

Research Progress on Protection and Development of Traditional Villages in China

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Abstract: The crisis of rural decline has become a global problem all over the world and an important part of the global governance system. The protection and development of traditional villages have become an important issue of social concern. At present, the protection of traditional villages in China has entered the stage of scientific research from the stage of investigation. By reviewing, sorting out and analyzing the research results of various scholars, this paper puts forward some thoughts for the follow-up research direction of the protection and development of traditional villages, and provides some ideas for inheriting and promoting rural traditional culture and cracking the crisis of rural decay.

Keywords: Traditional Village; Protection and Development; Research Progress

1. Introduction

Traditional villages contain the essence of traditional culture of the Chinese nation, carry the material cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritage left in the agricultural civilization period, and their heritage attributes cannot be copied and regenerated, which is the "living fossil" of agricultural civilization. With the deepening of modernization and the rapid development of industrialization and urbanization, many countries are facing the crisis of rural decline, and many villages are lost in the long river of history due to various reasons such as geographical environment, the exodus of villagers, and the combination of villages and towns. The crisis of rural decline has become a global problem faced by mankind all over the world and an important part of the global governance system. The protection and development of traditional villages are of great value and significance to the inheritance and promotion of traditional

rural culture, and have become an important topic of social concern. Scholars at home and abroad have launched a lot of research. By reviewing, sorting out and analyzing the research results of various scholars, this paper puts forward some thoughts for the follow-up research direction of the protection and development of traditional villages, and provides some ideas for inheriting and promoting rural traditional culture and cracking the crisis of rural decay.

2. Overview of Research on Traditional Villages

This paper uses CNKI database (journal full-text database, doctoral dissertation full-text database, excellent master's thesis full-text database, conference thesis full-text database, and featured journal full-text database) as the search source, with title as the direction, to search the literature related to "traditional village & ancient village", "protection and development & protection and utilization" from 1989 to 2023. A total of 486 articles were retrieved after eliminating news, book reviews, initiatives and articles that did not conform to the theme. The search results may not be completely equivalent to the number of papers related to the protection and development of traditional villages, but they can still basically reflect the overall status and trend of domestic academic research.

The research on ancient villages in domestic academic circles first began in the late 1980s, starting with Chongyi He et al. (1989)'s exploration of the protection and development of ancient villages in Nanxi River Scenic area [1]. According to the results of the academic attention of ancient villages and traditional villages in CNKI, after Chongyi He et al., the academic circles have rarely discussed and studied ancient villages and traditional villages, with an average of less than 10 relevant Chinese literatures per year. Since the

beginning of the 21st century, the research on ancient villages and traditional villages in China has increased significantly, especially the literature on ancient villages has increased rapidly. As our country began to carry out the national survey on traditional villages in 2012, traditional villages and ancient villages became the focus of academic research, and the number of related literatures began to surge. The academic research on the protection and development of traditional or ancient villages mainly started in 2002. According to the number and content of relevant research literature, the research on the protection and development of traditional villages in domestic academic circles can be divided into three stages: the initial stage (2002-2011), the development stage (2012-2019) and the deepening stage (2020-present).

In the initial stage (2002-2011), the average annual number of relevant papers was small, mainly focusing on the protection and development and utilization of ancient villages, while the research on traditional villages was less. Most scholars pay attention to the protection and development of ancient villages from the overall perspective, and some scholars discuss the protection and development of ancient villages from the specific perspectives of ancient village dwellings, garden landscape, heritage and so on. The research content mainly focuses on the ideas, strategies and modes of protection and development, tourism development and protection, etc. The research methods are mainly qualitative research and case studies, and single case studies are mainly used, and the cases are mainly concentrated in the central and eastern regions. In the development stage (2012-2019), the domestic research on the protection and development of ancient villages and traditional villages began to increase rapidly, and the research of ancient villages and traditional villages was equal to each other, and the number of relevant literatures increased significantly; scholars not only discuss the protection and development of ancient and traditional villages from the overall perspective, but also discuss and study from the specific perspectives of village architecture, spatial form, evaluation and promotion of village resource value, village heritage and culture, village dwellings and public space, villagers, and local education.

