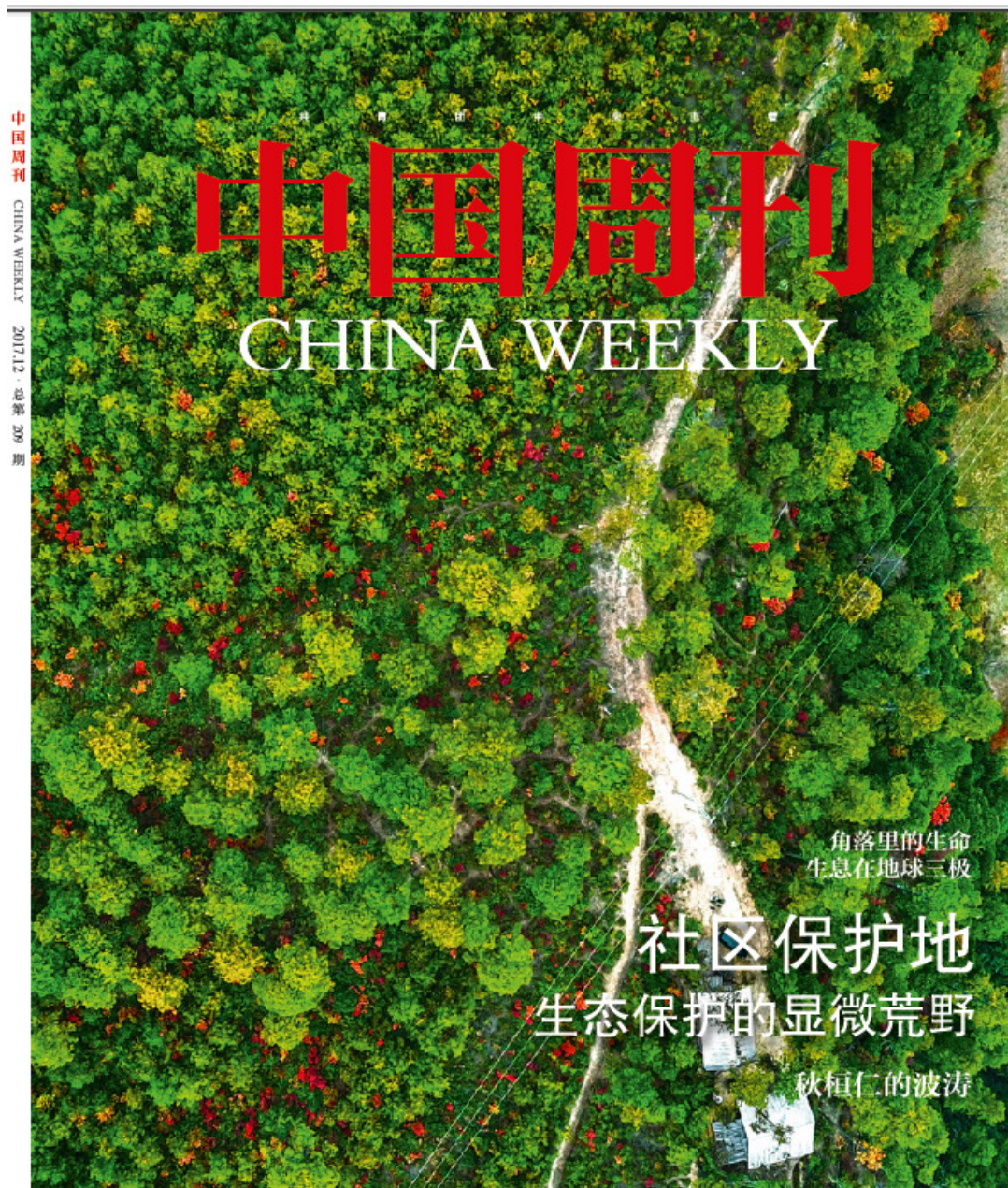


GEF SGP Supporting ICCAs on *China Weekly*, Dec. 2017



Page 2: Preface – The Primal Paradise and the Last Dreamland by Jiankun Yang, the chief editor of China Weekly

