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Contents

Conservation and Planning of Ancient Villages from the Perspective of Authenticity	
<i>Yuqing Xia</i>	(1)
Chemical Plant Key Machinery PdM and Fault Diagnostic	
<i>Wei Xu</i>	(7)
Application and Function of Methane Gas Detection in Coal Mine Engineering	
<i>Ke Zhou</i>	(12)
Collision Simulation Analysis of F-type B-level Heighten Concrete Barrier	
<i>Honghao Yan</i>	(16)
Research Status and Trend of Cold Recycling Technology for Emulsified Asphalt	
<i>Haosheng Wang</i>	(21)

Conservation and Planning of Ancient Villages from the Perspective of Authenticity

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Abstract: Ancient villages have a unique history and culture, and their protection is the focus of current town planning work. Most of the present-day studies on the protection of ancient villages are conducted from a single perspective, and although certain results have been achieved, there are still limitations. Therefore, the study of ancient village's protection and planning from the perspective of originality. On the basis of studying the current situation of ancient village conservation and planning and analyzing the causes of degradation of characteristics, the originality of ancient village conservation is defined with the meaning of originality. Under the perspective of authenticity, the principles and objectives of ancient village conservation are set and corresponding conservation planning countermeasures are formulated, which provide some theoretical support and reference for the continuation of ancient village culture.

Keywords: Authenticity; Ancient villages; Ancient village conservation; Village planning

1. Introduction

Ancient villages are a valuable heritage of mankind, a complex of cultural expressions formed by the ancestors on the basis of the natural and social environment, combined with their own experiences. However, with the development of society, ancient villages have lost their original environmental support, and the original functions can no longer meet the needs of local residents, so villagers have begun to spontaneously alter and demolish their villages, greatly damaging the overall appearance of ancient villages and making them face the crisis of extinction. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze ancient villages and protect them actively for their better development. In recent years, the protection of ancient villages has received great attention from the central government and relevant departments, and the importance attached to the inheritance and development of traditional village culture has reached an unprecedented height.

There are three main concepts of protection and restoration of historical relics and buildings abroad, namely, the French school advocates the originality and integrity of ancient buildings, and takes specific measures to restore architectural vitality according to the specific situation; the British school advocates the use of conservation instead of restoration, and emphasizes the preservation of historical memory of ancient buildings; the Italian school draws on the views of the other two schools, and believes that modern methods and materials can be used. However, it cannot exceed the affordability of historical

buildings. Domestic research on ancient villages is mainly focused on conservation, but usually focuses only on, for example, the relationship between villages and traditions and regions, the layout characteristics of villages, and historical and cultural development patterns from the perspective of conservation and development research. These studies have been applied to the conservation and planning of ancient villages with some success, but they also ignore the differences between ancient villages to a certain extent and have certain limitations.

Authenticity is an internationally recognized fundamental factor for cultural heritage assessment, conservation and monitoring. In recent years, the exchange and cooperation between China and international cultural heritage conservation has been deepened, and the introduction of the concept and principles of authenticity has been an important guide to promote the development of theories and practical activities of cultural heritage conservation in China. As an essential aspect of human development, the protection and enhancement of the diversity of the world's culture and heritage should be strongly advocated, and it is necessary to find effective methods for the protection of this cultural heritage by various cultures from the principle of authenticity. The current application of the principle of authenticity has been expanded from historical lots and the material space of historical towns to ideology and social life, but how to apply it specifically to historical towns with different characteristics has not been discussed in depth.

Ancient villages contain immeasurable social, historical, and cultural resources, and their research value is enor-

mous and irreplaceable. All kinds of thinking about how to carry out specific protection and how to make implementation plans have to be answered by the study of traditional village protection and planning. Therefore, the study of ancient village conservation and planning not only has important theoretical intentions, but also has considerable practical significance. Based on the above research content, this paper will study the conservation and planning of ancient villages from the perspective of originality, so as to summarize some ideas and methods about the conservation design of traditional villages in China. It will play a positive role in solving the contradiction between traditional villages regarding conservation and development as well as continuing the spirit and cultural lineage of villages, and help the expansion of the theoretical system of traditional village conservation and planning and the protection and renewal of cultural heritage.