The research content mainly focuses on the dilemma and problem of protection and development, protection and development strategy, protection and development model, tourism development, sustainable development, coordination of protection and tourism development, etc. Research perspectives and theoretical basis began to diversify, such as the construction of beautiful countryside, rural revitalization, the transformation of old and new driving forces, authenticity, community building, ecological civilization construction and global tourism, etc. The research methods are still mainly qualitative research and case study, and still mainly single case study. The difference is that the cases are rich and diversified, which are not only from the central and eastern regions, but also from the west, southwest, northeast and Hainan, and not only from the Han area, but also from the minority area. The protection and development of traditional ethnic villages has begun to attract scholars' attention.

In the deepening stage (2020 -- present), the annual average number of relevant documents has basically stabilized, with the protection and development of traditional villages as the main research, while the research on ancient villages has decreased relatively, which is related to the fact that the protection of traditional villages in China has entered the scientific research stage. Scholars have conducted more and more in-depth studies on traditional villages, including centralized and continued protection and utilization of traditional villages, implementation and management evaluation system, active protection and utilization, and coordinated development of traditional village protection and tourism development. Scholars increasingly prefer to discuss the protection and development of traditional villages from the specific perspectives of village heritage, cultural landscape, government behavior, tourism resource evaluation and development, digital protection, cultural and creative product design, etc. The application of multidisciplinary theories and research methods is gradually increasing, such as spatial narrative theory, cultural gene heritage theory, memory site theory and symbiosis theory, and so on; Quantitative studies began to increase, qualitative and quantitative studies began to increase, and multi-case comparative

studies appeared and increased.

3. Main Research Progress

Since 2012, China has organized a national survey of traditional villages, and listed villages with important protection value in the list of traditional Chinese villages. So far, a total of 8,171 traditional villages have been announced in six batches. At present, the protection of traditional villages in China has entered the stage of scientific research from the stage of mapping. Domestic academia focuses on and studies the protection and development of traditional villages, mainly from the classification of traditional villages, protection and development status, protection and development mode, countermeasures and mechanism, tourism development and other aspects of research.

3.1 Classification Research

Scholars generally realize that traditional villages have obvious regional characteristics, and they should be classified for protection and development, but scholars disagree on the basis of the division. There are five main classification bases, such as the change of village form in tourism development, terrain characteristics, heritage types, functional characteristics, and village industry and resident income.

3.2 Protection and Development Status

As early as 2013, Jicai Feng pointed out that strict scientific protection work would start when the national list of traditional villages was finalized [2]. Xiaoming Wang (2013) proposed that protecting and developing traditional villages is not only protecting the village architecture, shape and other material cultural heritage, but also protecting the natural ecological environment closely related to the village, and the integrity of the folk intangible cultural heritage and the village cultural ecosystem [3]. In addition, Hong Qu (2020) believes that heritage protection theory is the theoretical basis for the protection of traditional villages, and points out that cultural and economic values are the main values for the protection and development of traditional villages, and proposes the development method of incorporating traditional village protection into the overall planning of new urbanization [4].

Scholars have also conducted a lot of research on government behavior in the protection and development of traditional villages. Xuyi Li (2023) believes that the nature of quasi-public goods in traditional villages determines that the government must intervene in their protection and development, and puts forward six suggestions on the optimization of government behavior in the protection and development of traditional villages [5]. Of course, it is impossible to rely only on the government as a single subject for protection. Yansong Wang et al. (2020) proposed to give full play to the role of multiple protection subjects such as the government, development companies, cultural experts, villagers and ordinary villagers [6].

In addition to multi-subject participation in the protection and development of traditional villages, it is also necessary to explore the protection and development strategies of traditional villages from multi-angle and multi-industry. Gen Wu et al. (2019) discussed the endogenous development driving mechanism of rural industries from the perspectives of resources, market and talents [7]. Wenjun Zhang et al. (2023) put forward the concept, framework and path of continuous protection and development of traditional villages from the perspective of clusters [8]. At present, the centralized protection of traditional villages has become the focus of academic research, and a large number of scholars are conducting in-depth research on it.

3.3 Protection and Development Mode

Scholars have put forward many patterns from the perspective of different disciplines, which provide path selection for the sustainable use of traditional villages in our country. For example, Hongkai Jia (2016) proposed ten models from the perspective of economics, which provided a path choice for the sustainable development of traditional villages [9]. Jianwen Zhang (2016) proposed to apply the ppp model of "government-enterprise cooperation/joint venture" in architecture to the protection and development of traditional villages [10]. Shengjiao Fan (2017) proposed a government-led and civilian-led eco-museum model, a government-led, enterprise-led and community-led participatory development model, and a characteristic industry-driven

model^[11]. Zimong Yang et al. (2023) proposed four models: characteristic industry-driven, reasonable co-construction driven, traditional culture-driven and government-driven^[12].

