

The Main Experiences and Insights of the "Two Mountains" Practice Innovation Base in Chinese Mountainous Counties

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Abstract: This study examines the experiences and insights of the "Two Mountains" practice innovation base through a review of the literature, empirical analysis, and on-site research, utilizing Qingyuan County in Lishui City, Zhejiang Province, as a case study. The study examines the interconnected relationship between green mountains and gold and silver mountains within the framework of sustainable development and takes into account the larger context of China's ecological civilization construction. It makes the claim that ecological advantages can be converted into economic advantages. The study summarizes Qingyuan County's experiences and emphasizes how the county realized that green mountains and clear waters alone make up "gold and silver mountains". The county actively looks for ways to turn ecological advantages into financial gains and has established a green industry system based on ecological tourism, industry, and agriculture. Ecological capital is created through this transformation, which makes ecological resources a vital component of the regional economy within the ecological region. The paper talks about the lessons learned and experiences that can be applied to further integrate development and protection, combine substantive operations and reform, and combine model demonstrations with experience sharing.

Keywords: Ecological Civilization; Two Mountains; China; Green Efficiency.

1. Background

The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2022 stressed in its report the need to plan development from the standpoint of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature, and to firmly establish and implement the idea that "clear waters and green mountains are invaluable assets". In 2005, Comrade Xi Jinping, the Secretary of the Zhejiang Provincial Party Committee, first introduced the "Two Mountains" concept, which emphasizes the fundamental idea that "green mountains and clear waters are invaluable assets". He made this statement during his inspection and research in Yucun, Anji County, Huzhou City.

China has prioritized the development of an ecological society in recent years. People are gradually learning that the environment is essential to survival and development as the tensions between resource scarcity, economic development, and environmental deterioration become more and more obvious. We can only be "unafraid of having no firewood to burn" if we can guarantee that "clear waters and green mountains remain". Transforming ecological advantages into economic advantages has established an integrated and harmonious relationship. Grassroots governance in China has learned through promoting green development that "clear waters and green mountains" can continuously yield "invaluable assets", where the "invaluable assets" themselves are the "clear waters and green mountains".

On the one hand, community-based initiatives have actively undertaken a number of actions and carried out a range of projects to enhance and preserve the natural environment. This entails fortifying the regulation of industrial pollution, persistently tackling dust and water pollution, and forcefully closing down businesses that do not adhere to the law. On the one hand, community-based initiatives have actively undertaken a number of actions and

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In China, the "Two Mountains Index" indicator system has been established. This system is based on principles of conserving natural resources, rational spatial patterns, and optimizing production and lifestyle. It incorporates key indicator elements such as the bottom line for environmental quality, ecological environment redlines, and resource utilization upper limits. It clearly defines four major content areas: ecological environment, characteristic economy, people's livelihood development, and security system. The "Two Mountains Index" indicator system was developed in China. The foundation of this system is the preservation of natural resources, the optimization of production and lifestyle, and sensible spatial patterns. It includes important indicator components including the upper bounds on resource use, redlines for the ecological environment, and the bottom line for environmental quality. The text provides a precise definition of four primary topic categories, including the ecological environment, people's livelihood development, characteristic economy, and security system. Three batches of 53 "Two Mountains" bases have been recognized by the Ministry of Ecology and Environment since the inception of the program in 2016. Lishui City, Zhejiang Province's Qingyuan County is one of these approved bases.

Lishui City is a mountainous city situated in Zhejiang's southwest area. Lishui is an important ecological buffer in East China. It has unmatched ecological benefits and is known as the "Number One Ecological City in China". The city is located at the highest point in Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces. Several rivers originate here, including the Ou, Qiantang, Min, Feiyun, Ling, and Fuan rivers, which have supported civilizations along their banks. With 3,537 peaks

reaching elevations of 1,000 meters or above, the city boasts an amazing 81.7% forest coverage percentage. With a height of 1,929 meters, Huangmaojian, located atop Longquan Fengyang Mountain, is the highest point in both Jiangsu and Zhejiang.