2. Analysis of the Current Situation of Ancient Village Conservation and Planning and the Causes of Degradation of Its Characteristics

2.1. Current status of ancient village conservation and planning

Partial scale, street pattern and some human elements. There are some new houses and structures inside the villages, and very few of them follow the traditional style of ancient houses and have a larger spatial scale. There is a conflict with the original overall appearance of the ancient village. Break the original calm and harmonious spatial scale and atmosphere of the ancient village. It also triggers the change of road pattern in the ancient village, resulting in the loss of traditional street space culture. At the same time, the frequent construction activities also spread to the outer landscape area of the ancient villages, and the traditional natural village pattern and natural ecological landscape were impacted by the construction of the town. The natural environment around the ancient villages has been shifted, changed, and disappeared due to the paving of roads, new construction of modern buildings, and other phenomena, which have destroyed the natural ecological environment of the ancient villages and eventually led to the change of the overall environment and appearance of the villages.

In the development process of ancient villages, a large number of ancient buildings and even many lanes have been demolished and destroyed due to the backwardness of the village economy, the age of history, negligence in protection and weak awareness. The aging and destruction of historical buildings have caused the spatial pattern of ancient villages to be damaged to some extent. Due to the wind and rain, the historical buildings are

gradually aging and their functions are declining. Moreover, with the improvement of economic living standards, the original poor living environment, obsolete buildings, inconvenient transportation and other conditions of ancient villages, as well as the impact of continuously decaying dwellings on the quality of life of villagers, this backward physical living environment can no longer meet the needs of modern village development. In addition, the public service facilities in ancient villages are relatively backward. This has led to a dirty and poor overall environment in the ancient villages, which has seriously affected the quality of the internal environment of the ancient village has preserved a lot of traditional culture and folk life information, but with the change of time and economic development, the early buildings built in the ancient village are mostly brick walls and tile roofs, wooden beam frame structure, and basically have exquisite carvings and decorations on the doors, windows, cattle legs and beams; gradually the buildings built afterwards began to be simple, without the exquisite decorative details; and then the later buildings have been significantly different from the traditional buildings. Most of the buildings are modern buildings with flat roofs of brick and mixed structures. Along with the change of architectural style, there is also a change of the overall appearance of the ancient village, including the ancient villages and cannot meet the needs of the villagers' modern life and the overall development of the villages.

Influenced by urbanization and modern life, villagers began to renovate old houses and build new ones. Due to imperfect protection measures and some management neglect behavior, many new buildings as well as sheds and houses built indiscriminately by the ancient buildings are very incongruous with the architectural style of the old village. The lack of effective control and management of building new houses within the old village, and the insertion of new houses have seriously damaged the historical appearance of the village. In addition, these newly constructed buildings have no consideration at all to coordinate with the overall architectural style of the ancient village in terms of architectural materials, tones, heights, and forms, not to mention the inability to integrate into the overall historical landscape environment, thus destroying the harmonious and unified architectural landscape style of the ancient villages.

In addition to the architectural clusters, cultural relics and monuments and natural landscape environment in ancient villages, there is also a rich traditional culture in ancient villages. However, in modern society, the age structure and living atmosphere of ancient villages have changed greatly. The natural ecological environment of the villages has also changed. At the same time, some traditional festivals and customary activities in ancient

villages are not as lively and grand as before, and traditional culture is gradually lost.

2.2. Analysis of the causes of degradation of the characteristics of ancient villages

The impact of natural and contemporary factors on the degradation of the characteristics of ancient villages is unavoidable. The buildings in ancient villages, in terms of their use function, will experience depreciation and wear and tear in the process of realizing their own use value. Natural forces such as climate and pests can trigger the aging and decay of historic buildings, and even cause them to collapse and disappear. The number of ancient village buildings that have been damaged in the wind and rain is quite large, some have been lost forever, and some have been rebuilt but cannot be restored to their original state.

