

Reinstating Traditional Horsemanship of Ethnic Minorities in Southern China by Excavation, Sorting, and Comparative Research

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Abstract: In August 1991, the book *Chinese Nation's Traditional Sports History* was published, and it was hailed as the “masterpiece of Chinese folk sports” by academic circles. In this masterpiece, the traditional horsemanship of 23 ethnic minorities and that of 10 southern ethnic minorities represented by the Miao, Yi, Bai, Shui, Hani, Naxi, and other ethnic groups has been included. For the first time, this masterpiece integrates the traditional horsemanship of the ethnic minorities in Southern China in one volume. The disadvantage is that most of the included traditional horsemanship of ethnic minorities only made a brief introduction to the time, place, and form of its development. However, under the global trend of the transition from traditional society to modern society and post-modern society, the traditional horsemanship of ethnic minorities in Southern China is facing an increasingly serious crisis of inheritance and disconnection, resulting in a gradual extinction of related traditional cultural heritage. The characteristics are gradually lost because of it. Therefore, it is essential to return to the historical and cultural field of traditional horsemanship, conduct rescue excavation, sort out the traditional horsemanship of ethnic minorities in Southern China, rescue the records of traditional horsemanship that is disappearing or undergoing drastic changes, as well as carry out comparative studies on this basis. This is not only an important way to inherit the traditional culture of ethnic minorities, but also means to protect the diversity of ethnic cultures and promote the development of exotic villages.

Keywords: Ethnic minorities in Southern China; Traditional horsemanship; Rescue excavation; Comparative research

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1. Introduction

Equestrian is a long-standing sports skill, which has played a pivotal role in the process of Chinese civilization. According to the *Rites of Zhou*, raising a country by Taoism requires the six arts of teaching; that is, to be proficient in the six arts: rites, music, archery, chariotry, calligraphy, and mathematics. As early as the pre-Qin period, there were many records of equestrianism in China. Historical allusions about northern ethnics' horsemanship during the Spring and Autumn period as well as Warring States period, such as “Hufu riding and shooting,” are the most eye-catching typical representatives. For a long time, most people have mistakenly believed that only the northern people perform well in equestrianism. In fact, many peoples in the south also have their own practice of equestrianism. Not only there are records of ancient Nanzhao, Dali, and Tubo equestrianism in historical records, but many ethnic minorities (such as Yi, Miao, Shui, Bai, etc.) in Southern China still have traditional equestrian inheritance.

However, it is regrettable that the specific connotations and characteristics of the traditional horsemanship of ethnic minorities in Southern China are concealed from the outside world; moreover, due to the lack of adequate attention and protection, the traditional horsemanship of many ethnic groups is in a state of crisis and on the verge of being lost. There are many reasons behind the burgeoning of this situation, and the fact that relevant investigation and research work cannot keep up with the national and folk sports heritage is undoubtedly one of the main factors. So far, there are relatively few academic papers on the equestrianism of southern ethnic minorities, and academic writings are even rarer. Most of the existing papers on this subject only focus on the horse racing activities of a few ethnic groups (Tibetan, Mongolian, and Shui); even so, they remain at the general introduction level. Ethnographies or special investigations and studies on traditional horsemanship of ethnic minorities are still rare; even if they are mentioned occasionally, they are very brief. These conditions have caused people to lack a sense of familiarity with the vast majority of southern ethnic minorities' traditional horsemanship, lacking a comprehensive and in-depth understanding, let alone protecting the cultural heritage. China has always attached great importance to the excavation, sorting, and research of the traditional sports heritage of ethnic minorities. This is inseparable from the traditional sports culture that plays an important role in inheriting and developing excellent traditional culture, promoting exchanges and blending of various ethnic groups, improving the physical health of the people, as well as enriching the spiritual and cultural life of the people of all ethnic groups^[1]. In view of this, it is then necessary to adhere to the idea of “when ceremonies become lost at the court, it is necessary to search for them in the countryside” and venture into southern ethnic minority settlements where traditional horsemanship is still inherited to carry out field investigations. The rescue excavation and comparative research of traditional equestrianism have become important academic tasks that need to be carried out urgently.

