

The Practice and Inheriting of the Bai People's Local Culture of Dali

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Abstract

This paper discusses the status quo and problems of the local cultural heritage of ethnic minorities in Southwest China, which is in the context of modernization. The data in this paper are obtained through long-term field work. Study has the following findings: Firstly, minority cultural erosion is serious in Wan Town of Dali, Yunnan; secondly, the main minority cultural heritage's successors are the elderly and kids, called "empty nesters" and "left-behind children". Thirdly, the local culture of a minority in the tourism is superficial and distorted. Finally, the modern school education has not played an effective role in the inheritance of minority culture. In this paper, there are two suggestions: One is starting an in-depth study on minority local cultural inheritance pattern; the second, establishes a complementary pattern between school education and local education and promotes the inheritance of ethnic culture.

Key words: Minority culture; Inheritance; Education

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INTRODUCTION

Keeping the diversity of culture is an important idea of the Chinese government. Government makes efforts to protect minority culture. Such as making law, improving

policy, developing school education, all of those made a lot of achievements, but there are still a lot of problems emerge: Minority culture be misunderstood; the protection of local culture of minority is superficial; minority cultural is assimilation (Ding, 2009). So, how can the local culture of the minorities be able to have better practice and inheritance? We need to reflect on past behavior, so that we can find a solution to these problems. "questions are answers". We will get inspiration from this sentence. This paper tries to give up finding answers from the external analysis, and turn to inside of minority culture to find the answers. The keywords "practice and inheritance" in fact is local education (broadly defined). We use "practice and inheritance" in order to underline the difference between local education and modern education.

The Wan town in Yunnan Dali is selected to be the research object. The town is located on the southwest frontier of China, human activities were found early in the 4th century BC here. The largest number local ethnic group in Dali Yunnan is called Bai people, this group is evolved from Di and Qiang and other ancient Chinese nations. In history, Dali has been the dependence of China, only until the Yuan Dynasty formally incorporated under China's rule. From the historical perspective, the Bai has been absorbed in the outstanding achievements of Han culture. As early as in the Han Dynasty, the Bai society in the Erhai area has established the education which is suitable for the fine agriculture. Basis of the thought of this specialized secular school education in Dali, is from the Central China's Confucian culture system. Bai people imitated the imperial examination, developed Education and learned Chinese. They show strong cultural needs (Zhang, 1992). Bai people actively absorb the cream of the Han culture, its overall level of development is higher than the other ethnic minorities in southwest China. However, the nationality of the Bai people's original culture has not been lost. They learned

Chinese culture, while had a strong continuation of the original culture. Today, a lot of study on Bai Education show that Bai people are not only a good common school education system, and have other forms of social education, religious education and other education patterns, all of those forming a strong national cultural psychology.

Among researches of inheritance of minority culture, Zhang's work *Strengthen National Identity: Cultural Choice in the Digital Age* is a worthy reference which writhed from an anthropology angle (Zhang, 1992). This book made the main conclusion: Ethnic local cultural practice and inheritance has a lively and full of vitality, it is a kind of non institutionalized education, he used the field of cultural psychology" to define this local education pattern. This view has important implications for this article. Foreign scholars' studies are always from the view of the relationship between education, they researches provide helps too. For example: These studies which care about "cultural differences", "cultural interruption" and "cultural conflict", discuss local culture's influence on minority students in mainstream schools. Ogbu's (J.U.Ogbu) "Immigrant Minorities" "Involuntary Minorities" concept and "Folk Theories of Success" produced a great influence of Chinese researchers for a long period of time. They are within the theoretical framework of Ogbu to explore the education of Chinese minority students. And other Chinese scholars are partial to analyze the inherent system of local culture of minorities from the microscopic point of view, such as the study of folklore, religion, social organization, living space, economic life.

Due to limited space, this article only study on local culture in the village of Bai people in Dali. The main

purpose is to explore the specific modes of minority local culture practice and heritage Dali in Yunnan.

1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Firstly we use the random sampling, select a minority villages called Wanzhen in Yunnan Dali, the village is located on the shore of Lake Erhai and the foot of Cangshan mountain. The village has representative and be selected when we consider the following three factors: First, the proportion of ethnic minorities in this village is more than 40%; the second, a long history of the village; the third, village minority culture is very characteristics.

