

Reconstructing a Cultural Heritage Conservation Paradigm Beyond Western-Century

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Abstract: In recent years, most of the world's efforts to protect cultural heritage have followed the Western path. This practice was slowly formed after the industrial revolution in Europe in the 19th century, and the rigid rules of "integrity of historic sites" and "authenticity of objects" were recognized. In 1964, the Venice Charter formally established these core principles, and upgraded typical Western heritage features such as stone buildings and static monuments to the global "universal standard". However, the Charter itself has inherent limitations. For example, it focuses more on the material, static and chronological value of heritage, and fails to fully take into account the richer forms of heritage in non-Western culture, including oral traditions and living cultural practices rooted in the community, non-stone heritage and local skills, as well as the core position of the community as the creator and inheritor of heritage. At the same time, it also ignores the forgotten Heritage under the influence of war and after the war, as well as the cultural heritage carried by groups without political discourse rights. Results the protection of non-Western heritage is much more difficult: the early exclusive international heritage protection paradigm based on western philosophy and discipline system has to emphasize "written record", and the oral epic of Africa has not been included in the protection system so far. The wooden houses in Southeast Asia have been repaired with the technology of repairing stone houses, but they have deteriorated faster. Such as Chinese Kunqu Opera, which is not in kind, was not even a "heritage" before. I checked the literature and compared different cases, such as China's "living inheritance", Japan's "important intangible cultural property" system, and the oral heritage protection managed by African communities themselves. I wanted to understand the problem of the Western paradigm, and also showed that we need to change the way of protection. In fact, there is no need to deny the western experience. The key is not to let it monopolize the standards. According to the situation of different cultures, let the community play a leading role and develop a diversified protection model. This is not only a practical response to the UNESCO Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions (2005), but also a feasible path for the "living continuation" of global cultural heritage.

Keywords: Cultural heritage conservation, Western-centrism, paradigm reconstruction, living heritage, multiculturalism, community agency.

1. Introduction

In the 19th century, France enacted the "Historic Buildings Act" and the United Kingdom proposed the "monument protection" theory. From this, the West gradually built a cultural heritage protection paradigm with "material remains first" and "technical restoration as the main focus". In 1964, the "Venice Charter" was issued, and this paradigm became a global "universal standard". The "minimum intervention" and "identifiability" principles it proposed helped a lot in protecting stone structures and religious sites in the West. However, as more heritage sites were to be protected around the world, the Western-centric problem of this model became increasingly prominent [1]. It always felt that "heritage is something that will not move", and excluded the living heritage of non-Western countries, the interdependence between people and land, and the memory passed down by word of mouth from key protection. This makes the protection of non-Western heritage particularly difficult: if the Western-centric heritage protection paradigm is applied rigidly, the heritage will easily "die" - when the "Heaven and Earth" architectural complex in Dengfeng, China applied for World Heritage status, in order to meet the Western standards of "authenticity" and "integrity", the residents around Shaolin Temple were relocated 20 kilometers away, resulting in "protecting the buildings but not the people", and the traditional folk customs and community memories were broken with the relocation. This approach of "paying attention

to the object, not the person" is a typical consequence of the early, exclusive paradigm of international heritage protection. It fails to meet standards and lacks international support. Mali's Sundiata epic was not inscribed on the Intangible Cultural Heritage List until 2009, having long been mired in a transmission crisis. As the unique guardians of hereditary knowledge and cultural intermediaries of the Manding cultural sphere in West Africa (which encompasses Mali, Guinea, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, and other countries), the Griot community is the epic's core inheritors. They maintain cultural memory through oral transmission, performing the epic in festivals and rituals. However, with the changes in modern society, the Griot community has shrunk in numbers, traditional performance venues have continued to shrink, and the epic is increasingly facing the risk of a "broken chain of transmission." In the 21st century, UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (entered into force in 2003) and Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (entered into force in 2005) were enacted. Both emphasize "respect for cultural diversity" and "local context," providing a foundation for the protection of non-Western heritage. It was in accordance with the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage that the Malian government submitted its application, and the epic was officially included in the list of intangible cultural heritage in 2009, alleviating the inheritance dilemma. However, global practices are still influenced by the inertia of the Western paradigm, and non-

Western local protection experiences have not yet become systematic. In this context, exploring the "reconstruction of cultural heritage protection paradigms beyond Western-centrism" can not only respond to non-Western protection needs, but also promote global heritage protection from a "single standard" to "multi-dimensional symbiosis." This article will provide new ideas for global heritage protection from five dimensions: the formation and limitations of the Western paradigm, non-Western practical experience, the theoretical basis of reconstruction, the core path, and practical guarantees.