The Concept of ICCAs may be unfamiliar for general public in China. The IUCN defined ICCAs as ‘natural and modified ecosystems including significant biodiversity, ecological services and cultural values voluntarily conserved by indigenous peoples and local communities through customary laws or other effective means’. ICCAs are distributed in various ecosystem and culture in the globe. The literal meaning seems distant and rational. But in the deep heart of everybody, we all have a homeland, which we always long for, which is a familiar word with the breath of life and spirit. That could be sort of ICCA. ‘Community people have close connection with their surrounding natural resources and biodiversity, they were born and grew up here, their production, living, traditional knowledge, spiritual needs, culture and custom are interweaved with the natural resources and biodiversity.’ (Yi Liu) ICCAs provide sustainable food and clean water; prevent natural disaster such as landslide; satisfy people’s spiritual needs or religion belief; defend outside threat; maintain community’s own political, cultural and economic self-governance and manage the natural resources according to custom laws such as tradition, culture and rules.

ICCAs are probably the oldest and most active model of protected area on the earth. They are the human paradise and refuge jointly created by our ancestors and their neighbors, which are full of the wisdom of nature and human.

The UNDP/GEF SGP was established in 1992. Since then, SGP has been making efforts to support indigenous peoples and local communities for their activities that conserve and sustainable use biodiversity on the ground.

Since its establishment in China in 2009, UNDP/GEF SGP has supported 21 ICCAs in Yunnan, Guangxi, Guizhou, Qinghai and Gansu provinces. All these ICCAs are located the areas where biodiversity and cultural diversity are richest and ecological environment is most vulnerable in China. These ICCAs are protecting significant biodiversity for China and the globe.

We hope this special issue on ICCAs can provide the microcosmic reference and inspiring for China’s ecological civilization construction; impact the macrocosmic policy making to some extent; and recognize the value of conservation made by community peoples.



Page 30-31: Cover Story- ICCAs: the microcosmic wilderness of ecological conservation

2

Since its establishment in 1992, the UNDP/GEF SGP has been making efforts to support indigenous peoples and local communities for their activities that conserve and sustainable use biodiversity on the ground. SGP has supported over thousands ICCAs in 125 countries. The UNDP/GEF SGP was established in China in 2009, since then, it has supported 21 ICCAs, among them 9 have registered with ICRA registry system. All these ICCAs are located in the areas where biodiversity and cultural diversity are richest and ecological environment is most vulnerable in China such as Yunnan, Guangxi, Guizhou, Qinghai and Gansu provinces. Some of them are Sacred Natural Sites; some of them are overlapped with government's protected area but protected and managed by local community; some of them are supported and facilitated by NGOs building on their traditional rules; some of them have registered with government's system and received recognition of labeling. Whatever the types are, these ICCAs are protecting significant biodiversity for China and the globe.

Page 32-35: ICCAs: the Oldest Model of Protected Area on the Earth by Yi LIU, the NC of SGP China

The article introduced the IUCN definition of ICRA, the three characters of ICRA, why indigenous peoples and local communities conserve and manage their ICCAs, IUCN's PA management category and PA governance category, the relation and difference between