The change of times accompanied by the change of institutions always has a large or small impact on the physical form, social life and culture of the village at that time, and leaves traces in the historical development. From the perspective of history, this impact has two sides. On the one hand, the positive influence of change will promote the progress of human social civilization; on the other hand, the negative influence of change will destroy human civilization and ruin the wisdom of previous generations.

The backward development of villages and the lack of economic support will also lead to the weakened ability to protect ancient villages and cause the degradation of ancient village characteristics. Economic backwardness not only hinders the development of ancient villages themselves, but also brings many difficulties to the protection of ancient villages. On the one hand, the most direct manifestation of economic backwardness is the lack of funds for protection, the repair and maintenance of ancient buildings need financial support, relying on government financial subsidies is far from enough, which makes the protection of ancient villages have the heart but not enough. The aging and damage of ancient buildings are not repaired, resulting in the lack of strong protection of the historical and cultural heritage of ancient villages. On the other hand, a large number of modern buildings have been invaded under the drive of economic interests, destroying the traditional architectural style of ancient villages and causing them to gradually lose their historical and cultural values. Moreover, the economic backwardness has triggered the generation of various social problems, which is very unfavorable to the conservation of ancient villages.

The degradation of architectural functions has taken away many traditional cultures and changed the connotation of ancient villages. Under the change of people's living needs, the traditional building space gradually cannot meet the villagers' needs of living and consump-

tion, and there is a shift of building function. On the other hand, the disappearance of traditional craftsmanship in ancient villages makes the buildings in ancient villages lose their original function as a venue for traditional craftsmanship and folk culture communication, further weakening the ability of ancient villages to inherit human civilization and carry forward traditional culture. The degradation of architectural functions in ancient villages is triggering changes in the connotation of ancient villages from the analysis of both physical spatial patterns and traditional history and culture of ancient villages. In addition to the above-mentioned factors leading to the degradation of the characteristics of ancient villages, modern management techniques for ancient villages are weak and it is difficult to balance the relationship between conservation and development of ancient villages, which leads to the degradation of the characteristics of ancient villages.

Based on the above-mentioned research on the current situation of ancient village conservation and the causes of degradation of ancient village characteristics, we study the conservation and planning of ancient villages from the perspective of authenticity in order to promote the development of villages and the continuation of traditional culture.

3. Conservation and Planning of Ancient Villages from the Perspective of Authenticity

3.1. Defining the originality of ancient village preservation

Authenticity is an important principle in testing world cultural heritage, so the embodiment of the value of authenticity of ancient villages is one of the prerequisites and basic contents of ancient village protection and must be given full attention. It is a measure of the expression of ancient villages and the degree of inherent unity of cultural significance, which reflects the state of preservation and continuation of the organizational structure of ancient villages, and is a necessary condition for the perpetuation and utilization of ancient villages.

As shown in figure 1 below, the object resources of ancient villages include three aspects: carriers, information and clues, i.e., material carriers reflecting the historical appearance, such as architectural monoliths, street patterns, spatial layouts, etc., immaterial information such as folk customs and folkways, and veins linking tangible and immaterial heritage such as buildings, traffic routes, water bodies, urban spatial patterns and cultural themes or historical events.