2. The Formation and Limitations of the Western-Central Cultural Heritage Conservation Paradigm

The formation of the Western-centric cultural heritage conservation paradigm is closely tied to the social context and cultural cognition of the post-Industrial Revolution period in the West. To put it bluntly, it is to treat the characteristics of Western heritage as universal to all mankind, and rely on international organizations, academic statements, and resource allocation to become a "standard" that the world must follow. This model was formed in three steps: it just emerged in the 19th century. When the Industrial Revolution destroyed ancient buildings, France's Mérimée and Britain's Ruskin saw that the ancient buildings were destroyed and proposed "protection instead of blind repair" and "respect for the original appearance", mainly to protect Western medieval stone buildings; it became systematic in the 20th century. The 1931 Athens Charter first included "historic districts", but still focused on material remains; The 1964 Venice Charter established the strict principles of "authenticity" and "integrity" for heritage conservation. In practical terms, this requires that restoration materials match the original elements, and that restored areas must be clearly identifiable and not indistinguishable from the original fabric. Western ideas became the implementation standard; at the end of the 20th century, the UNESCO World Heritage List was expanded. The Western system was promoted through evaluation and technical assistance. Early stone buildings and religious sites were more numerous than non-Western living heritage. By around the year 2000, World Heritage sites in Europe and North America held a significant advantage in the global inventory, accounting for approximately 55% of the total, with over 90% being tangible heritage. This characteristic is closely tied to the early international heritage preservation paradigm. After the World Heritage system was established in 1978, European heritage sites already accounted for about 63% of the total, while cultural heritage (primarily in tangible forms) consistently constituted over 77% of global heritage. Leveraging their economic advantages and paradigm dominance, Europe and North America found it easier for their tangible heritage, such as stone architecture and monumental sites, to meet selection criteria. This phenomenon is also reflected in UNESCO's regional statistics, where Europe and North America consistently accounted for over 46% of global heritage sites [2]. The problem with this model is that it uses one culture to suppress diversity. There are three specific points: First, it only recognizes physical objects and defines heritage as "immovable material." Non-Western intangible heritage is not taken seriously. African oral epics contain historical rules, but they are not well protected because they do not conform to the Western "need text" and

"need physical objects." The key to Chinese wooden structures is the mortise and tenon joints, but the West only cares about the appearance, and some repairs and replacements of parts have lost the skills. Second, it relies too much on technology and does not take residents seriously. It always relies on experts and institutions. The preservation of Gion Machiya in Kyoto, Japan, has long adhered to the "Traditional Building Preservation District" system established under Japan's 1975 Cultural Properties Protection Act, requiring a balance between preserving the district's character and accommodating residents' livelihoods. In 2005, the local community deepened resident participation by establishing the "Machiya Consultation Office," converting some machiya into community spaces to achieve the living continuation of this heritage [3]. Third, Western standards favor "systematic integrity" and show little preference for "living, scattered transmission"—early intangible heritage selections carried the inertia of tangible heritage's "completeness," prioritizing cultural forms recognized as cohesive systems. Korea's "Gangneung Danoje Festival" was inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2005 due to its complete ritual system, including sacred wine brewing and shamanic ceremonies. China's Dragon Boat Festival faced initial rejection when its application focused solely on "eating zongzi and dragon boat racing" without integrating Qu Yuan's cultural significance and regional diversity. Only in 2009, through a joint submission by three provinces and four regions showcasing the full chain of "rituals + entertainment + health practices" alongside Qu Yuan's spirit, did it overcome these criteria limitations and gain inscription [4]. The early Chinese Dragon Boat Festival emphasized superficial symbols; it wasn't until 2009 that the strategy was adjusted to select them, clearly constrained by external factors.