the two categories; international policies that recognized ICCAs, for example the World Parks Congress (Durban 2003), the CBD PoWPA (2004), the WCC3 (2004), the WCC4 (2008), the 10th COP of CBD (2010), the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 including Aichi Targets, ICCAs and Aichi Targets, especially target 1, target 5, target 7, target 11, target 13, target 14 and target 18 and how ICCAs can contribute to achieve these targets. The article analyzed that ICCAs play important role in global biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. The international society, national government and other stakeholders have provided properly recognition to ICCAs, for example, the ICCA registry system managed by UNEP-WCMC and the GEF SGP. The article also introduced the ICCA recognition system and ICCA policy situation in Australia, Cambodia, Columbia and Philippines. The conclusion: ICCA is a social-cultural phenomenon. It's probably the oldest model of protected area on the earth. Meanwhile it's continuously changing with the passage of time and the evolution of history. Some disappeared, some survived and some re-emerged. Although every ICCA has the traits of voluntarily management, self-governance and conservation of biodiversity and cultural diversity, the related belief, practice and governance mechanism are various. Carried by the tide of modernization, ICCAs are facing many threats such as resources exploitation, land encroachment, being forcedly merged into protected area by government, climate change, the damage of local knowledge, the breaking of cultural inheritance, the loss of community internal governance mechanism and etc. The community should strengthen their internal coherence and the inheritance between generations. The government, NGOs and international society should properly recognize and support ICCAs and provide necessary assistance to ICCAs in the premise of fully respecting the communities, which will make this oldest conservation model glow youthful luster. Ensuring communities and indigenous people's rights of conserving and sustainable using natural resources can effectively contain the trend of biodiversity loss globally, which is the most effective and low-cost approach of conservation.

Page 36-91: Case Stories

Page 36-43: Qunan-the homeland of white-headed langur



Qunan is located in low latitude area with the characteristic of south subtropical monsoon climate. The weather is moderate and plants are evergreen in four seasons. The first grade state protection animal-white-headed langur, the second grade state protection animal – macaque and over 40 bird species are living here. The Karst forest ecosystem is maintained relatively completed in Qunan and it is neighboring the Chongzuo White-headed Langur National Nature Reserve. 12% of the global population of Chinese endemic species White-headed Langur is living in Qunan, which is listed by IUCN as Critically Endangered.

4

From 2008 to 2010, with the support of UNDP EU-China biodiversity project, the Forestry Bureau of Guangxi autonomous region has developed the CCA register system in Guangxi. In 2014, with the support of SGP and CEPF, the BRC (Guangxi Biodiversity Research and Conservation Association) worked with Guangxi Forestry Bureau to explore the sustainable development mechanism of community conserved areas. Qunan is one of the new CCAs supported by this project.



Qunan is a Zhuang ethnic people community with 450 population of 110 households. The main income relies on sugarcane, watermelon, orange and maize. The community still maintains many cultural tradition of Zhuang ethnic group. For example, they have traditional collective council institution to make decision. There are dragon temple and earth temple in the community. During the Chinese New Year or traditional festivals such as 3rd March of lunar calendar, the community people will go to the temples for worship to celebrate the festivals in hopes of fair weather and a good crop yield in the coming year and family peace. In November of lunar calendar, the community will celebrate harvest festival. Senior people can sing folk songs, weave bamboo basket, and know herb medicine and hunting.

Although the community forest was cut down widely in 1958, forests surrounding the dragon temple were never touched. There are three feng-shui (geomancy) forests in this community, which protected well and revered by the community. Everyone in the community knows that the feng-shui forests are not allowed to touch and if the forests are damaged, people will suffer from their evil deeds. Even today, the forests have been contracted to individuals, the community requested the contractor plant trees at the foot of the hills and never cut down the trees although the contractor has the property right of the trees. This has provided more food resources for white-headed langur objectively.

The SGP grantee BRC has played important role to support the establishment of this CCA. They have worked with the community to conduct baseline survey on community's economy, culture and ecology, which laid on the foundation for the CCA's recognition and management. They also provided capacity building to the community, enhance community's self-governance, promote natural education and eco-farming, help community to mobilize other resources and improve the policy environment. For example, BRC helped the community to raise fund for natural education equipment such as lighting, projector, video camera, telescope and patrolling clothes. The community has been empowered and their capacity of self-governance and internal cohesion has been enhanced.