2. The status quo and necessity of excavation and comparative research on traditional horsemanship of ethnic minorities in Southern China

Equestrianism also played an important role in the shaping of Western civilization, and scholars abroad have been paying attention to its academic value and far-reaching practical significance for a long time. In Chamberlin's monograph, *How the Horse Has Shaped Civilization*, he systematically discussed the relationship between equestrianism in production, transportation, war, and human civilization^[2]. However, so far, no one from foreign academic circles has specifically conducted investigations or studies on the traditional horsemanship of ethnic minorities in China. However, there are references to the traditional horsemanship of the ethnic minorities in Southern China in overseas treatises on ethnic minorities in China, such as *Miao Culture and Customs* by an Australian Hmong scholar, Gary Yia Lee^[3], and *Forgotten Kingdom* by a former Soviet writer, Peter Goullart^[4]; a Brazilian scholar, Miriam Adelman, and an Australian scholar, Kirrilly Thompson^[5], co-authored *Equestrian Cultures in Global and Local Contexts* as a representative, mentioning the traditional horsemanship of Miao, Yi, Bai, and other ethnic minorities in Southern China. All these have important reference value for the rescue excavation and comparative research on the traditional equestrianism of ethnic minorities in Southern China.

From Xia, Shang, to Ming and Qing Dynasties, equestrianism played an important role in the development of ancient Chinese society. According to the *Bamboo Annals*, Shang Dynasty's prime minister took a horse, and then moved his capital to Shangqiu. It can be seen that riding horses and using carts were very popular at that time. In addition, according to *Xinan Yi Zhi*, the strength of ancient Nanzhao is not independent to the possession of a cavalry with superb riding skills. With the development of society, equestrianism has gradually evolved into an important part of traditional festivals among southern ethnic minorities, as represented by the horse race held during the Torch Festival with a history of more than two thousand years; it originated from the horse race held during March Fair of the Bai people during the

Yonghui period of Tang Dynasty. However, as of today, there are no books dedicated to the traditional horsemanship of southern ethnic minorities in China. What is gratifying is that in the monographs on the traditional sports of ethnic minorities, there are discussions on traditional equestrianism in China, such as in the *National Sports Collection* by Hu Xiaoming^[6], and the *Chinese Minority Traditional Sports History* by Xu Yuliang^[7]. Most of them are about the Mongolian, Hui, Manchu, Kazak, and other northern ethnic minorities as well as the Tibetan traditional equestrianism, but they rarely mention the traditional horsemanship of southern ethnic minorities. It is worth mentioning that the *Chinese Traditional Sports History*^[8], which has been praised by academic circles as “the masterpiece of Chinese folk sports,” included the traditional horsemanship of 8 southern minorities, including Miao, Yi, Buyi, Bai, Hani, Gelao, Shui, and Naxi. The disadvantage is that this work is only a popular introduction to its development time, place, and form. In addition, as of December 31, 2020, through a search on China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), it has been found that there are currently less than a hundred journal articles about traditional horsemanship in the country. Even in these existing achievements, more than half are directed at certain ethnic groups, such as the Mongolians and Tibetans. There is a lack of adequate care for other ethnic groups, especially the traditional horsemanship of southern ethnic minorities.