3.4 The Countermeasures and Mechanisms of Existing Problems

With the beginning of the survey of traditional villages in China, various places began to pay attention to and actively take measures to carry out the protection and development of traditional villages. However, after more than ten years of development, there are some urgent problems to be solved in the protection and development of traditional villages. In response to the above problems, most scholars put forward development strategies by analyzing the main policy and strategic background of the current state on the "three rural issues". For example, Junhua Liao (2018) put forward countermeasures and suggestions on the protection and development of traditional villages from the perspective of rural revitalization^[13]. Jing Zhang (2020) analyzed the development conditions faced by the protection and development of traditional villages from the perspective of the construction of beautiful villages, and proposed specific development strategies^[14]. Bei Liu (2022) proposed solutions from the perspective of the integration of culture and tourism^[15].

In addition, the active protection and utilization of traditional villages have become the focus of scholars' research in recent years, and also become one of the important strategies for the protection and development of traditional villages. Based on the perspective of activated utilization, Xingfa Zhang et al. (2018) proposed the improvement paths of regional development, active product development of material cultural heritage, scene-based product development of intangible cultural heritage, and digital product development^[16]. Jinxiu Wu et al. (2022), from the perspective of the integrated development of "three sheng", constructed a multiple path of active protection and utilization combining spatial and temporal dimensions^[17]. From the research of scholars, it has become a consensus understanding that tourism development is one of the effective ways to revitalize traditional villages. At the same time, with the development of electronic

information technology and Internet technology in China, digital protection measures and strategies have entered the field of view of scholars. Xing Su (2022) proposed strategies such as digital storage of relevant data of traditional villages, construction of digital museums of traditional villages, and development of digital products^[18].

3.5 Traditional Village Protection and Tourism Development

Scholars generally believe that tourism development of traditional villages is not only a way of development, but also a way of protection, and have conducted a large number of studies on this, mainly focusing on traditional village tourism development strategies, paths, protection and coordinated development of tourism development. Zhenyu Che (2016) pointed out that tourism development has "more advantages than disadvantages" on traditional village features, and benign tourism development is an important way to promote cultural inheritance and protection, but cultural damage caused by tourism development should also be highly valued^[19]. Jie Huang et al. (2018) pointed out that tourism has become a feasible way to drive the new life of villages, and built a "4C+4D" model of tourism activation of traditional villages in ethnic minority areas^[20]. Some scholars are concerned that tourism development will have both positive and negative impacts on residents' income, architectural style, public space and industrial development of traditional villages, so they put forward the concept of synergistic development of traditional village protection and tourism development and conducted research.

4. Conclusion

Traditional village is a unique term in China. There is no direct research result on "traditional village" in foreign countries, but the protection of small towns and ancient villages with historical and cultural value began to be emphasized in foreign countries very early, and the protection behavior also increased from individuals to the state, government and international institutions, which has important reference significance for the protection and development of traditional villages in China. In the future, we can

strengthen the learning and reference of excellent research results abroad. As the biggest heritage of farming civilization, the protection and development of traditional villages is a hot topic in the academic field. From the perspective of research content, most of the existing literature is about the protection and development of specific villages, the research on a certain problem of villages, and the specific practice research of a certain protection and development mode (in which tourism development is the majority), and there are few regional and overall studies. In addition, from the perspective of the literature on the classification of traditional villages, there are many literatures on the classification of traditional villages, but there are few literatures that take the obvious regional characteristics and cultural background of villages as the most important classification indicators, and there are few researches on the protection and development of classification. From the perspective of research, there are more studies on the protection and development of traditional villages from the background of rural revitalization strategy, but few studies from the perspective of local knowledge. Although there is a trend of increase in recent years, the coverage is not wide, and the cases are mostly concentrated in the central and eastern regions, and there are few studies on traditional villages in southwest and even western Sichuan. From the perspective of research methods, qualitative research is the majority, quantitative research is less, the combination of qualitative and quantitative research is less, and the comparative study of multiple cases is less. Further research can be carried out from these aspects in order to better help the protection and development of traditional villages.

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