Since Qunan is the important habitat of white-headed langur, BRC together with the Administration of White-headed Langur National Nature Reserve suggested the community to register with the local forestry bureau as a small protected area. From September to November 2014, the community committee has consulted with the community council members regarding the registry of small protected area and received positive feedback and then they seek for opinions door-to-door. Finally, on 9th Nov. 2014, the community assembly was held and over 100 community representatives attended the assembly to discuss the registry of small protected area. The community representatives voted unanimously to approve the decision. In Dec. 2014, Qunan has been officially recognized by the local government as a CCA and was titled 'small protected area'. The purpose of establishing the CCA for the community is to conserve the biodiversity and

protect the endangered wildlife in their community. They hope their rich natural resources could be passed on to future generations and maintain a better Qunan.

After the CCA was titled, Qunan community established a CCA management team. The management team formulate the CCA regulations based on their village rules and agreement. The CCA regulation was publicized in the community and promoted at the CCA establishment ceremony, community assembly and other occasions. There is no rejection during the collective council meeting. Meanwhile, a voluntary patrolling team composed of 17 young people was established. The patrolling team leader directly report to the management team. Considering the real needs of the community, the patrolling team is also responsible for the security work for the entire community. All the community members actively participate in the CCA management. They monitor the enforcement of the CCA regulation in their daily farming. If outsiders arbitrarily enter the scope of CCA and their activities violate the CCA regulations, the community members will inquire, dissuade and report to the patrolling team. If the patrolling team cannot handle it, they will report to the forest ranger. If the activity breaks the law, they will report to the government protection station. Usually, the community itself will prevent illegal behavior before it happens.

At the beginning of the year 2017, the community patrolling team formulated a new working plan and the action plan for protecting white-headed langur. They have set the target of ‘zero destruction.’ With the strict patrolling and management, no farmland or eucalypts encroach the habitat of white-headed langur. The main threats still come from outsiders including catching bird, trapping wild animals or stealing ornamental trees, especially during rainy days or holidays when villagers don’t work at farm. The patrolling team has increased the patrolling frequency at the special time.

The SGP grantee BRC helped the CCA to build the natural education base and bring the urban family who want to learn more about white-headed langur, biodiversity, local culture and conservation to the CCA. They also provided training and study tour for the community members to enhance their capacity on natural education and eco-farming. Through providing accommodation and food and becoming tour guide, the community has received 600 visitors and increased 190,000RMB by the end of Jun. 2017. The main part of income goes to the host family and they also remain a small part of income to invest in CCA management and community public affairs. The visitors for natural education in Qunan have made the community feel proud of their ecological environment, the white-headed langur and their traditional culture. The community become solidary and cohesive. After the establishment of CCA, the population of white-headed langur has increased from 85 in 2014 to 130 in 2017 according to the investigation.

Page 44-49: Villagers defend the paradise of *Liriodendron Chinense* through legal approach



Laozhai village is located in the east of Guizhou province, the southwest of China. The community have the known biggest natural forest of *Liriodendron Chinense* in China, which is the plant of *Liriodendron* genus of Magnoliaceae. It is the relic species from the quaternary ice age and it is Chinese endemic species.

Since *Liriodendron Chinense* has high economic value, excessive deforestation happened in 1980. Especially from 1985 to 1987, in extreme cases, over hundred people entered the forest to cut trees and gain a big amount income from selling timber. In 1988, the Jianhe County government has set up a county level 'Liriodendron Chinense Nature Reserve' on 50ha. of community collective forest. They formulated the village regulation and agreement as the conservation rules. However, there was no specialized agency, no staff and no funding investment. It is an 'empty' nature reserve from the view of government management. The daily management and protection are organized by the village committee. The county forestry bureau created 3 forest ranger positions for the community and provide 100RMB (\$15) per month per capita.

In 2003, with the facilitating of the county environmental protection bureau, during the community meeting, the villagers agreed to re-establish the conservation group. The community assembly elected 11 responsible, young people to establish a forest ranger team. They also formulated the team's activity rules and the conservation resolution: all the community members have the responsibilities and obligations of protecting and monitoring the forest; harvesting wild vegetable, bushes and medicinal plants in the forest are not

allowed; hunting is forbidden. During the period from January to June each year, 2 forest rangers are guaranteed for patrolling on the mountain each day; during the period of June to September when the seeds of *Liriodendron Chinense* are ripening, 6 forest rangers are guaranteed for patrolling each day; harvesting seeds are not allowed without permission. The village committee will arrange unified harvest time but climbing trees and breaking down branches are not allowed.