What is gratifying is that with the efforts of some scholars, such as Zhong Dehong, Xu Fengchi, Wei Yuzhang, Liu Shibin, Gu Xiaoyan, and Chunyun, the traditional horsemanship of some southern ethnic minorities is now known to the world. However, this is only the tip of the iceberg of the traditional equestrianism of ethnic minorities in Southern China. *A Preliminary Study of the History of Yi People's Horse Racing Activities* by Zhong Dehong^[9], *The Bai People's Horse Racing* by Xu Fengchi^[10], *The Miao People's Horse Racing in Xinchang Commune, Duyun County*^[11] by Wei Yuzhang, etc. are popular scientific introductions to the traditional horsemanship of Yi, Bai, Miao, and other ethnic groups in the academic world. They provide important clues for the excavation and sorting of this topic. In addition, in *The Origin of Naxi Race Horse Racing from the Custom of Cremation*^[12], He Chunyun analyzed the origin of horse racing of the Naxi race based on field research. This is currently the only academic paper devoted to the traditional horsemanship of the Naxi people. It is worth mentioning that there are more than 15 academic papers published on the horse racing of Shui nationality during Duan Festival, such as *Exploring the Origin of Aquatic Horse Racing* by Liu Shibin^[13], *The Survival State of Traditional Sports Culture in Shui Nationality Cottages – The Changes of Shui Nationality's “Duan Festival” Horse Racing Activities* by Gu Xiaoyan^[14], etc. This has important practical guiding significance for the excavation and sorting of traditional equestrianism of other ethnic minorities in the south.

In summary, the research on traditional equestrianism of the ethnic minorities in Southern China is still very weak, except for the Shui nationality, with less than 10 studies. Existing research has also stayed at the stage of general descriptions of the form and content of traditional equestrian among southern ethnic minorities. No one has carried out multiethnic and regional excavation or research on the traditional equestrianism of southern minorities, let alone multiple comparative studies on that and even traditional Chinese equestrianism. However, in recent years, with the continuous deepening of globalization, especially the continuous development of the western region, the economy and society of southern minority areas in China are undergoing drastic transformations, including many ethnic minority traditional festivals and traditional national sports. In this context, traditional horsemanship of ethnic minorities is undergoing the “survival of the fittest,” similar to the evolution of natural species, in which those who adapt will survive, while those who do not will be eliminated. Those that are “unsuitable” are gradually dying out or in an endangered state, while those that are “suitable” are undergoing drastic modern transformation. In view of this, the rescue excavation and comparative research on traditional equestrianism of the ethnic minorities in Southern China has become an urgent academic subject.

3. The excavation and comparative research on the traditional equestrian of ethnic minorities in Southern China create a new path of research content, perspectives, and methods

3.1. Research content

The traditional horsemanship of ethnic minorities in Southern China is undergoing rescue excavation, sorting, and comparative research. As the name suggests, the traditional horsemanship of ethnic minorities in Southern China that is still alive or has value for mining and sorting should be taken as the subject. In addition, various national horse control techniques, as well as investigations and multi-perspective comparative studies on the natural geographical environment as well as the social and cultural spaces involved in traditional equestrianism should be included. The traditional horsemanship of ethnic minorities in Southern China is mainly distributed among the ethnic communities in Yunnan, Guizhou, Hunan, Guangxi, Sichuan, and Chongqing in the southwestern region. The traditional equestrian resources of ethnic minorities in Yunnan and Guizhou are the most abundant. However, what is regrettable is that apart from the traditional equestrianism of the Shui ethnic group (15 articles), there are currently only six ethnic minorities in the south of China, including Miao, Yi, Buyi, Bai, Hani, and Naxi. However, the form of their development is becoming more and more single, and most of them are carried out during folk festivals. Based on this, the content for the rescue excavation and comparative research on traditional equestrianism of ethnic minorities in Southern China should focus on the aforementioned six ethnic minority settlements in Yunnan and Guizhou as well as carry out rescue excavation, sorting, and comparative research on traditional horsemanship during various folk festivals.