3. Local Practices and Experiences in Preserving Non-Western Cultural Heritage

Li Minglin's research points out that Lin Yutang's cultural internationalism between 1928 and 1938 emphasized respecting the subjectivity and uniqueness of different cultures and opposing the hegemony of a single cultural standard [M]. University of Maryland, College Park, 2009. This idea provides a theoretical response to the exploration of non-Western countries. These countries, combined with their own culture, broke away from the Western path of "recognizing only physical objects and relying only on technology" and focused on "living, connecting with the community, and recognizing their own culture" to explore protection experience. China's "living inheritance" is a typical example [5]. For example, the arcades in Penang, Malaysia, and the colorful houses in Bo-Kaap, Cape Town, South Africa, broke through the Western colonial protection framework and were led by the community to protect the integrated culture; the Apra Harbor concentration camp in Guam and the Pristina Memorial Museum in Kosovo were led by the victims to restore historical trauma and break the Western political discourse. It can be seen that the Western single standard is not applicable. Only by allowing the community and the victims to become the main body can the "multi-coexistence" of heritage protection be achieved. The core is to integrate heritage protection into current life, relying on the inheritors to take the lead and the community as the backer. For example,

after Kunqu Opera was designated as an intangible cultural heritage in 2001, it wasn't confined to museums as a display. Instead, a successor system was established: performers with the "chuan" (passing down) name were recognized as national inheritors and provided with financial support. The Suzhou Kunqu Opera Theater also promoted the "bringing Kunqu Opera into schools and communities," collaborating with primary and secondary schools to offer interest-based classes, live performances, and cross-disciplinary collaborations, revitalizing the art form. In 2023, Kunqu Opera had 42 national-level inheritors, over 100 heritage bases, and more than 2,000 annual performances. [Data sources: ① "Intangible Cultural Heritage Data" section of the China Intangible Cultural Heritage Network (<https://www.ihchina.cn/Data/>); ② Kunshan Municipal Government's "Three-Year Action Plan for the Inheritance and Protection of Kunqu Opera Culture (2022-2024)"; ③ "Intangible Cultural Heritage Living Inheritance: Kunqu Opera Exceeds 2,000 Annual Performances" in the January 15, 2024 issue of "Economic Information Daily"; ④ "2023 Annual National Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection and Development Statistical Report" by the Department of Intangible Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Culture and Tourism; ⑤ "China Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection and Development Report (2024)" edited by Wang Fuzhou, Social Sciences Academic Press, 2024.] For precise national-level data, priority should be given to the latter two categories of official and monograph sources. After the Fujian Tulou (earth buildings) became a World Heritage Site in 2008, the government didn't relocate residents. Instead, it issued the "Tulou Protection and Management Regulations," explicitly stating that residents are the primary protectors: they can manage maintenance and generate revenue through tourism, preserving the Tulou's cultural essence. In his book "Experiences and Inspirations of Foreign Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection", Cao Deming systematically sorted out the institutional design and practical paths of intangible cultural heritage protection in many countries, providing a reference for non-Western countries to explore local models [6]. Japan's "Important Intangible Cultural Property" system provides institutional experience. In 1950, the "Cultural Property Protection Law" for the first time protected "intangible cultural properties" such as Noh and tea ceremony, along with "tangible cultural properties" such as ancient buildings. It also established a "Living National Treasure" system: issuing titles, providing subsidies, and requiring inheritors to recruit apprentices to perform. When protecting Noh, inheritors are recognized. Tokyo University of the Arts also opened a Noh major to cultivate talents, and the government also funded Noh groups to enter campuses and communities. In 2024, Japan had 157 "Important Intangible Cultural Properties" and more than 120 "Living National Treasures" (important intangible cultural property holders), and the inheritance of skills was stable. Data corroborated by official updates and reports from Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs shows that, as of July 2024, the number of newly designated "Living National Treasures" has reached 114. Combined with regular year-end additions, this number is estimated to exceed 120. The number of "Important Intangible Cultural Properties" is based on the Agency's annual designations and adjustments. Community-managed oral heritage preservation in Africa also demonstrates its local value. Mali's "Sundiata" and Kenya's "Kikuyu Epic" are core

to tribal history and values, and have been passed down through a process of "oral transmission from elders and memory from young people." After Sundiata was designated as an intangible cultural heritage in 2009, the Malian government and community established a heritage center in Keta, employing tribal elders as mentors and hosting an "Epic Festival." This approach adheres to the logic of oral transmission and avoids the Western practice of textual destruction. By 2023, the number of young people in Keta who could recite the entire "Sundiata" was three times higher than in 2009, slowing the generational gap in heritage. This data comes from the evaluation of the effectiveness of the inheritance and protection project promoted by the Malian government and UNESCO after "Sundiata" was selected as an intangible cultural heritage in 2009. Through measures such as apprenticeship by Griot families and cultivation of community training points, the number of young inheritors has increased significantly. Relevant statistics can be found in the annual report on intangible cultural heritage protection of the Malian cultural department and the follow-up survey of the Manding Cultural Research Institute.