In 2013, with the support of SGP, Guizhou Association of Anthropology developed the 'Evaluation System for the Management Sustainability of Community Conserved Areas' and used this system to evaluate Laozhai CCA. The management sustainability of Laozhai CCA was given a score of 79%, which indicates a relatively high level of sustainability of this CCA. The SGP grantee organization also did a rapid assessment on *Liriodendron Chinense* forest in Laozhai and found the forest is under well protection and the extent of the threat is low.



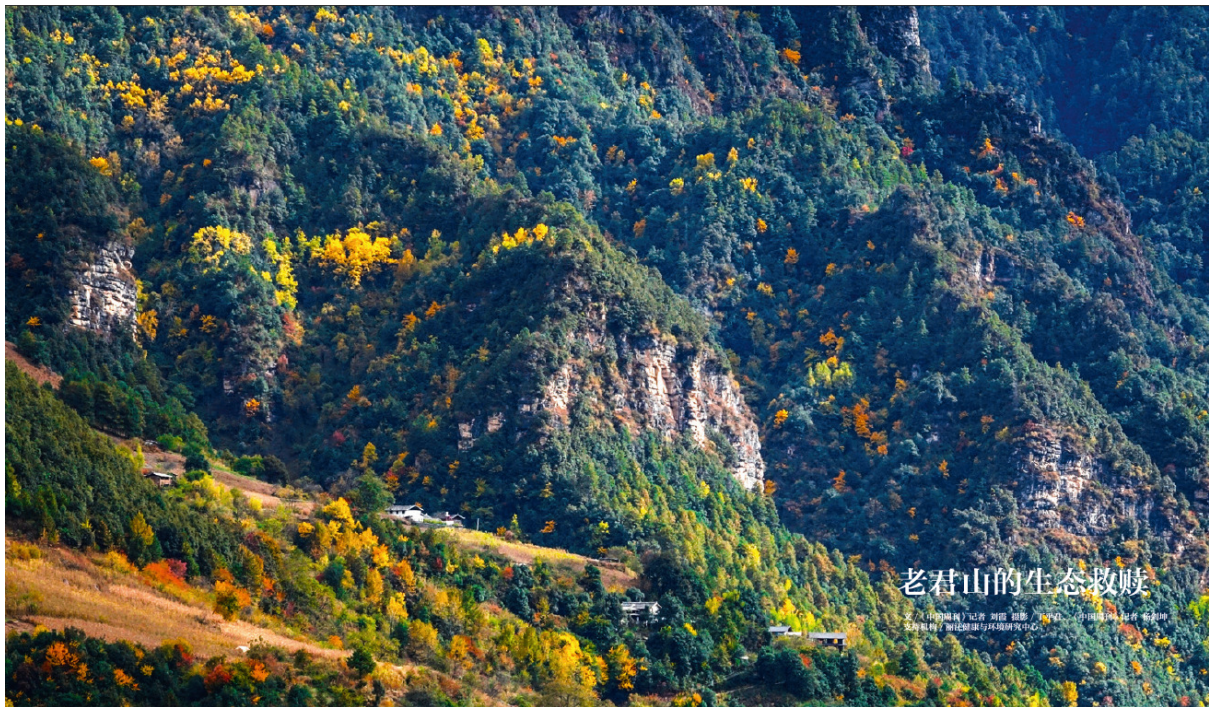
Based on the results of evaluation and the problems they are facing, the SGP grantee partner facilitated the community to enhance the management of their CCA. The activities included natural resources survey, institution building, capacity building and livelihood improvement. For example, they have provided 2000 seedlings of Chinese yew