In this study, field surveys were used to investigate information about various aspects of the local culture of the Bai people in Dali. This paper mainly uses three methods. First of all, we use participatory observation, to understand the essence of minority local culture in Dali and the impact of the folk culture itself. Secondly, use interview method to understand the learning situation of minority children, and to study the relationship between the modern school education and the local cultural heritage. Finally, through the text analysis, in order to understand the context of modernization, and the changes of minority local culture.

2. FINDINGS

2.1 local Culture Is Constantly Losing

We randomly sampled a total of 449 people in the village to carry out a questionnaire survey to understand the situation of their grasp of the local culture, the following results were obtained:

Table 1
Situation of Bai People's Familiarity About Local Culture

		Engagement of religion affairs	Familiarity of local folk music	Familiarity of local folk dance	Familiarity of local folk costume
Male	Mean	2.52	3.19	1.82	3.21
	N	221	220	221	221
	Median	3.00	3.00	1.00	3.00
female	Mean	2.50	3.17	2.11	3.84
	N	228	222	224	223
	Median	3.00	3.00	2.00	4.00
Total	Mean	2.51	3.18	1.97	3.55
	N	449	442	445	444
	Median	3.00	3.00	1.00	4.00

Results show that the mean value is not high, especially on Bai local folk music and dance. locals are not familiar with their local culture. Many local folk ballad and memory of the local minority groups is fuzzy. Many of them only know the name of folk song but can't sing, there are quite a few even don't know the name of the folk songs. Participation in religious activities is not so bad, but in the process of the investigation, we found

that the degree of participation of older people is higher, the young people's participation is lower. People show that they are very fond of their own folk costume, but they don't wear it frequency, they often wear modern style dresses.

In addition, Bai people's language is to be studied. In daily life, they always use Bai language (Minjia hua) and Chinese. Bai language is just an oral language, not a

written language. Bai people can use Bai language and Chinese skillfully, and Bai people's many ancient books and records were recorded in Chinese. This is different from the Tibetan, Yi, etc.. But in real life, people who can use the Bai language are decreased year after year. Quite a few Bai adolescents can speak their own language. The Bai people has a rich oral culture (Bai opera, Dabenqu, Ancient Myths etc.), but these oral culture will disappear while the Bai language fading. Factual, it is more and more difficult to find qualified successors, and these unique culture is facing danger of disappearing.

2.2 The Main Minority Cultural Heritage's Successors Are the Elderly and Kids

Along with the acceleration of the process of urbanization in China, China has generated a huge "migrant workers". There are nearly 31% people migrate to big cities. Most of them are farmers. Most of "migrant workers" move to cities because of the income of agricultural production is too meager, few of them are land-lost farmers, government and land agents make a requisition of land, for public facilities construction or real estate development. After entering the city, they will gradually forget the life style of the village, and gradually adapt to the modern life of the city. They will no longer be the practitioners and the main inheritance of the local culture. Most of the "left behind people" in the village are old people and children. They have become the main inheritance of the local culture.

2.3 Tourism Development Become an Important Way to Protect the local Cultural

Because of its unique minority culture and beautiful natural scenery, Dali attracts tourists from all over the world. Tourism has become a new industry which the government strongly promotes. However, after all, tourism culture is a kind of culture, which has a strong commercial flavor. Curiosity and interest of foreign tourists to bring business interests, and promote the local people to refocus on the local culture of their own. In order to create a "exotic", the Bai local architectural art, folk music, folk dance, folk costumes, handicrafts and other forgotten cultural heritage has been excavated, analyzed and restructured. The local ethnic culture becomes a kind of industry. We can not deny its success in business, and its products are sold everywhere. But this does not mean that Bai culture is flourishing. The folk music, dance, handicrafts are more and more recognized and consumed by tourists, while the bearing of the local cultural significance has been gradually digested and distorted. Tourists into the Bai village, they buy Bai products ethnic flavor just think these things very strange, rarely caring about meanings of these folk matters. People's cultural consumption just stays in the form of a surface. If the development of Bai's local culture is only serving to tourism and commerce, it can only make the Bai local culture more bad and shallow. Its original

cultural connotation will gradually ignore. As times pass by, if the culture of the Bai people lost the original connotation and leaving only the form, the establishment of the tourism industry will loss roots and it is difficult to maintain. In the end, the cultural issues that have been lost are no longer fresh and interesting to people. Commercialization makes the transition of Wan Zhen Bai local culture has become more complex and difficult.