According to the research content, around the aforementioned research subjects, the work can be carried out from eight aspects. At the level of academic research, the traditional horsemanship of ethnic minorities should be placed in a habitat where it depends on all-round investigation and multi-perspective analysis. The inherent relationship between the traditional equestrianism of ethnic minorities and social life as well as cultural traditions should be emphasized, the connotation characteristics of the traditional equestrianism of ethnic minorities should be excavated, its essential attributes, ethnic characteristics, and regional colors should be expounded theoretically, its values should be excavated and interpreted, in order to promote the theoretical construction and method innovation of the research on this matter, and the research results should then be used to feedback or promote the work of rescue excavation and inheritance protection of the traditional equestrianism of ethnic minorities. As far as the work ideas of rescue excavation and comparative research on this subject are concerned, the comprehensive and systematic investigation of traditional equestrianism of ethnic minorities in the research content is the primary task. To this end, it is necessary to first determine the overall distribution of traditional equestrianism of ethnic minorities in Southern China through multi-channel and all-round literature review as well as field inspections; then, considering the opinions and suggestions of experts, the traditional horsemanship of six ethnic minorities, including Miao, Yi, Buyi, Bai, Hani, and Naxi, can be identified as the research subjects. The representatives can be selected based on the geographical distribution of the aforementioned ethnic communities. The ethnic minority villages are field observation points, in which comprehensive and systematic rescue excavation work should be carried out in these areas. Finally, on the basis of the aforementioned work, a comparative research on the intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic aspects of traditional horsemanship of ethnic minorities in southern China can be carried out.

The first part includes the traditional horsemanship habitat of the ethnic minorities in Southern China. The investigation should be based on the specific context of being born in Sri Lanka and growing up in that area. The main content of this part of the work is to conduct background investigations on the traditional horsemanship of six ethnic minorities (Miao, Yi, Buyi, Bai, Hani, and Naxi) in six provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities): Yunnan, Guizhou, Hunan, Guangxi, Sichuan, and Chongqing. It is mainly an in-depth investigation of the natural geographic environment as well as the social and cultural spaces on

which it depends on for survival, thus laying a solid foundation for subsequent rescue excavation and sorting.

The second part includes the excavation and arrangement of the traditional horsemanship of various nationalities. In the excavation and sorting of the traditional horsemanship of the Miao nationality, it has been found that there are many traditional Miao festivals. Among them, the Kaili Horse Racing Festival, Leishan Miao Nian, Huangping Lusheng Festival, Majiang Temple Fair, Rongshui Horse Fighting Festival, and others. Traditional equestrianism is considered an important activity, either dedicated to horse racing or concurrently with horse racing. The situation varies from place to place. The traditional horsemanship of the Miao nationality can be divided into big horse race, trot horse race, and horse fighting. This part is to excavate and organize the traditional horsemanship of the Miao nationality in the aforementioned festivals.

The third part includes the excavation and arrangement of the traditional horsemanship of the Yi nationality. The traditional horsemanship of the Yi nationality is a traditional sports activity that is generally carried out. There are many records about traditional equestrianism of the Yi people in local chronicles, such as *Xinan Yi Zhi* and *Yue Xi Ting Zhi*. The traditional horsemanship of the Yi people mainly includes three forms: horse racing, horse walking, and horsemanship. Therefore, this part is mainly to excavate and sort out the aforementioned traditional equestrianism of the Yi people (origin, evolution, project, value, and development status).

The fourth part includes the excavation and arrangement of the traditional horsemanship of the Buyi people. Traditional equestrianism is a traditional sport that the Buyi people love to hear and see, and it is also an important part of the festival. The most representative traditional festivals of the Buyi people include New Year's Day, Sanyuesan Festival, Siyueba Festival, Liuyueliu Festival, and Hop Flower Festival. The traditional horsemanship of the Buyi ethnic group is mainly in the form of speed horse racing. Therefore, this part is to excavate and sort out the traditional horsemanship of the Buyi ethnic group during their traditional festivals.

The fifth part includes the excavation and arrangement of the traditional horsemanship of the Bai nationality. The traditional horsemanship of the Bai nationality has a long history. In the Ming Dynasty, Xu Xiake recorded the horse races of the Bai nationality during their festivals in his travel notes. Their traditional festivals include March Fair, Rao Sanling, and Torch Festival. Traditional horsemanship is the most popular activity during the festivals. Therefore, this part reflects the excavation and sorting of traditional equestrianism with a long history, such as the March Fair in Dali and Jianchuan Mule Horse Club.