to the community, they also mobilized the local government to co-financing SGP project by providing renewable energy facilities to the community; they also provide capacity building on ICCA and supported the community to registry their CCA with the UNEP-WCMC. The patrolling is more regular and professional. Now the team patrol their mountains everyday starting at 9:00a.m. and ending at 6:00p.m. Usually three people become a group and the community members will take turns in keeping watch. In 2015, 5 people from other county came to their mountain to steal the leaves of *Cyclocarya paliurus* because it is an ingredient of a costly health care products. The forest ranger found them and reported to the community by cellphone and all the villagers went to block the thieves and send them to the police station. The community learned the lessons so that during the Middle Autumn Festival season, it is the peak time of illegal harvesting herbs and honeycomb. They increased the number of people and time duration of patrolling. In 2015, the CCA was facing another challenge. A wind power company carved out a way to install the wind turbines, which has destroyed some *Liriodendron Chinense* trees. With the

support by SGP and NGO ‘Friend of Nature’ and the lawyers, they initiated a litigation and finally the wind power company pay for 1.8million RMB to the community. And the environment public interests litigation is still in the process. Through this incident, the community enhanced their solidarity and the confidence to conserve their forest and community conserves area.

The area of the *Liriodendron Chinense* forest in Laozhai community has expanded from 50ha.in 1980s to 300ha.today.

Page 50-57: The Ecological Salvation in Mt. Laojunshan



9

Mt. Laojunshan is surrounded by Jinshan River (the upstream of Yangtze River) and Lancan River (Mekong River). It is the core area of World Natural Heritage Site ‘The Three Parallel Rivers’. It has many endemic species and is one of the global biodiversity hotspots. However, in recent 30 years, large area of primeval forest were cut down by the villagers. Today, if you go to there, you will see the slide rail that was used to move the timbers from the mountaintop to the foot of the hill. ‘Living from what the mountain and forest can give’ is the life logic of the local people. However, when they look at the mountain from green to bald, they know one day all the trees on the mountain will be complete destroyed if they don’t stop cutting. But they also need money for food, house and children’s education. How to break through this dilemma between living and environmental protection?

Started from 2010 and supported by SGP since 2013, the Lijiang Health and Environment Research Center has been exploring the solutions of community development and environmental protection. They think it’s not fair if it’s only environment-oriented but not

human-oriented. 'Environmental protection shouldn't deprive the local people using natural resources which they rely on generation by generation.' They initiated the 'Three Parallel Rivers Area Community Sustainable Development Project' aiming to facilitate local community's self-decision, self-management and self-monitoring to achieve human-nature win-win situation and also explore the institution of solving the 'tragedy of the commons'.

Heyuan is the village where the 'Three Parallel Rivers Area Community Sustainable Development Project' was initiated. Guiding by the 'community endogenous development' method, the Lijiang Health and Environment Research Center implemented project activities including community capacity building, establishing public management system, setting up community mutual-support fund (or 'village bank') and developing ecological products. The community in Heyuan self-decided to designate their community conserved



area. They also link their CCA with the 'village bank' to formulate a correlated mechanism, which not only helped the community to reach a consensus of protecting the environment but also provided the fund for villagers to develop their production. The

purpose of establishing the 'village bank' is to help the villagers to develop economy while protect the environment. The villagers join the 'bank' by household and 10 households compose a group. Each joined household become a shareholder by providing the same amount of money. The project provides 1:1 ratio of matching grant to the 'bank' as principal. The joined households are divided into 3 groups to apply the same amount of load in turn by drawing lots for precedence. The load period is one year. Each joined household has to sign environmental protection agreement. If someone violates the agreement, he/she will be fined through his/her share capital. The community member Mr. LI Yukun said, 'It's very difficult at the beginning. We have organized about 30 meetings to discuss how to manage the loan, how much interest should be paid, how much principal should be given and etc.' Under the support of the project, through lots of meetings, debates and negotiations, finally the community formulated a common agreed institution. According to the data from project volunteers, after one year, the loan can help the

borrowers to increase 60% of their family income. Later, the villager came out the idea to formulate a correlated mechanism to link the ‘village bank’ with their CCA. If someone cut tree, his/her share capital will be taken out as fine. Before, the forest protection is only the business of villager-chief and forest rangers, a few people watch most people. Since the correlated mechanism of linking the ‘village bank’ with their CCA, forest protection directly links up with villagers’ personal interest, which turns to a situation that most people watch a few people. This has dramatically promote the ecological conservation in the community.

