

Research on Problems and Countermeasures of Traditional Village Protection—Guojiaying Village, Zhonghe Town, Tengchong City, as an Example

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Abstract: The overall pattern of Guojiaying Village in Zhonghe Town, Tengchong City is complete, retaining the street and alley characteristics of traditional villages, with a large number of traditional buildings existing in recent times. Due to the village being included in the urban planning area in the new planning orientation, the expansion of urban boundaries and the influence of modern lifestyle, the ancient village landscape pattern has been eroded and it is difficult to maintain the original characteristics, coupled with the lack of funds for repairs and the villagers' low awareness of protection, the damage is becoming increasingly serious. This paper argues that effective protection of villages can be realized by coordinating the relationship of various plans, maintenance of spatial texture, protection of important buildings and historical relics, maintenance of spatial carriers of cultural relics, retention of characteristic elements of traditional dwellings, reasonable improvement of traditional dwellings, as well as implementation of one or three industries linkage development, and establishment of readable planning charts and so on.

1. Introduction

Since the successful nomination of the ancient villages in southern Anhui Province as a World Heritage Site in 1999, China's attention to the protection of ancient villages has continued to grow. Since 2003, the State Council has published a list of national historic and cultural villages in seven batches, and since 2005 it has held several national seminars on the protection and development of ancient villages and issued a series of policy documents and statements. By 2012, the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Construction, together with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Culture, had published a list of national traditional villages for five consecutive times, marking the gradual formation of a consensus among the whole society to protect traditional villages in terms of their historical relics, intangible cultural heritage, and natural landscapes and environments[1-3].

However, in the past three decades, China's urbanization process has been proceeding at a fast pace, and a large number of traditional villages have rapidly disappeared due to various reasons. Especially in multi-ethnic border areas, the collision of different living habits [4-6], ethnic customs, and cultures has led to the inability of rural areas to maintain a unified ideology in the long run (as

can be seen from various temples of the Lord of the World), and architectural styles are constantly changing. Traditional villages have long been in a contradictory situation, and it is not easy to maintain their beauty. According to statistics, at present, the traditional villages that have preserved their original style only account for less than 2% of the total area of administrative villages nationwide, and less than 0.4% of the total area of natural villages nationwide. During this period, some traditional villages due to aging and deterioration of the living environment led to the exodus of villagers, the formation of hollow village phenomenon, exacerbating the decline and destruction of villages[7-8]; some villages due to disorderly new construction and renovation of housing activities, making the mix of old and new buildings, seriously undermining the overall coordination of the vernacular landscape; there are also some villages over-development of tourism and blind construction, demolition of the old and build a new one, false to the real phenomenon, damaging the authenticity of the traditional villages[9].

In the face of this grim reality, it is urgent for the whole society to pay attention to and take salvage measures to protect traditional village resources. A typical case is Guojiaying Village in Zhonghe Town, Tengchong City, which is listed as the fifth batch of Chinese traditional villages in 2018 because of its complete overall pattern, preservation of traditional street characteristics, and numerous traditional buildings. However, in the process of preparing the protection plan, it was found that with the deepening integration of urban and rural areas, it is difficult for traditional villages to hold on to their own characteristics, and the demand of residents to pursue modern lifestyles and facilities has put traditional buildings at great risk.

2. Overview

Guojiaying Village, located in Xinjie Community, Zhonghe Town, Tengchong City, Yunnan Province, was listed as one of the fifth batch of Chinese traditional villages in 2018. The village is situated in the western part of Tengchong County, with coordinates of 98 degrees and 23 minutes east longitude and 25 degrees and 3 minutes north latitude, the village occupies an area of about 450 acres, covering a total area of 3.8 square kilometers, with terrain residing on top of a flat hill in the mountains, close to the Zhonghe Township area, only 1 kilometer from the township government and 12 kilometers to the center of Tengchong City. The village is predominantly Han Chinese, with multiple surnames in communion, such as Guo, Yang, Yin, Liu and Zhu.