The sixth part includes the excavation and arrangement of the traditional horsemanship of the Hani nationality. The traditional horsemanship of the Hani nationality evolved from various activities, such as production, labor, and military struggle. Its traditional horsemanship is mainly observed during traditional festivals, such as October Year (Zalet) and June Year (Kuzhaza). Therefore, this part is to excavate and sort out the traditional horsemanship in Honghe, Yuanyang, Luchun, and Jinping counties in the Hani and Yi Autonomous Prefecture of Yunnan.

The seventh part includes the excavation and arrangement of the traditional horsemanship of the Naxi people. The Lijiang area, where the Naxi people live, is famous for producing horses, and it is known as "Hua Ma Guo." It is an important passage for the ancient "Southern Silk Road" and "Ancient Tea Horse Road." The equestrian culture of the Naxi people is very well-developed, and its traditional equestrian resources are also very rich, which include walking, racing, horse racing, picking up performances, as well as riding and shooting. Therefore, the excavation of the aforementioned traditional equestrianism is the main content of this part. It can be seen that the excavation and research on the traditional equestrianism of ethnic minorities in Southern China should begin with the investigation of ethnic festivals, and then,

carrying out a comprehensive as well as systematic investigation and research on the historical evolution, activity forms, and main contents of their traditional festivals. On this basis, the characteristics, connotation, value, as well as the inheritance and protection of traditional horsemanship can be excavated and sorted out as the main contents of the festival. In addition, traditional horsemanship plays an important role in the social development of ethnic minorities in Southern China. There are records of traditional horsemanship in historical records and descriptions of these ethnic historical books. Therefore, the excavation and sorting out of these “historical” traditional horsemanship are important tasks.

The eighth part includes a comparative study of traditional horsemanship among the minority ethnic groups in Southern China. This part is based on the work of the aforementioned parts. The comparative study of the traditional horsemanship of various ethnic minorities is within and between the ethnic groups. Intra-ethnic comparisons refer to comparisons between different branches of the same ethnic group and different regions; inter-ethnic comparisons include the comparison of traditional equestrianism among the above-mentioned six ethnic groups, the comparison between the traditional equestrianism of southern ethnic minorities and the traditional equestrianism that is currently focused by academic circles (Mongolian and Tibetan), as well as the comparative study of modern western equestrianism. From the perspectives of classification, form, connotation, etc., the traditional equestrianism of different ethnic groups, regions, and periods should be compared and studied, their similarities and differences should be analyzed, the reasons for such similarities and differences should be explored, the process and mechanism of their mutual influence should be scrutinized, and the way to realize the harmonious coexistence of multiethnic culture should be explored.

There should be a long-term mechanism for the inheritance and protection of ethnic minorities in Southern China. In order to realize the effective protection and inheritance of traditional equestrianism as well as the intangible sports cultural heritage, rescue excavation and comparative research should not be the bottom line. On the basis of a comprehensive and systematic rescue and sorting, the finest items should be selected to guide the involvement of social forces, promote their integration and development with tourism and culture, as well as assist the revitalization of rural areas and the construction of a modern new countryside. Only in this way can the traditional horsemanship of ethnic minorities in the country develop in a healthy and orderly manner.

3.2. Perspectives and methods

As far as the work ideas of the rescue excavation and comparative research on the traditional equestrianism of ethnic minorities in China are concerned, the comprehensive and systematic investigation of the traditional equestrianism of ethnic minorities is the primary task.

The traditional horsemanship of the ethnic minorities in Southern China is closely related to many aspects, such as social life, religious culture, production methods, customs, and habits. This requires an interdisciplinary and a multi-perspective start as well as a comprehensive application of relevant research methods from multiple disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, ethnology, folklore, and physical education. Several research methods may be used.

(1) Fieldwork

On the basis of numerous literatures and suggestions from experts, the field observation points are determined, and then field investigations are carried out on the traditional horsemanship of ethnic minorities in the field observation points. For example, in the excavation and sorting of traditional Miao equestrianism, first, through preliminary work, the field observation points for traditional Miao equestrianism include Kaili Guding, Kaihuai, Huangping Gulong, Leishan Danjiang, Xijiang, Majiang Youshi, Bibo, Danzhai Nangao, Rongshui Antai, Dongtou, Wenshan Maguan, etc. Field

investigations on the natural environment of traditional equestrianism, social and cultural spaces, as well as other aspects can then be carried out in the above-mentioned field observation points, while paying attention to the use of the fieldwork method in sports ethnography.