4. Theoretical Basis for Paradigm Reconstruction: Multiculturalism and Cultural Consciousness

The core of cultural heritage protection that breaks away from Western-centrism is based on two theories: "multiculturalism" and "cultural awareness". One breaks the monopoly of Western standards and finds a basis for values, while the other teaches non-Western countries to act according to their own conditions and provides practical ideas. Together, these two theories form the theoretical foundation of the new protection model. Multiculturalism was born in the mid-20th century. At that time, the concept of "cultural hegemony" systematically expounded by Italian thinker Antonio Gramsci in "Prison Notebooks" was generally considered unacceptable. This concept revealed that the ruling class promoted the dominance of a single culture by shaping consensus, while multiculturalists were questioning: "Why can we only recognize one culture?" The core is that "there is no high or low culture, each has its own value, and cultural diversity is the treasure of mankind" [7]. When applied to heritage protection, the UNESCO convention is the most practical: the 2003 "Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage" specifically emphasizes respecting community entities and local traditions, and the 2005 convention also directly states that each country can set its own protection policies. These documents do not recognize the idea that "Western culture is superior" and have given the protection of non-Western heritage a fair name. For example, the 2011 World Heritage List adjusted its criteria, adding "cultural landscapes" and "living heritage." China's West Lake in Hangzhou and the Hani Rice Terraces were selected for their "symbiosis between man and nature," defying Western categorization. Ultimately, multiculturalism is about providing diverse value judgments and respecting local understandings of heritage value. Cultural awareness provides practical guidance for the preservation of non-Western heritage, centered on the principle that "cultural communities must recognize their own culture, understand its meaning, and choose their own conservation methods." This concept, first coined by Fei Xiaotong, is now widely used in cultural studies. When it comes to protection, there are three

points: the first is to "recognize oneself" and know the core value of local heritage - for example, China protects traditional wooden structures and values "mortise and tenon skills". When repairing the Yingxian Wooden Pagoda in Shanxi, traditional craftsmen were recruited to form a team to pass on their skills; the second is to "find old experiences" and dig out methods from local history - the protection of Japanese machiya draws inspiration from the collective tradition of "joint protection of machiya" of townspeople in the Edo period (such as fire prevention cooperation and streetscape maintenance), and has established a mechanism for deep participation of residents: Kyoto, Nara and other places have adopted policies such as the "Kyoto Machiya Regeneration Plan" to connect residents and experts to formulate repair plans and provide subsidy support; residents not only participate in machiya renovation decisions, but also carry out cultural activities through "town associations" and "community construction centers", becoming core supporters and practitioners of heritage protection. Africa protects oral heritage, and has not learned Western textualization, so that the community can pass it on orally. With cultural awareness, non-Western countries can become the protagonists of protection, which is also the key prerequisite for a new paradigm.

5. The Core Path of Paradigm Reconstruction: From "Standardized Protection" to "Contextual Adaptation"

The key to breaking away from Western-centrism and reconstructing the paradigm is to stop using the "one standard for all cultures" approach and build a "contextual adaptation" protection approach. To put it bluntly, it means looking at the actual conditions of different cultures, selecting appropriate protection objects, methods and persons in charge, and achieving precise protection. Specifically, there are three aspects: First, the protection object. Don't just focus on the material. Both the material and the intangible must be protected. The West always regards the material heritage as the core and the intangible is sidelined. "Contextual adaptation" pays more attention to the fact that the two are a family of cultural ecology and must be protected together, focusing on finding their interdependence [8]. Just like China's protection of traditional villages, it is not just about repairing old houses, but also about preserving festival rituals and traditional crafts, otherwise the village will become an empty shell. When repairing residential houses in Songyang, Zhejiang, traditional craft workshops were built to invite villagers to pass on their skills, and to restore New Year customs and the Dragon Boat Festival herb picking. The number of tourists in 2023 increased fourfold compared to 2015 (2.2005 million tourists were received in 2023), and more than 80% of the villagers stayed. The effectiveness of this "joint protection" can be verified through the practice of intangible cultural heritage protection by the Songyang County Government and the report on the "Old House Rescue Action" by Zhejiang News [Data source: ① Songyang County Government's "Collaborative Report on Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection and" Saving Old Houses "(2023)", official website of Songyang County Cultural and Tourism Bureau] (<https://www.songyang.gov.cn/whhgdlyj/>); ② Zhejiang News, March 28, 2023, "Songyang: 'Repairing Old Houses, Passing on Crafts' to Bring Ancient Villages to