At the end of 2017, there were 223 households in Guojiaying, with a total population of 1,118, and a per capita income of about RMB 10,200, which is higher than the average level of Tengchong City (RMB 8,615). Villagers mainly rely on planting (grain and oilseed-based), farming and migrant labor to generate income, and their economic situation is greatly affected by market fluctuations.

The layout of the village follows the principle of sitting in the north and facing the south, and the dwellings are compactly arranged in the shape of a tic-tac-toe, with each lane divided according to the family name, which fully reflects the harmonious symbiosis between mountain villages and the natural environment as well as the wisdom of traditional camping. Guojiaying houses take the triple or quadrangle courtyard as the basic unit, and generally adopt the symmetrical layout of one courtyard and two courtyards, with clear spatial sequences, from public to private, and rich levels. The main body of the building is a wooden or brick structure, with a variety of wall materials, including earth, brick, volcanic stone and wood panels; the interior is exquisitely decorated, with superbly carved beams and columns, and the roofs are designed with a slate-tiled overhanging hilltop or a hard hilltop.

Currently, Guojiaying has one cultural relics protection building, nine residences with potential value for protection, and more than a thousand residences reflecting the characteristics of the ancient village. In addition, several elements of the historical environment have been preserved,

such as photo walls, pavilions, ponds, inscriptions, a cluster of tobacco-roasting buildings, ditches, earthen walls, stone paths and old trees. In terms of intangible cultural heritage, the village has unique lion dance and lantern activities, and holds rich folk activities during ethnic festivals such as the Hongsheng Temple Sacrifice on the 13th day of the 6th month of the Lunar Calendar, the Dragon Boat Festival, the Ching Ming Festival, the Mid-Autumn Festival, and the National Day, as well as preserving customs such as the reception of the dead, traditional marriage customs, and funerary customs.

3. Problems in the Protection

3.1. Urban Planning Positioning Threatens the Survival of Ancient Villages

Due to its geographical location near Tengchong city, Guojiaying Village has been included in the development plan of the Zhonghe Industry-City Integration New Zone in Tengchong Border Cooperation Zone of Baoshan City, and is positioned as part of Yunnan Province's Border Openness and Industry-City Integration Demonstration Zone, as well as an important re-export processing and trading base in western Yunnan. With the advancement of the construction of the new area, Guojiaying Village is facing the transformation into a modern urban residential area with multi-storey to high-rise residences, and its original traditional village style is at risk of disappearing completely.

3.2. Inadequate Protection Measures and Deterioration of Historical Heritage

Hongsheng Temple and other important traditional buildings are in a serious state of structural deterioration due to lack of maintenance, which, together with the integration of modern elements, has led to the damage of their original appearance. Most of the dwellings and elements of the historical environment, such as the Dashuiban and the Roast Tobacco Building Cluster, are also falling into disrepair due to a lack of maintenance. Although awareness of the protection of ancient villages has increased in recent years, there are still problems of insufficient protection, including unused old houses, abandoned functional buildings and the loss of some cultural relics.

3.3. Urbanization and Modern Lifestyles Affect the Maintenance of Village Characteristics

Guojiaying is close to Xinjie Community and Zhonghe Town, and many villagers have changed their lifestyles, housing needs, and facility standards as a result of urban-rural interactions. According to the “Master Plan for Zhonghe Industry-City Integration New Area in Tengchong Border Integration District, Baoshan City”, Guojiaying will be developed as a sub-center and face the transformation to become a second-class residential land in the city, so how to integrate into the urban environment while maintaining its own characteristics has become an urgent problem. Coupled with the villagers' increased demand for life improvement, modern lifestyles have gradually infiltrated the traditional village. Due to the lack of effective guidance, some of the newly built architectural styles, materials and colors are not in harmony with the overall appearance of the ancient villages, destroying the historical environment. For example, the randomly built solar water heaters have damaged the overall beauty of the village.

3.4. Backward Village Infrastructure and Lack of Repair Resources Accelerate the Decline of the Village

The backwardness of Guojiaying's infrastructure, such as the imperfect road drainage system,

insufficient road hardening, and the lack of garbage disposal facilities, seriously affects the villagers' quality of life and causes the gradual decline of the ancient village. At the same time, villagers have technical and financial difficulties in supporting the daily protection and repair of traditional buildings, especially families with a large number of migrant workers, who are unable to carry out effective house maintenance. The poor condition of hardware facilities has led to increased population loss, and some traditional houses have been left vacant for a long time, increasing the risk of building damage or even collapse.