(2) Multi-form interviews

Various forms of interviews, including open, structured, semi-structured, in-depth interviews, individual, interactive, face-to-face conversations, and focus group interviews are carried out. The interviewees mainly include local ethnic cultural research experts, government officials, organizers of the traditional festivals, traditional equestrian participants, and compatriots of various ethnic groups who have come to participate in festive activities.

(3) Documentation

In the process of conducting field investigations and writing research reports, it is necessary to comprehensively consult relevant literature records, such as ethnography, local chronicles, etc., as much as possible to verify historical facts. At the same time, after the interviewees have made their statements and explanations on the issues related to traditional equestrianism of the minority people, it is important to comprehensively consult previous similar analyses or explanations and compare them with each other as well as provide evidence to ensure more rigorous results.

(4) Comparative research

Combining the frontier dynamics of related theoretical research in physical education, anthropology, sociology, and other disciplines, a comparative study of traditional equestrianism within and between ethnic groups should be conducted. Intra-ethnic comparisons include comparisons between different branches of the same ethnic group and different regions; inter-ethnic comparisons include the comparison of traditional equestrianism among the six ethnic groups mentioned above, the comparison between the traditional equestrianism of southern ethnic minorities and the traditional Mongolian and Tibetan equestrianism that the current academic circles focus on, as well as modern Western equestrianism. On this basis, the similarities and differences as well as the causes of the results should be analyzed.

4. Re-understanding the academic value and practical significance of the excavation and comparative research on the traditional equestrianism of southern ethnic minorities

Horses played an irreplaceable role in production activities, military operations, and transportation in China, especially in ethnic minority areas during ancient times. Various techniques of controlling horses were born from this. To this day, equestrianism still plays an important role in ethnic minority areas in Southern China. Traditional equestrianism represented by the Tibetan, Yi, Bai, and Shui nationalities has become a key symbol of the nation. It contains rich national historical and cultural memories as well as many practical life skills, which play a decisive role in boosting the nation's cultural self-confidence and cultural consciousness. However, the traditional horsemanship of most ethnic minorities in Southern China has not received the care that it deserves from academic circles. In the wave of globalization, the traditional equestrianism of ethnic minorities in Southern China is facing an increasingly serious crisis of inheritance and extinction. This traditional culture is gradually disappearing in the dust of history, with a gradual loss of national identity ^[15]. Therefore, returning to the historical and cultural context of this field, it is imperative to rescue and sort out the traditional equestrianism of ethnic minorities in Southern China, record the traditional equestrianism that is facing extinction or undergoing drastic changes, and then carry out comparative studies. This is an important way of inheriting the traditional culture of ethnic minorities, which undoubtedly has extremely important academic value and practical significance in protecting the diversity of ethnic culture and promoting the construction of a harmonious society.

4.1. Academic value

First of all, in terms of academic thinking, different from the traditional equestrian research in the past, this study upholds the academic thought of courtesy. It aims to excavate and sort out more traditional equestrian skills of southern ethnic minorities as well as reveal their connotations and characteristics, so as to enrich the equestrian resources in the country and make up for the lack of academic research in this subject. At the same time, since this subject is based on excavation and comparative research, intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic comparative research should be carried out on the traditional horsemanship of ethnic minorities in Southern China. It would be helpful for academic circles to have a more comprehensive understanding of the reality and connotation characteristics of the traditional horsemanship of southern ethnic minorities.