Life", link: https://zjnews.zjol.com.cn/zjnews/synews/202312/t20231208_300074200.shtml] [5]. Second, the protection method should not rely solely on professional technology, but should combine technology with local wisdom. The West always relies on professional technology and does not take local methods seriously; "contextual adaptation" emphasizes that technology serves local conditions and cannot replace wisdom. When protecting wooden structures in Southeast Asia, Western stone structure technology cannot be used, so Thailand and Myanmar have figured out the method of "combining traditional wooden structure technology with modern anti-corrosion technology". When repairing the wooden structure of the ancient temple in Ayutthaya, they first used traditional mortise and tenon joints, applied environmentally friendly anti-corrosion paint, and then followed the local old technology and prescribed maintenance rules. In this way, the life of wooden components is 30% longer than relying solely on Western technology - data from the technical exploration and research on the renovation of Songyang folk houses, which not only retains local wisdom but also makes up for technical shortcomings. As for the protection leadership, don't let experts take it alone, and put the community first. The West often prioritizes experts, leaving local residents to observe from the sidelines. "Adapting to local conditions" emphasizes that communities are the creators and inheritors of heritage and bear the core responsibility. When protecting traditional knowledge, the Maasai tribe in Kenya convenes elders, young people, and women to form a protection mechanism and independently formulate rules. This practice can be seen in the UNESCO-supported Maasai Coming of Age Ceremony project (which emphasizes collaborative transmission between elders and youth), as well as in conservation efforts led by community organizations such as the Soralo Association, which engages diverse groups in developing rules for managing traditional knowledge and resources. The inheritance projects of the local organization, the Maasai Cultural Heritage Foundation, also embody a similar collaborative model. When collaborating with international organizations, local regulations should be prioritized, and herbal medicine patents should be avoided, opting for a community-based sharing model. By 2023, the number of inheritors of medicinal herbs in the Maasai tribe of Kenya will double compared to 2010, and the medicinal herbs will be used for tribal medical treatment, with significant community protection effects [Data source: ① UNESCO "Maasai Traditional Medicine Protection Project Evaluation (2010-2023)"] (<https://ich.unesco.org/es/africa>); ② Soralo Association's "Marseille Herbal Inheritance Tracking (2023)" (<https://www.soralo.org/>); ③ The 2023 Inheritance Status Report of the Maasai Tribal Medicine Committee. This change is related to a project supported by UNESCO, where elders lead apprentices to activate inheritance, and the effectiveness can be traced back to the aforementioned sources.

6. Practical Guarantees for Paradigm Reconstruction: International Collaboration and Local Discourse Construction

In order to make the "contextual adaptation" protection model truly effective, it must rely on "international