For many years running, Lishui has maintained its top spot in Zhejiang Province when it comes to both public satisfaction and the ecological environment index. Qingyuan County maintains the fundamental idea that "clean waters and green mountains are invaluable assets", in accordance with the sincere directives of General Secretary Xi Jinping to "protect the ecology for the greatest political achievement" in Qingyuan. For many years running, Lishui has maintained its top spot in Zhejiang Province when it comes to both public satisfaction and the ecological environment index. Qingyuan County maintains the fundamental idea that "clean waters and green mountains are invaluable assets", in accordance with the sincere directives of General Secretary Xi Jinping to "protect the ecology for the greatest political achievement" in Qingyuan.

2. Methodology

Literature Review: The most recent national and provincial materials, particularly those pertaining to the advancements, creative solutions, and difficulties faced during the building of the Qingyuan "Two Mountains" practice base, were swiftly acquired through field visits to pertinent departments engaged in the "Two Mountains" practice. In order to further enrich resources and data, pertinent works, articles, and research findings pertaining to the ecological civilization concept and the "Two Mountains" concept were studied concurrently using a variety of media, including the internet, newspapers, magazines, libraries, etc. Summarized and reviewed for discussion and conclusions were the experiences, flaws, and barriers in Qingyuan County, based on a thorough assessment of pertinent theoretical underpinnings.

Empirical Analysis: The research object chosen was Qingyuan County. It has better ecological conditions despite being economically undeveloped. A development path for further realizing the transformation of the "Two Mountains" and enhancing green efficiency was proposed based on other regions' experiences through the analysis and study of Qingyuan County's mountain and water resources, along with the ecological civilization concept and related theories, as well as the practical characteristics of Qingyuan County.

Field Research: To learn more about the current state of the "Two Mountains" practice innovation base and the problems that are arising with the building of the huge garden's central region, a field visit was made to Qingyuan County in Lishui City, Zhejiang Province. On-site inspections provided more first-hand information for the study.

3. Theoretical Basis

In the international research on ecological civilization theory, the concept of ecological civilization emerged through profound reflection on traditional industrial development patterns and ecological crises. In the mid-20th century, issues such as resource scarcity, environmental pollution, and ecological imbalance became increasingly severe, leading people to recognize the importance of ecological environmental issues and reflect on the drawbacks of industrialization models. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 established the basic

strategies and approaches for sustainable development, deepening people's understanding of the relationship between resources, environment, and the economy. The World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 identified economic development, social progress, and environmental protection as the three pillars of sustainable development, gradually establishing a consensus on the ecological transformation of traditional industrial civilization.

Scholars have explored the construction of ecological civilization from theoretical and practical perspectives, including ecological modernization theory, ecological economics, and sustainable development theory. They have analyzed the realization paths of ecological civilization construction from five aspects: economic development mode, industrial structure, production methods, consumption patterns, and institutional safeguards. Morrison (1995) first introduced the concept of ecological civilization in the English context, pointing out that global driving forces and specific policies are promoting the shift from industrial civilization to ecological civilization. The self-destructive reality of industrial civilization provides the necessity and conditions for ecological transformation, and ecological democracy is crucial to ecological transformation. Gare (2010) believes that ecological civilization is a global form of civilization that can only arise in the world order under the background of industrial civilization. However, ecological civilization will transcend and change this civilization. Ecological civilization should inherit and retain rational elements that promote harmonious development between humans and nature in agricultural and industrial civilizations, constituting a diverse and differentiated civilization. Magdoff (2012) emphasizes that ecological civilization is a civilization of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature and among people, promoting ecological and socially sustainable development. A "strong ecosystem" characterized by self-regulation, diversity, self-sufficiency, and self-renewing resilience can serve as a framework for building the future ecological civilization.

Ecological civilization is an essential component of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for the New Era. On August 24, 2005, Xi Jinping, then the Secretary of the Zhejiang Provincial Party Committee, published a column titled "Zhi Jiang New Language" in the featured section of the front page of Zhejiang Daily. In this article, he explicitly stated, "We pursue harmony between man and nature, as well as economic and social harmony. Put simply, we want both green mountains and golden mountains". Xi Jinping has provided a series of discussions on ecological civilization construction.