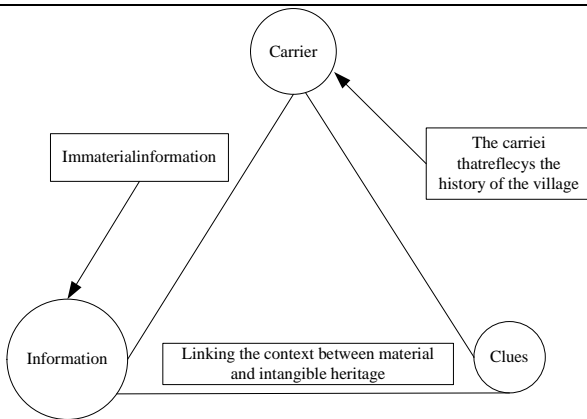


Figure 1 Analysis of object resources of ancient villages

Thus, the authenticity of the carrier is reflected in the technology, scale, material structure, spatial organization and overall appearance of the old buildings; the authenticity of the information is reflected in the festive customs, folklore, folk art, and marketplace folklore; and the authenticity of the clues is the way and manner of interpreting the formation and development of the ancient villages, and connecting the scattered information points of the ancient villages into a whole.

The protection of the authenticity of ancient villages has changed from the museum-style protection of the material aspects of cultural heritage, such as landscape, architecture, and cultural relics, to the stage-show-style protection of the non-material aspects, such as folklore, crafts, music, and rituals, etc. Instead, the two are integrated and unified through the medium of the value of authenticity, so that the protection of ancient villages is integrated into the original authentic and credible state, and the traditional culture, historical landscape, and local characteristics of ancient villages are reproduced. Culture, historical style, local characteristics and ethnic customs of ancient villages. The events experienced in the history of ancient villages and even the damage caused by the passage of time also belong to their unique authenticity. In this sense it has a broader meaning. In the two-dimensional scale of time and space, the continuity of the time dimension is added, and the point of authenticity protection does not simply stay at the beginning of the "original", but turns the authenticity into the connection of the "original" composed of countless points in history.

3.2. Ancient village conservation principles and target setting

According to the above definition of the originality of ancient village protection, the following principles of the originality of ancient village protection are clarified.

(1) Protection planning must first reflect the principle of historical environment authenticity. The dusty historical

remains carry a lot of real historical information and are the main carriers of the historical and cultural values of ancient villages. If these authentic carriers are lost, the protection of ancient villages will lose the basis of existence. Therefore, a high number of historical buildings must be maintained in the protected area to sustain the traditional historical atmosphere and to avoid excessive artificial intervention leading to the urbanization and commercialization of the ancient village.

(2) Follow the principle of protecting the integrity of the historical landscape. The object of landscape protection is a characteristic group landscape, which does not necessarily have particularly important cultural relics or monuments, but as a whole, the shape and image of such landscape has become a symbol of a certain place, region, or a certain culture; the goal of landscape protection is to reflect historical scenes based on the study of documents and surviving objects to gain a sense of local cultural identity. The individuals in the plan are not necessarily the material reality of the past, but are created to serve the environmental atmosphere.

(3) Implement the cultural relics policy of "protection first, rescue first, rational use and strengthen management", take effective measures to strengthen the protection of cultural heritage, pay particular attention to the rescue and protection of historical and cultural heritage on the verge of destruction, and strive to achieve the sustainable preservation and rational use of historical heritage.

(4) Properly handle the relationship between the protection of historical and cultural reserves and modernization, and effectively protect the interests of local residents. Follow the principle of maintaining the continuity of life. Only in life can we inherit true culture and make people feel the presence of history. Attract local residents to participate in conservation planning. Local residents as the main body of conservation work are conducive to increasing the level and strength of conservation, and to the real implementation of all conservation measures to every place.

(5) While protecting tangible cultural relics, it is also necessary to protect intangible traditional elements, the local human environment and traditional cultural elements, such as social fires, rituals, and the essence of festival folklore, traditional theater, traditional handicrafts, and local specialties. These are the elements that constitute the historical environment of the village.

(6) Protect and improve the natural ecological environment of villages, vigorously carry out greening industries and regulate the microclimate of villages. Keep the water and air clean, and improve the natural landscape of villages.

For the currently existing ancient villages in China, the general objectives of ancient village protection with universal applicability are as follows.