2.4 School Education Has Little Effect on the Local Culture

In Schools, Bai students and Han students are not in difference. We have seen the schedule for the junior high school students, their curriculum, including Chinese, English, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, history, geography, politics, sports, art and craft, music. Music and art course is national unified, and not related to the Bai's folk music and folk art, the main courses for the students are also unified national textbooks like Han students. In fact, this is also related to the first reason of our analysis, Bai had no written language, so can not use their own language textbooks, also cannot use the own language and local as courses factors. Culture and history of Han nationality are the main content, the Bai nationality culture is rarely except for textbooks. Bai culture is difficult to practice in school education is because some political or unavoidable reasons. The vice president of the school accepted our interview, he said teachers just tell their students the worthy and important of Bai local culture, and made them feel pride. But pride is not enough, we have suggested they set up some Bai culture course, his answer was negative, he said, Chinese senior high school entrance examination test mathematics, English, physics, chemistry and political, other courses are non significant. They have no time to teach courses of Bai culture. It seems that the function of the school system was not teaching the Bai culture, but aim to school enrollment rate. There is no more new and interesting.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 Minority Local Culture's Have Its Unique Practical and Educational Pattern

The practice and education of local ethnic culture take the form of imitation and orally teaching. So the type and content of the education cannot define with the views of modern education. "Life is education or education is life" (Gu, 1998) is a true portrayal of local education in the past. Critics may have actual evidence to say that ethnic minorities do not attach education, however, the so-called education is roughly including knowledge inheritance and education mechanism of educational philosophy, policy, school, teachers, students, curriculum, assessment by a series of text, charts, data files and the original educational pattern; men's club in the village, social organization, peer, clan gatherings, myths and legends,

ritual taboos, the concept of space, life values, knowledge and skills of tribal and education system. Due to the lack of written record, arrangement and interpretation, and not relate to life closely, make the research of modern education cannot be regarded minority's practice of local culture as education. However, the practice and transfer of the local culture of minority is irreplaceable, and this kind of "non school education" should be carried out by "national cultural psychology field" (Long, 2009). The psychological field of national culture is a unique pattern of the practice and the education pattern of the minority local culture.

Field is the concept of physics, is the material existence form and its way of action description, such as magnetic force. Cultural psychological field is a "field" in anthropology. The concept is used to describe the form and the way of cultural identity. Basis of the Chinese national identity can grow depend on two factors: One is China which expresses the way of thinking, the other is famous mountains and great waters. The "cultural psychology field" contains the important content of the humanities' spirit and the natural landscape, visual, auditory image, they have carried out in space-time (Zhao, 2011). In space it has length, width and height, it is the landscape, it is building, it is art; and in time expansion, it is the music, it is the festival ceremony, it is the custom, custom. That is to say, the psychological field of culture is the structural existence of space and time and multiple factors interact with each other, they more or less, or explicitly or implicitly affected people's mode of thinking. Zhang further pointed out that "the cultural psychology field" promote the identity of the Chinese nation. "cultural psychology field" includes at least the following levels: firstly, humanity and nature in one, such as conception of "harmonious relationship of heaven and earth and men"; Royal progress of ancient emperors. "Chi" as the representative of the intellectuals have the "concept of heaven and men", such as, "learn by book, learn by traveling"; etiquette, auspicious village customs and related creation myths and folklore and show natural landscape and humanities.

Coincidentally, Zhang Fusan, He Xiaorong, Zhao Shilin were referred to the concept of "cultural field". Although they are mainly from the perspective of cultural heritage to discuss, it is different to Zhang's basis from the perspective of ethnic and cultural identity. They all use "field" describe the cultural influence. Zhang Fusan pointed out that the cultural field is the intermediary entity of the heritage of folk culture, is platform and channel of folk culture education, is the natural field, social field and the results of the field of thinking. The formation of the heritage site is related to the cultural formation of various nationalities. National culture is always produced and transmitted in a certain environment, which is the part of the cultural heritage mechanism, which constitutes the hardware of the cultural heritage (He, 2009). It includes

the natural environment and cultural environment, such as the jungle, fireplaces, temples, rituals, markets, schools and other heritage field of cultural heritage is of great significance.