General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out, "Historically, when ecology thrives, civilization thrives; when ecology declines, civilization declines". He emphasized that in the process of developing and utilizing nature, humanity must follow the laws of nature; otherwise, there will be retaliation from the natural world. He further stated that, "Humanity has experienced primitive civilization, agricultural civilization, and industrial civilization. Ecological civilization is a product of the development of industrial civilization and represents a new requirement for achieving harmonious development between humans and nature". After the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Party Central Committee, under the leadership of General Secretary Xi Jinping, attached great importance to ecological civilization construction. They are vigorously promoting the necessary

adjustments in industrial structure, transformation of growth patterns, technological innovation, and institutional development required for ecological civilization construction.

Currently, domestic research on the ecological civilization perspective in China primarily focuses on its connotations, significance, practical paths, and its relationship with Marxist ecological civilization perspectives. Regarding the key points and hot topics in the aforementioned research, there are various viewpoints:

Yang Chaoxia, Director of the Ecological Law Research Center at Beijing Forestry University, proposed in 2019 that the primary essence of the ecological civilization perspective is development. Its fundamental stance revolves around people-centeredness and environmental fairness, with the core being high-quality green development. The main methods include spatial orderliness, ecological development, ecological capitalization, environmental industrialization, and governance socialization. The crucial tool is the rule of law. Wan BenTai, former Chief Engineer of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and a member of the National Environmental Advisory Committee, suggested in 2018 that the ecological civilization perspective refers to the fundamental views on the relationship between humans and nature and how humanity interacts with nature in a rule-based manner. It involves recognizing the fundamental origins of human-nature relations, understanding the significant importance of protecting the ecological environment, the ways to achieve harmony between humans and nature, and jointly planning for global ecological civilization construction. He compared it with Marxist ecological civilization perspectives.

Dai Yanyan, Associate Professor in the Department of Economics at the Party School of the Guangdong Provincial Committee of the CPC, proposed in 2018 to guide the construction of a beautiful China with the socialist ecological civilization perspective. This involves promoting green development, focusing on solving prominent environmental problems, enhancing the protection of ecosystems, and reforming the ecological environmental regulatory system.

In addition, scholars have systematically discussed Xi Jinping's ecological civilization ideology from the perspectives of core content, thinking, and construction (Qiao Qingju, 2017; Huang Chengliang, 2018; Wang Gan, 2018; Zhang Yunfei, 2018). They have also conducted theoretical and practical case studies on the ecological civilization perspective from legal and urban-rural relationship perspectives (Li Tiantian, 2020; Zhang Geyue, 2020).

This article, from the perspective of the ecological civilization perspective, systematically reviews the theoretical basis for building the "Two Mountains" practice and innovation base in Qingyuan County. It explores why it is necessary to focus on ecological foundation, ecological resources, ecological products, ecological publicity, and ecological advantages when constructing this practice and innovation base. From the viewpoint of ecological civilization, and by emphasizing aspects such as protection, reform, and models, the article puts forward insights for further advancing the practical innovation of the "Two Mountains" concept.

4. Experience of Qingyuan

(1) Green Protection and Environmental Advancement to Foster Development Features

We have not held back in our ardent efforts to prevent and

regulate pollution, always keeping in mind the sincere directives of General Secretary Xi Jinping that "protecting the environment well is the greatest achievement in governance". "Qingyuan County Mechanism for In-Depth Advancement of Pollution Prevention and Control Campaign" was introduced, focusing on four main actions: "clean land", "blue skies", "clear waters" and "waste disposal". A work advancement mechanism was put in place, consisting of quarterly supervision and assessment, monthly scheduling and reporting, and annual accountability checks, to ensure the campaign's successful advancement. The quality of the ecological environment is consistently among the best in the province. Zhejiang Province continues to lead in indicators such as the ecological environment condition index, public satisfaction with ecological environment quality, and complete evaluation of the national key ecological function zone. Awards have been given out in abundance, such as the "Dayu Ding" and "China's Natural Oxygen Bar".