Another focus of the project is providing capacity building through methodology of farmers teaching farmers. The project bring the villager representatives to other place to learn from other communities. And the representatives are requested to record what they saw and learned from the study tour and will tell others when they return home. It is from the study tour, they learned forest protection, ecological production and ‘village bank’ from Gusheng village in Guizhou province. Of course, in some cases, they also need ‘experts’ to teach them. For example, the project invited the farmer expert from Shaanxi to teach the community how to cultivate gastrodia elata (Chinese herb).

Farmer’s Cooperative of Ecological Production is another community organization after the establishment of ‘village bank’. It aims to increase the community income to improve their livelihood. The Farmer’s Cooperative also link up with ecological conservation. They have formulated a mechanism that villagers mutual monitor their CCAs. For example, Jinhe village’s main income come from tobacco. Flue-cured tobacco requires lots of firewood. It’s definitely not an ecological production. Then they decided to plant walnut and develop walnut oil as the ecological production. With the support of Lijiang Health and Environment Research Center, they have initiated the cool-rolled walnut oil shareholding project.

After 4 years, the CCAs in Mt. Laojunshan area have expanded from 1 community to 97 communities, which have covered over 630km² area and protect the core area of World Natural Heritage Site ‘Three Parallel Rivers’.

Page 58-65: Bazhu-the conscious ecological conservation of a Tibetan village



Bazhu is located in Diqing prefecture of Yunnan province, the ‘Three Parallel Rivers’ area, which is one of the global biodiversity hotspots. It is a Tibetan village. On the 88km² of area in Bazhu, the forest coverage reaches 98.2%.

12

From 1970s to 1990s, 80% of Diqing prefecture’s financial revenue came from timber. Some local people were also living from cutting trees, timber processing and timber transporting. Over exploitation of forest exacerbated the natural disaster such as mud flow and landslide. At that moment, the local government ever brought a logging company to Bazhu. They said they will chop down Bazhu’s trees and build a road for the village and help Bazhu to develop economy and agriculture. The proposal was rejected by the community. They were banding together against the logging company and conserved their forest.

The key reason of strong protection of the forest in Bazhu is because the community has traditional religion and ecological culture system. All the people in Bazhu believe Tibetan Buddhism. They treat plants and trees as lives which is equally important to human life. They believe ahimsa and respect all the lives. Bazhu has a total of eight sacred mountains. On the mountain, land above the hillside symbolizing the boundary between man and God is seen as sacred domain; one can only burn the branches of pine and Cypress to pray for the God, but cannot make a lot of noise, cut firewood, pick pine leaves or log trees; even trees that have already fallen, they must be left on the sacred mountains to rot.

However, with the impacts of globalization and modernization, Bazhu is experiencing external and internal challenges, such as outsiders illegally logging yew and other precious resources, cross-border grazing by villagers from adjacent towns, clashes between modern and traditional lifestyles, relying on national ecological forest welfare compensation, disparity between villagers' desire to increase their incomes and their unsophisticated economy, etc.

In response to these challenges, from 2013, SGP supported the Shangri-La Institute for Sustainable Communities' efforts to initiate the CCA in Bazhu. The project is set on the existing eight sacred mountains in Bazhu Village, re-energizing the community's self-consciousness as a protective body and helping the community to set up a "Bazhu Community

Natural Conservation Area". The mechanism, based on supporting the community's ability to protect biological diversity as well as related cultural traditions and local knowledge, while simultaneously helping the community develop sustainable



livelihoods so that communities can derive benefits from ecological conservation and be on the path of sustainable development. Through this platform, the project integrated modern scientific methods and skills with traditional knowledge and practices to help villagers elevate their capacity for learning about and exploring new knowledge, technology and environment theories regarding better sustainable development and ecological protection methods. The project also pays special attention to the role and impacts of women in ecological and cultural protection and sustainable community development.