In the process of ancient village protection and planning, firstly, the construction behavior that destroys the village pattern and the overall landscape environment should be effectively curbed, the protection, improvement and improvement of the overall village pattern and environmental characteristics should be effective at first, the important protection units and important traditional buildings should be effectively protected, and the improvement of their surrounding environment should be gradually completed.

Secondly, real and complete protection of all historical information and cultural values of the ancient village architectural complex, rational use and full display of its cultural values and connotations, protection of natural, historical and cultural resources, protection and restoration of the natural and humanistic characteristics of the ancient village and the historical and cultural environment, and promotion of sustainable development of the ancient village socio-economic culture.

After setting the above-mentioned principles and objectives for the protection of the originality of ancient villages, and after delineating the key conservation areas and transitional conservation areas for the protection and planning of ancient villages, the countermeasures for the protection and planning of ancient villages are formulated.

3.3. Development of ancient village conservation and planning measures

When carrying out original protection and planning for ancient villages, at the policy and institutional level, it is necessary to improve the policy of new housing construction in ancient villages and enhance the legal status of ancient village protection and development planning. For the new housing needs of owners of historic buildings in ancient villages, policies should be introduced as soon as possible to improve the relevant regulations and encourage villagers to consciously maintain historic buildings. For the historical buildings that do not meet the conditions and have general historical value, they are generally located around the key cultural relics protection units, which are important constituent elements of the core landscape substrate of ancient villages, and are affected by slight changes, so corresponding policies and measures need to be proposed to solve the problem of poor living conditions. The legal status of ancient village protection and development planning is enhanced to develop rigid and flexible spaces that are conducive to cultural heritage inheritance and development, thus reducing the negative impact of other related plans on the sustainable development of ancient villages.

At the level of public participation, when carrying out ancient village protection planning, public opinions should be carefully listened to at the early stage of planning and design and public will should be reflected in

the planning. Through in-depth communication and contact with villagers can dig out more traditional folklore and characteristics, and grasp more original information, so that traditional culture can be fully inherited and developed.

At the technical level, there is a need to introduce perfect technical specifications for traditional villages as soon as possible. As most of the current traditional villages do not require high design qualifications for the preparation of protection and development planning, it is difficult to ensure the quality of ancient village protection planning work. Therefore, it is necessary and urgent to introduce technical specifications for the protection and development of ancient villages as soon as possible. At the same time, because the ancient village is different from the collection of cultural relics, cannot use static protection methods and protection measures, and the ancient village inevitably with the development of the times and some updates. Therefore, the protection of traditional villages must adhere to a dynamic view. The dynamic protection of ancient villages is also the original protection of ancient villages' historical culture, humanistic emotions and other carriers. In the conservation planning, the historical buildings in ancient villages can be evaluated and subdivided so that more targeted conservation and renovation measures can be adopted. In addition, the unique spatial layout of ancient villages can be explored to enhance the landscape characteristics, combine traditional cultural activities with the static architecture of ancient villages, vividly reflect the unique history and culture of the villages, and realize the originality of ancient village culture.

The above is to realize the protection and planning of ancient villages from the perspective of authenticity. It should be noted that there are differences among different ancient villages, and in the actual operation, it is still necessary to combine the specific situation of ancient villages and carry out village conservation planning.

4. Conclusions

As an important form of settlement in Chinese society, ancient villages carry rich historical and cultural information and have important social value as well as scientific research value. This paper launched a study on ancient village conservation planning in response to the current problem, which is to emphasize the overall historical environmental protection with the original character as the priority, to protect the historical and cultural heritage of ancient villages, and to promote the development of village socio-economic culture. This study proposes the protection and renewal strategy of ancient villages by rising from individuality to commonality, which has certain one-sidedness. Along with the various problems brought by urban development to the conservation of ancient villages, it is necessary to carry out

research on different types of ancient villages. In future studies, different research methods will be used and appropriate conservation and renewal measures will be taken to promote the development of ancient villages.

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