Secondly, from an academic point of view, in the past, the focus of equestrian research in China was on Western modern equestrianism marked by the Olympics. The research on traditional equestrianism of China's ethnic minorities is still very weak, and only a few scholars are paying attention to the traditional equestrianism of southern ethnic minorities. Among the existing results, almost all of them are general descriptions of the history and status quo of the traditional equestrianism of a single ethnic group. Cross-regional and multi-ethnic research can be said to be elusive without any comparative studies. This makes the connotation and characteristics of traditional equestrianism of many southern ethnic minorities mysterious to the outside world. Therefore, this subject is the first to conduct a comparative study of the above-mentioned explorations on the traditional horsemanship of ethnic minorities in the country, which would help the research on traditional Chinese horsemanship to develop to a higher level.

Finally, in terms of academic methods, the traditional horsemanship of southern ethnic minorities is mainly passed on in remote mountainous areas. The field research method of sports ethnography should be adopted to realize the understanding of its details. For the fieldwork to be successful, it is necessary to mingle with the locals and establish a good cooperative relationship. Therefore, the newly developed method of "collaborative ethnography" has been introduced into the field investigation of this subject. This is rarely seen in studies on traditional national sports in China. It is the first time in the research of equestrianism. Previous sports ethnography studies are generally limited to the study of a single nation or a single community. However, the research of this subject intends to jump out of this yoke and conduct comparative research on the basis of the research on single nation equestrianism. The method has a certain degree of innovation.

4.2. Practical significance

In January 2018, the State Sports General Administration and the National Ethnic Affairs Commission jointly proposed the vigorous development of the traditional sports industry of ethnic minorities along with rural revitalization and poverty alleviation. The traditional horsemanship of ethnic minorities in Southern China is not only the cultural heritage produced by the local people in the process of transforming nature or ethnic migration, but also the storing of rich social knowledge and wisdom gained from surviving. It is an important part of the traditional culture of ethnic minorities and an important manifestation of the perseverance as well as tenacity of many southern ethnic minorities. The traditional horsemanship of southern ethnic minorities is highly ornamental, participatory, and interesting, with a high potential for tourism development. The rescue excavation and comparative study of the traditional equestrianism of southern ethnic minorities would not only help boost their cultural self-confidence, but also guide the intervention of social forces and promote its relationship with tourism and culture. Integrated development can also help ethnic areas and ethnic minority people win the battle against poverty as well as promote the harmonious development of village communities in ethnic minority areas in Southern China, so as to build a beautiful socialist village in the new era.

5. Conclusion

According to “Traditional Sports of the Chinese Nation,” more than a dozen southern ethnic minorities, represented by Miao, Yi, Bai, Shui, Hani, Naxi, etc., possess their own traditional horsemanship, reflecting the country’s rich southern traditional horsemanship resources. Since the 1980s, academic circles began to pay attention to the traditional horsemanship of ethnic minorities in China. Nowadays, the research on traditional horsemanship of ethnic minorities has achieved certain results in quantity. The research topics are constantly expanding and deepening, the research methods are constantly being updated, and the research theories are constantly being enriched. However, the current academic research results on traditional ethnic horsemanship are far from the actual development of the traditional horsemanship of ethnic minorities, and there are even some that are in a state of being raised in boudoirs. In recent years, the wave of sports globalization marked by the Olympics has engulfed Western sports culture and its values to “gently kill” other national sports cultures in the world. Western sports discourse has become extremely fierce, resulting in the dissolution and submergence of traditional Chinese sports discourse as well as the collapse of many ethnic minority traditional sports in China or their reconstruction with modern Western sports. In addition, with globalization, the homogeneity of traditional horsemanship among ethnic minorities in China has become more and more common, and its regional and national characteristics are disappearing. Therefore, by clarifying the status quo of the development of ethnic minorities in Southern China, it is then possible to re-understand the significance and value of the excavation and sorting of traditional equestrianism of ethnic minorities in Southern China as well as to waltz in the field on a new path. The excavation and sorting of traditional equestrianism of ethnic minorities in Southern China as well as more traditional equestrianism of ethnic minorities with rich connotation and various forms, the comparison of their similarities and differences, as well as the analysis of their causes on this basis would lead to a new trend of research on the traditional equestrian of ethnic minorities in China and promote the development of this research and that of traditional sports disciplines of ethnic minorities in depth.

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