(2) Green Transformation for Prosperity, Turning Ecological Resources into Wealth for the People

audacious investigation motivated by reform to advance progress and create new avenues through reform. We spearheaded the implementation of forest rights mortgage loans throughout the province in order to alleviate the financial obstacles that mountain farmers encountered when attempting to finance their businesses. More than 30,000 farmers have profited from this program, which has also revitalized over 770,000 acres of forest resources and successfully turned mountainous forest resources into a "green bank" for the local populace. By creatively expanding the "National-Village Cooperation" operating pilot, we created afforestation bases spanning 285,000 acres, giving village collectives and forest producers a total value of 860 million yuan. With a profit-sharing revenue of 260 million yuan, the company was chosen as one of the first experimental bases for provincial forestry carbon sinks. With the goal of creating a strong county in clean energy, we aggressively developed the "Wind, Light, Water Storage, and Extraction" project cluster by utilizing the "Million Clean Energy Reserves" resources. One of the first national pilot projects chosen was the rooftop distributed solar development spanning the entire county. By advancing the establishment of "Two-Mountain Cooperatives", increasing the use of "ecological collateral loans", facilitating transactions for water rights, carbon sinks, and other things, we deepened the application of ecological product value accounting and turned more ecological dividends into wealth for the populace.

(3) Turning Green into Treasure, Transforming Ecological Products into Distinctive Brands

Using the "Million Clean Energy Reserves" resources, we aggressively carried out the "Wind, Light, Water Storage, and Extraction" project cluster with the goal of establishing a robust clean energy sector in the county. The rooftop distributed photovoltaic development spanning the entire county was chosen as one of the initial national pilot projects. By advancing the use of ecological product value accounting and facilitating the creation of "Two-Mountain Cooperatives", "ecological collateral loans", and other transactions pertaining to water rights, carbon sinks, and other assets, we were able to convert more ecological dividends into wealth for the populace. Propelling the "industrial +" revolution, we are assiduously advocating for the establishment of a "3+1+X" ecological industrial structure, headed by wood, bamboo, edible mushrooms, and biotechnology as the fourth

industry. With the ecological processing industry's production value nearing 50% of the entire industrial output value, we have produced the province's first county-level growth plan for the biotechnology sector. Utilizing the Baishanzu National Park and concentrating on "tourism +", we have established tourism brands like the "Lanqiao International Off-road Race", "China Shiitake Mushroom Cultural Festival", and "Yu Shan Spring Festival Gala". Over the previous five years, the revenue from ecological tourism has continued to grow at an average annual rate of 25%.

(4) Embracing Green in Our Hearts, Transforming Ecological Promotion into a Green Consensus

By fortifying the pattern of widespread ecological promotion, we are pushing ecological civilization to become deeply ingrained in people's hearts and raising public satisfaction and involvement. Since 2011, April 7th has been celebrated as "Qingyuan Ecological Day". We have achieved full participation by promoting ecological civilization through various online and offline platforms, including special training sessions, square promotions, prize collections, and bringing green living into communities. We have been running the "Plant Green, Protect Green, Increase Flowers, Add Colors" campaign for the past 17 years, encouraging people all throughout the county to get involved in the creation of an ecological civilization. Relying on the beautiful ecological environment and biodiversity resources, we have developed outdoor experience routes and popular science interactive areas. Qingyuan County's Kengli Biodiversity Experience Site was awarded the title of the province's first "Biodiversity Experience Site". We established the province's first county-level public welfare low-carbon charity fund — the "Carbon Qing Hui" Low-Carbon Development Public Welfare Fund — mobilizing the public to engage in hometown ecological environmental protection endeavors.