3.5. Intangible Cultural Heritage Transmission Faces Difficulties

Under the influence of foreign culture and modern culture, the intangible cultural heritage of Guojiaying, such as lion dance lanterns, traditional wedding and funeral customs, etc., are gradually simplified and diluted, and the atmosphere of festivals and celebrations has weakened. The memories of the older generation are gradually fading, and folklore and village history are not being passed on, so it is urgent to take measures to protect and promote them.

4. Development Strategies and Countermeasures

4.1. Accurately Coordinate the Planning Relationship, and Protect the Ancient Villages by Many Parties Together

It is necessary to actively integrate the overall urban development plan and traditional village protection measures, and implement the planning and protection content at all levels of Guojiaying Village. In particular, we need to pay attention to balancing the relationship between Tengchong City Bianhe District Zhonghe New Area Plan and the protection plan of ancient villages, from the perspective of architectural heritage protection and cultural inheritance, take the initiative to docking and feedback on the protection of ancient villages, and strive to be adjusted to match the stage of implementation of the Bianhe District Plan. At the same time, it is necessary to strengthen cooperation with the municipal cultural relics protection department and cultural management department, strive for policy support, and jointly promote the protection of traditional villages in Guojiaying Village. The long-term goal is to incorporate it into the traditional neighborhood protection system, delineate the purple line control area, and ensure its comprehensive protection with a better system.

4.2. Adopt the Principle of Holistic Protection and Implement It in a Hierarchical and Progressive Manner

Following the protection concepts of wholeness and originality, the spatial pattern of Guojiaying is protected in a detailed manner layer by layer. Firstly, the expansion boundaries of villages should be strictly restricted to ensure the overall integrity of the ancient village landscape. Secondly, the internal road system and public space layout of the village should be gradually optimized. Finally, carry out maintenance and protection work on the building complex and individual buildings.

4.2.1. Expand the protection vision, including the regional environment and landscape association

The protection of traditional villages needs to be viewed as a holistic and systematic project, emphasizing the symbiotic relationship with the natural environment. For the mountains, Jianfeng River, farmland and other elements of the ecological environment around Guojiaying, strict protection measures are implemented to maintain a harmonious symbiosis between man and nature.

4.2.2. Maintain the overall pattern of the village and key historical relics

In accordance with the principle of “whole first and then subdivided”, focus on protecting Guojiaying's spatial form, layout structure, public space sequence and unique spatial texture. Scientific and reasonable village planning should be adopted to ensure the overall pattern and spatial structure are maintained, detailed guidelines for village housing construction should be formulated, and various restoration and new construction activities should be guided according to the predetermined direction of village development to construct a clear hierarchical spatial sequence.

4.2.3. Restore important cultural carriers to ensure the continuation of the physical foundation of the cultural lineage

It is necessary to strengthen the expansion and restoration of key physical spaces that affect cultural heritage, in conjunction with village planning and construction projects. Encourage local residents and foreign forces to participate in construction activities through cultural identity, and renovate some facilities to meet the actual needs of cultural heritage. For example, providing spacious public activity venues for ethnic festivals, ceremonies, and traditional customs in Guojiaying, while establishing fixed performance venues and planning exhibition paths for special cultural projects such as lion dance and lanterns, and collaborating with cultural and creative industries to develop related products and services.

4.3. Explore ways to Protect and Develop Traditional Village Architecture in the New Era

In the face of changes in lifestyles and housing needs, the traditional architecture of Guojiaying should also evolve in time, such as introducing modern living facilities (e.g., separation of people and animals, sanitary facilities, etc.), but core features such as pierced wooden frames, volcano stone facades, and quadrangle courtyard layouts must be maintained.

