but also could destroy the long-term and vulnerable vertical circulation of the human settlement system. This should be a considerable threat to the sustainable development of these Hani vernacular settlements in future. The protection and utilization of cultural landscape of Hani settlement group in the Xishuangbanna, Yunnan province, need further consideration and study.