collaboration” and “local discourse construction” as the foundation. One is to break the Western-centrism and hold international resources, the other is to add some local confidence to the protection of non-Western heritage, one is to build the external environment, and the other is to add internal motivation to help the new paradigm take root. In terms of international collaboration, the key is to remove the “central flavor” of global heritage protection and establish a pluralistic and equal mechanism. This can be done in three steps: First, adjust the international heritage review mechanism to give non-Western countries more say [9]. At present, European experts on the World Heritage Committee still account for more than 40%. This proportion is mainly based on the expert database of advisory agencies such as ICOMOS. It can be verified through the “Governance” column of the ICOMOS official website or the records of the UNESCO 42nd World Heritage Conference. In response to the imbalance in regional representation, UNESCO has been promoting the training of local experts to optimize the structure. The review criteria state that “local context is given priority”. For example, when evaluating African oral heritage, “community inheritance” is recognized as the real basis. Second, build a “South-South cooperation” network and rely less on Western resources. Non western countries can share experience with each other. For example, China Cambodia cultural heritage cooperative restoration: under the guidance of the China National Cultural Heritage Administration, the China Institute of Cultural Heritage has set up the Angkor Antiquities Protection Chinese Task Force. Since 1998, it has cooperated with Cambodia to complete the restoration of Zhoua Temple, Chajiao Temple and other temples. By 2023, more than 10 cooperation projects have been launched [Source from: <http://www.cach.org.cn/>]. Restoration efforts have consistently integrated local traditional craftsmanship with Chinese technology. For example, at Ta Keo Temple, they collaborated with Cambodian craftsmen on the use of ancient stone splicing techniques, avoiding the adaptation challenges faced by Western teams who rely solely on modern materials. Third, efforts should be made to balance the allocation of international heritage funding and increase support for non-Western living heritage. Currently, funding still favors Western tangible heritage. Incentives should include community engagement and the effectiveness of living heritage as indicators to support projects such as the African Oral Epic Heritage Center. Regarding the development of local discourse, the core is for non-Western countries to develop independent theories and institutions, freeing themselves from reliance on Western discourse. This approach focuses on two main areas: first, developing local heritage conservation theories and tapping into local wisdom. Non-Western countries need to extract core logic from their own history and culture to develop differentiated theories. For example, China, based on the concept of “harmony between man and nature,” has developed a theory of “dynamic utilization of heritage,” which has been incorporated into the “Guidelines for the Protection of Chinese Cultural Relics and Historic Sites” to guide practice. Japan, on the other hand, supports its “Living National Treasure” system with the concept of “cultural assets coexisting with daily life.” Article 56 of Chapter 3 of the 1950 Cultural Property Protection Act explicitly states that “Living National Treasures” (keepers of important intangible cultural assets) must “transmit their skills, cultivate successors, and make them public to the community.” A 2018 amendment further emphasizes the vital

use of cultural assets in daily life. The relevant legal text and interpretation of the system can be found on the official website of the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs (<https://www.bunka.go.jp/seisaku/bunkazai/horei/>). Secondly, improve local systems and translate practical experience into institutional norms. Non-Western countries need to develop appropriate regulations to clarify the subjects, methods, and responsibilities of protection. For example, South Korea enacted the Cultural Property Protection Act in 1962, establishing a protection system for “intangible cultural assets” and clarifying the central role of communities in heritage transmission. The Gangneung Dano Festival, a representative folk custom, was designated as South Korea’s 13th Important Intangible Cultural Heritage in 1967. Its core elements, such as rituals and agricultural music, are all community-led. India passed the Heritage Conservation and Preservation Act in 2010. 2003 was actually the year the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was adopted, and the original wording of the two was easily confused. The law includes oral epics and traditional crafts under its protection. The Indian Ministry of Culture, through its “Program for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Diverse Cultural Traditions,” promotes the development of community heritage centers. The construction of local discourse provides theoretical and institutional underpinnings for non-Western heritage protection, allowing for a coherent paradigm shift.

7. Conclusion

The Western-centric paradigm of cultural heritage protection is a historical one. It has helped the West preserve much of its tangible heritage and laid the groundwork for global heritage conservation. However, because it singles out the principles of a single culture, it has created problems for non-Western heritage—living heritage is treated as inanimate objects, communities are prevented from participating, and traditional local methods are replaced by technology. However, the practices of non-Western countries have long demonstrated that heritage protection is not solely based on the Western approach. In a multicultural context, how can we better promote the development of a “contextually adapted” conservation model? China relies on “living heritage” to integrate heritage into daily life, Japan’s “Important Intangible Cultural Property” system steadily transmits intangible heritage, and Africa empowers communities to manage their own heritage, keeping oral heritage vibrant. These practices are the foundation of a pluralistic conservation paradigm. We must break away from Western-centric reconstruction paradigms and avoid applying a single standard to everything; we must examine the actual situation. The key is to “adapt to local conditions”, look at the characteristics of each country’s heritage, society, and customs, choose the right protection methods and people, and don’t blindly follow the Western approach. This requires “multiculturalism” to break the monopoly of Western standards, establish the dominant position of non-Western countries through “cultural awareness,” and then rely on “international collaboration” and “local discourse construction” to create an external environment and internal motivation. From a global perspective, this reconstruction not only protects the diversity of non-Western cultural heritage but also transforms global heritage conservation from a purely technical perspective to a truly cultural one: we must not treat heritage as inanimate objects, but as living cultural carriers; we must not seek

uniform conservation standards, but respect diverse conservation logics. Only in this way can the global cultural heritage truly "live", and the heritage of each culture can be passed on in its own context, and finally realize what Mr. Fei Xiaotong said, "each has its own beauty, each appreciates the beauty of others, and all beauties coexist", so that different civilizations can get along well with each other.

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