(5) Planting Green to Strengthen the Foundation, Transforming Ecological Advantages into a Local Symbol

Always regarding afforestation and resource cultivation as fundamental tasks, we have consistently burnished the "China's Top Ecological Environment County" gold card. During the "Thirteenth Five-Year Plan" period, we established public welfare forests exceeding 1.41 million acres at or above the provincial level. In 2021, the forest coverage rate in the entire county reached 86.13%, maintaining the top position in the province. We actively promoted the construction of the Baishanzu National Nature Reserve, intensified efforts in biodiversity protection, and compiled a list of key protected animals, plants, ancient trees, and famous trees. Conducting a comprehensive survey of biodiversity, we formulated achievements such as the "Qingyuan County Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development Plan", discovering eight new global species such as the Baishanzu horned toad, wrinkled oil bag mushroom, and Lishui lace cap. After years of effort and continuous research, we entrusted an expert team to overcome the breeding difficulties of the "living fossil" Baishanzu fir. The Baishanzu fir and the Baishanzu horned toad made appearances at the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15), successfully creating a beautiful gold card for the conservation of the Baishanzu fir germplasm resources and making a significant contribution to biodiversity conservation in China.

5. Experience Insights

(1) Emphasizing Protection as the Foremost, Integrated

Construction with the Ecological System

First, all-encompassing planning. Plan the regional ecological system as a whole, including national park areas and the Ou River headwaters area, by using a systemic perspective. Considering the mountains, valleys, above-ground, subsurface, beaches, upper reaches, and lower reaches of the area, coordinate the integrated protection and restoration of the entire region.

Standardized guidance is the second. eschew the conventional engineering-dominated paradigm for ecological restoration and protection. Create comprehensive technical standards based on various ecological restoration components and creatively provide nature-based solutions. Introduce and investigate more sophisticated guidelines in a variety of fields, such as "Water Ecological Protection and Restoration Guidelines", "Guidelines for Agricultural Symbiotic Systems and Positive and Negative Lists", and "Guidelines for the Construction and Transformation of Ecological Dams," building upon the research foundation already established in Lishui.

Integrated advancement comes in third. Incorporate the promotion of the "Two Mountains" transition with venues for shared wealth, like the Poetry Road cultural belt, Zhejiang's Grand Garden, and the central regions with the most breathtaking landscape. Encourage the successful change in the perception of the worth of ecological products.

(2) Emphasizing Reform Leadership, Integrated with the Actual Operation of "Two Mountains Cooperatives"

First, removing obstacles and clearing bottlenecks will hasten the flow of natural resources. Clarifying the scope and procedures of ecological resource acquisition and storage for "Two Mountains Cooperatives" at the city and county levels, as well as streamlining the many stages of ecological resource "confirmation, acquisition, development, and transaction", addressing the challenges associated with trading ecological products for the "Two Mountains Cooperatives", enhancing the asset management system for ecological resources, and developing management strategies that are specific to the various ecological resource types—such as small hydropower, rural homes, abandoned homesteads, etc. accelerating the development of trading platforms for ecological products, removing data barriers between departments and levels, creating a single platform for trading ecological products, and developing trading regulations and management strategies for ecological products.

Secondly, enhancing managerial and operational capabilities through resource acquisition and asset investment. introducing specific support policies, encouraging "Two Mountains Cooperatives" to achieve comprehensive management, acquisition, and development of high-quality ecological resources, and addressing the early operational challenges of "Two Mountains Cooperatives", such as a lack of high-quality resources, insufficient funds, and policy constraints. Initially, supplying "Two Mountains Cooperatives" with superior ecological resources; quickening the pace of specialized acquisition in light of local resource endowments; creating a varied "Two Mountains" project library; and strengthening the "Two Mountains Cooperatives" basis.

Thirdly, enhancing overall planning and placing a focus on incentives to foster collaboration in the advancement of work. putting in place a thorough coordination system and bolstering the "Two Mountains Cooperatives" resource, data, platform, and interest linkages in order to foster cooperative

initiatives. forming an expert group and depending on prestigious professional consulting firms to offer technical assistance for the industrialization and financing of ecological assets. establishing and strengthening support systems, such as the "Two Mountains Fund" and subsidized loans for "Two Mountains" initiatives, to help "Two Mountains Cooperatives" become more adept at realizing the value of ecological goods. creating "Two Mountains Cooperatives" performance evaluation procedures, assessing cooperatives throughout the province, and offering rewards based on output.