4.3.1. Based on the Protection of the Characteristic Elements of Traditional Houses

It is necessary to focus on the core characteristic elements of Guojiaying's architecture, prevent sudden changes in traditional styles, and thus support the core values of traditional villages. These elements include: architectural forms reflecting regional characteristics, such as courtyards built on mountains and large-slope roofs adapted to climatic and geomorphological features; environmental treatments reflecting the harmony between people and the earth, such as the channeling of water systems and the protection of mountain vegetation; and construction techniques demonstrating the wisdom of the local community, such as the use of volcanic materials, the adoption of pierced-dipper construction techniques, and the incorporation of local beliefs and customs.

4.3.2. Reasonable Improvement of Traditional Houses to Adapt to Modern Life

With the improvement of economic level, the villagers' demand for improving housing conditions is increasing, especially the younger generation of villagers expect modernized quality of life. For this reason, on the basis of protecting the characteristics of traditional houses, it is allowed to make reasonable improvement and development to solve the inconvenience in actual life. For example, guidance is given to the concealed installation of solar collector equipment, the design of awnings in line with the overall style, the improvement of hoarding and flooring processes to enhance thermal insulation, the installation of additional kitchen and sanitary facilities, and the standardization of water and sewage supply and electrical wiring, in order to achieve a comfortable

and safe living environment. At the same time, the villagers were guided to rationalize their farming space, so as to ensure the environmental hygiene of the dwellings without destroying the traditional architectural style.

4.4. Developing a Model of Linkage between One and Three Industries to Promote the Sustainable Development of the Village

The existing industrial structure of Guojiaying is single, and agriculture lacks characteristics. In the future, we should fully explore the advantages of small plots of land and local specialty crop resources, inject historical and cultural connotations, and create agricultural industries and cultural tourism with high added value. Specifically including: in-depth development of eco-tourism agriculture and cultivation of characteristic agricultural product brands; development of rural tourism by utilizing unique traditional cultural resources; and opening of experiential tourism services such as agro-parlors and B&B inns relying on traditional dwellings.

4.5. Enhancing the Operability of Planning and Responding to the Real Needs of Villagers

An easy to understand and operate "chart" construction guide should be developed to clarify the design guidelines for village road construction, public facility configuration, and residential renovation. Train village committee management personnel to become experts in planning implementation, form township rules and regulations that include planning content, effectively improve the feasibility of planning, and meet the current needs and future development aspirations of villagers.

5. Conclusion

As one of the fifth batch of Chinese traditional villages in Tengchong City, Yunnan Province, Guojiaying Natural Village possesses rich historical and cultural heritage, unique traditional architectural style and deep cultural heritage. However, with the acceleration of urbanization, lagging infrastructure, insufficient protection, and the influence of modern lifestyles on traditional culture, Guojiaying Ancient Village faces many challenges, such as the village style being threatened by modern urban planning, serious deterioration of the historical heritage, increasing decay due to the backwardness of the village's infrastructure, the villagers' difficulties in maintaining and repairing the traditional buildings in terms of technology and finance, and the difficulty in passing on intangible cultural heritage etc.

In order to solve the above problems and ensure the sustainable protection and development of ancient villages, the following strategies and countermeasures should be adopted: firstly, accurately coordinate the urban planning relationship at different levels and strive for the joint participation of many parties in the protection; secondly, adhere to the principle of holistic protection, and implement the protection measures from macroscopic to microscopic in a hierarchical and progressive manner, and at the same time, pay attention to the protection of the regional environment and landscape connection, the overall pattern of villages, and the protection of important historical relics; secondly, explore the traditional village architecture in the new era, and explore the possibility to develop a new architecture in the future. When exploring the protection and development of traditional rural architecture in the new era. It is necessary to improve residential buildings reasonably while maintaining core characteristic elements to meet the needs of modern life. Finally, developing a linkage model between the primary and tertiary industries, promoting the transformation of industrial structure, and achieving rural revitalization by improving the operability of planning and responding to the actual needs of villagers.

To sum up, Guojiaying ancient village needs to seek a balance in the process of protection and development, not only to inherit and carry forward the traditional culture, but also to adapt to the development trend of modern society, and finally realize the effective protection of its historical and cultural value and the sustainable development of the village economy through scientific and reasonable planning and effective management mechanism.

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