

A Study of the World Heritage Site Application for Terraced Field Landscapes in Honghe Prefecture, Yunnan Province

Proponent: Fu Yongshou, PhD

Institutional affiliation:

Department of Social Sciences, Yunnan Arts College and CBIK

Research Background

The terraced paddy-field cultural landscape in the Ailao mountain area has a history of more than 1000 years. It is closely integrated with locally specific topographical, ecological and architectural features, ecosystems, and ethnic architecture. The resulting multi-dimensional landscape provides unique ecological, economic, cultural and aesthetic values.

The ecological and aesthetic value of the terraced fields have been recognized gradually by researchers, local government and tourist agencies in recent years. Honghe Prefecture government and Yuanyang County government have established special departments charged with applying for World Cultural Heritage Site status with UNESCO. The Ministry of Construction of the central government has accepted this application and put the site on the provisional list of heritage sites to be applied for by China. At the same time, the terraced fields continue to provide the main source of subsistence for local people of various ethnic groups.

The process of applying for World Heritage Site status can be seen as a process that necessitates the 'appropriation' by a new range of stakeholders of an ecological system that has to date been managed by a variety of community-based and local actors.

My research will focus on understanding the different perceptions of the terraced field landscape among different stakeholders, their roles in the application process and the ways in which they interact.

Research questions

- 1) What are the perceptions of different actors of the terraced landscape and the values they attribute to it?
- 2) What factors have driven the government's decision to apply for World Cultural Heritage Site status?
- 3) How have different actors been involved in the application process?
- 4) How will the application affect the management of the landscape in the future and the distribution of benefits among of local actors?

Research objectives

- 1) To identify the different actors relevant to the management of the terraced field landscape and the application process
- 2) To document to date the process of applying for heritage site status and the roles of different actors
- 3) To understand the differences of the perceptions of the terraced field, its value and the expectations of different actors of the application for heritage site status.
- 4) To understand the potential implications for future roles in the management of the terraced fields and the distribution of benefits among actors.

Methodology

Method	Objectives
Literature research	To review the history, management and functions of terraced field landscape
PRA and Semi-structured interviews	Identify stakeholder groups and significant individuals involved in the terraced field management and application process, and document the application process. To understand the perceptions of different actors (from local villagers to scholars in Kunming) of the terraced fields
Analysis	To analyze how the perceptions of different actors relates to their roles in the application process, and to the likely roles in future management and benefits from the heritage site.

Time Schedule

Time	What	With whom	Where
April	Literature research interview	Scholars	Kunming
May	Field survey (interview)	Government officers Scholars	Gejiu, Yuangyang Honghe Prefecture
June	Field survey (interview)	Villagers	Yuangyang county
July-December	Analysis Write paper		Kunming

Expected output

One paper of between 6000-8000 words