(3) Highlighting Model Demonstration, Integrated with Concentrated Promotion of Existing Experience

First, advocating for the empowerment model of technology innovation. Leveraging the benefits of mountainous ecological surroundings, advancing conventional industries toward a middle-to-high-end level, and accelerating the transformation of ecological industries using technological innovation as a guide. encouraging the development of public service platforms for technological innovation and cultivating a network of businesses with advantages in intellectual property. Developing and growing the biotechnology industry, including bamboo-based new materials, medicinal and health products derived from edible fungi, deep processing of Chinese medicinal materials, and forming a cluster of biotechnology industries in mountainous areas, building on the foundation of traditional industries such as "one mushroom", "one pair of chopsticks", and "one pen" in mountainous areas.

Second, advocating for the income-growth model based on green financing. accelerating the use of finance to recognize the value of ecological products, encouraging the development of inclusive and green finance in concert, and actively pushing financial products such loans for ecological credit and collateral. encouraging banks to create internal evaluation metrics for green credit and green collateral loans in order to raise the overall amount of green credit that is issued. Developing innovative finance guarantee products for the transformation of ecological asset values, creating an ecological asset collateral risk guarantee fund, and refining financing techniques for risk compensation fund systems and ecological asset collateral guarantees.

Thirdly, putting the energy storage, carbon sequestration, and reduction paradigm into practice. proactively creating clean energy and fostering a new paradigm of low-carbon, environmentally friendly wealth. Prioritizing "increasing carbon sequestration in forestry" and "increasing income for farmers", building a sophisticated system for forestry monitoring and accounting, digitizing forestry, improving the overall quality of carbon sequestration in forestry, increasing the amount of carbon stored in bamboo and wood products, encouraging the transformation of carbon sequestration value, and naturally fusing increased carbon sequestration in forestry with shared prosperity. assembling a leading service team for pollution and carbon reduction made up of academics and professionals from related fields to offer "full-cycle, full-chain, full-factor, and all-round" diagnostic analysis and advisory support to businesses in need of these services.

6. Conclusion

The experience and learnings from the creative methods used by the "Two Mountains" base in Qingyuan County are the main topics of this essay. It explores the dialectic unity

between the notions of "rich resources and wealth" and "beautiful landscapes and clear waters", the incorporation of ecological benefits and economic development, and the real-world investigation of conservation, reform, and model innovation. The following observations and deductions have been made:

Dialectical union between "rich resources and wealth" and "beautiful landscapes and clear waters": empirical research in Qingyuan County reveals that protecting beautiful landscapes and pure waters is a proactive investment in economic development as well as a concern for natural ecology. Economic benefits can be converted from ecological benefits, creating a positive and cohesive link. This offers important insights for the growth of other mountainous regions.

The "Two Mountains" model's unique approaches center on the creative process for appreciating ecological products. At the regional level, it facilitates the effective transformation, coordination, and general planning of ecological resources. The model is based on the idea that natural capital, artificial capital, and human capital should all be integrated in an organic and mutually beneficial way, taking into account the unity of natural laws and the rules of economic and social growth. It makes use of the natural capital endowment to draw in and take in investments in human and artificial capital. Natural capital is continuously empowered by artificial and human capital, which also improves infrastructure for the ecological environment, fosters governance and protection of the ecological environment, and increases the operational management capacity of ecological goods.

Creating "Two Mountains Cooperative Societies", which integrate biological resources throughout the county and accomplish general planning, coordination, and value enhancement, is essential to success. It combines dispersed efforts into a methodical manner, creating a scale advantage that draws in both human and technological capital. By establishing systems for ecological resource inventories, property rights inventories, project inventories, and an all-encompassing process of protection, development, and supervision, this raises the management level of ecological product operation. One potential avenue for innovation in the green evaluation mechanism is to assess townships based on specific criteria and provide them with general incentives to improve their ability to recognize the value of ecological products.

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