3.2 Establish a Complementary Pattern Between School Education and Local Education

With the deepening of China's modernization and urbanization process, the educational pattern and connotation of the past have been destroyed. Operation of modern education, in fact cannot replace all inside the village cultural heritage affairs; caught in such, minority's education attitude or idea does confusion. Minority education whether to for inheritance and development of local culture or actively participate in the modern social. Of course, livelihood, basic level of knowledge and educational experience is the factors that affect minority parents to the point of view of value education. As to the knowledge and experience of the minority whether adapt to the modern society or not, it should be by observing of cultural evolution (such as Han old divination gradually formed the book of changes; sacrificial customs gradually formed the rites; folk song is finishing become the book of songs) and gripping of cultural connotation. In recent years, ethnic minorities in the United States and Canada for nature biology, ecology, geographical understanding and application of (ethnography, ethnocentric, prediction knowledge, the concept of space), and gradually by the academic attention, will also be incorporated into a part of the scientific knowledge, is a practical example. The culture and knowledge system created by the minority nationality in Dali are accumulated by the collective experience and memory, which are of great value to the development of Dali in the knowledge of the land.

Minority education achievement evaluation postwar shows that: The key issues probably is the system of education, teacher education, curriculum, textbook and teaching methods and the enrollment mechanism of conformance and national language and culture could achieve the inheritance by means of education. However, view of minority education if it still can not jump off the assimilation education thought category, entirely to imitate education of the Han nationality, and ignore the need of education for ethnic minorities, we will never be able to really build system and connotation of education for ethnic minorities. It is also found that minority students due to the social and cultural background and economic conditions, are different from the general students in local cultural practices and the mode of inheritance: Minority students learning is close to life experience, emphasize to use observation, imitation, and the actual operation way to learn, not to ask questions in class, and like with the existing experience based learning. Secondly, minority students prefer to study in the context of informal, warm, low competition, and like to share with a partner, like small group learning, do not like competition mode. Furthermore, minority student's

preferences using sensory to aid in learning, especially like a visual learning, and like to use the body to personally operation object, to achieve the learning experience. Such learning characteristics of the tribe, family life.

In recent years, the minority in all kinds of issues gradually showing its unique cultural and creative thinking, such as the use of tribal myths and beliefs, appear natural and harmonious production form and land resource collocation structure, plant and medicine with the control, even tribal organization and interpersonal relationship. Compared with the modern social alienation, and show difference of dance and technology, in the past that warning civilization and knowledge of the owner, in the constant pursuit of high economic development and resource development, in the face of climate change, natural to give the earth the destruction of the ozone layer, the greenhouse effect, drought, flood, debris flow, air pollution, water scarcity and relentless response, for human nature and various social groups to take the attitude, whether you want to change policy? In particular, minority whether can give suggestions and contribution that based on the local experience and strain of inspiration. In fact, this case is gradually accumulated. Such as minority respect mountains and rivers from past to present, such as closure of the lake; and special industrial organization, Bai people used to establish the collective management mode; according to the environmental conditions in planting native plant, such as glutinous rice, beans, garlic, rhizoma gastrodiae, pseudo-ginseng; and the collective experience of all beliefs, rituals and taboos, in specific and simple forms, also showed interacting relations between the human and the supernatural establishment; in a word is fully exerting minority ethnic culture and biological diversity of rich

connotation. The concrete connotation of the knowledge, experience, it should be through the collection, collation, classification and interpretation of a knowledge system of minority nationality), into the teaching system and become an important part of national education connotation.

The knowledge system of ethnic specific cultural practices and the mode of inheritance and the attendant, is in the long historical process to construct product and accumulation, it is not easy to remove, replace; in the constantly changing environment, the style of knowledge learning and produce is diverse, so multiple learning strategies should be respected, the national education system should think about local cultural practice and the mode of inheritance and its own knowledge system, must be respected, and incorporated into the educational heritage of the operation, reduce the disadvantaged students to receive education setback, also let the education way and content more rich and varied.

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