Since the beginning of the project, a community forest patrol team has been set up under the help of the project, of which many members are female. The patrol team is responsible for regularly monitoring the village grounds to prevent outside logging and illegal hunting.

With the project support, the community and outside experts jointly conducted the baseline survey of birds in Bazhu and recorded 205 bird species among which 4 are first grade state protection animals and 18 are second grade state protection animals. The project also supported livelihood activities such as medicinal herb planting, rose planting, solar insecticide lamp installation and Tibetan embroidery handicraft training.

In 2015, Bazhu was facing outside threat. A company was planning to build a nursing home in Bazhu, which the community think will bring pollution to their village. With the support of journalist, the community has sent a letter to the leader of the local government and explain the important of ecological conservation in Bazhu and their concern of the commercial project may destroy the ecological environment. Finally, the government stopped the project. Bazhu CCA has survived.

Page 74-81: The Green Livelihood in a Small Village of Sanjiangyuan Area (the source of three rivers)



14

Yunshu prefecture of Qinghai province is called the headstream of three rivers and also the water tower of China. The ecological environment is very vulnerable and if it's damaged, it's very difficult to recover. Nangqian County of Yushu prefecture is located in the southern part of Qinghai province. The Zhaqu River, Ziqu River, Baqu River, Requ River and Jiqu River of the upper stream Lancan River (Mekong River) flow across the entire county. Between the alpine grassland and forest, it is the habitat of several hundreds of plateau wildlife such as yak, Tibetan sheep, Snow leopard, bar-headed goose and etc.

Gamai is a village located in Nangqian County, where Tibetan people's life rely on traditional agriculture and livestock husbandry. 70% of the land in Gamai is covered by forest and only 20% is grassland, which is very hard for local livestock husbandry. Cordyceps sinensis is another main resource of local income. In order to increase livestock production and improve livelihood, the local people have to cut the trees for livestock fence building, house ad firewood using. After all, a few people can rely on the income from



harvesting *Cordyceps sinensis*. Most people can only increase the numbers of their livestock, which will damage the forest and make negative impact on wild animals. Another problem in Gamai is plastic pollution. With the economic development, more and more plastic products are consumed and the local people don't know the danger of plastic to human health and environment. They

throw away or open burn the waste without sorting.

In 2013, with the support of SGP, Jinpa Charity Relief Association started ICCA support project in Gamai. The project support the local community to establish a community service team, which is composed of 20 local young people, who were trained on camera and GPS using. The team conducted the biodiversity monitoring and community patrolling activities. They have recorded over 10 species information. The project also supported the local community to develop a brochure of Gamai's sacred mountains and lakes and the biodiversity. The community also developed their management regulations regarding the sacred mountains and lakes, forest, grassland and wild animals. They not only disseminated the management regulations within the community but also to the visitors. To reduce the plastic waste, the project provided training to local community regarding the danger of plastic to human health and environment and also provided cloth bags to the local people to replace the plastic bags. Recyclable waste has been centralized collected and transported to the county town for treatment.

Yak dung is a kind of normal fuel for Tibetan people. However, it has more rainy days in Gamai and it's difficult to dry the yak dung. So that people cut trees as firewood since 1970s. After the careful thinking, the project create the bamboo plank which can dry yak dung with less time. After using bamboo plank to dry yak dung, it can provide 80% of fuel for local people's daily using and save 1000 trees.

The project also trained 30 people on community natural resources management, biodiversity conservation and ecological friendly livelihood. 15 women participated handicraft development training and 5 household participated eco-tourism training. The local community's hope is to conserve their environment, to pass on their culture and tradition to next generation and to improve their livelihood through eco-tourism.