

The Protection and Development of Traditional Villages in the Context of Rural Revitalization: A Case Study of Anhe Village

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Abstract: Traditional villages have a rich history and cultural heritage, encompassing ancient buildings and natural scenery that are valuable remnants of the past. However, rapid industrialization and urbanization pose significant challenges to the preservation and development of these traditional villages. This study focuses on Anhe Village in Shahe City, Xingtai, Hebei Province as a case study under the backdrop of rural revitalization. Through questionnaires, literature review, and other methods, we deeply investigated the basic situation, current status of architectural protection, and future development path of Anhe village in order to propose improvement measures conducive to its sustainable development while preserving its original character.

Keywords: Rural revitalization; Traditional villages; Protection and development

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1.1 Background Investigation

The report to the 19th National Congress clearly shows that the economic and social problems of agriculture, rural areas and farmers are essential to the sound economic and social development of the country. We should continue to give priority to the vigorous development of the agricultural and rural economy, promote rural revitalization, and take "thriving industries, livable ecology, civilized village style, effective governance, and prosperous life" as the overall goal of urban and rural recovery. Elevate this overall goal to a strategic height and write it into the Party Constitution. This sentence gives a direction that can help drive change in agriculture and the countryside.

1.2 Purpose and significance of the survey

Traditional villages not only hold importance as part of global culture but also represent China's ancient agricultural civilization. Due to their cultural heritage and long history compared with other types of villages they are particularly valuable for study purposes. The investigation into traditional village preservation in Anhe Village is not only beneficial for its continued vitality but also holds great significance for integrating tradition with modernity towards sustainable development.

1.3 Basic information of the respondents

Anhe Village is situated in the northeastern region of Chaiguan Township, Shahe City, at the eastern foothills of the South Taihang hilly area. It is only 32 kilometers away from Shahe city, boasting a superior geographical environment and convenient transportation. In 2016, Anhe Village was recognized as one of China's traditional villages in the 4th batch list. Subsequently, in 2017, it received the honor of being designated as a national social history and traditional culture village by Hebei Province. With its rich tradition of ancient architectural history and culture, Anhe Village stands out with its unique "four manor" layout and intact former site of Bethune Hospital - a battlefield for international communist fighters. Through continuous development, it has cultivated a distinctive historical and cultural connotation.

2. Local culture and cultural relics

2.1 Village layout and traditional architecture

The terrain of Anhe Village presents a form of Taiji diagram, from the air, its two water storage ponds are located in "Yin Yu Yan" and "Yang Yu Yan", while the hillside of the west village is a Xipo forest, and the north of the village is a Jiannao-shan and Qiding-shan. Under the Qiding-shan cliff, there is a "cool river" seasonal river. Whenever the rainy season comes, the water gurgles. On the surface of the river, there will be a large number of gray sand rocks, known as lying sheep stone. The terrain to the east of the village is relatively flat, and the south of the village is adjacent to Gaozhuang Village, and the terraces and gullies between the two villages are intertwined to form a "lower gully" or

"stream gully" that extends from the center of the village to the outside of the village. The villagers built a reservoir at the end of the ravine, and the residents of Anhe village built around the pond, layer by layer, in order of the height and height of the hill.

After the Anhe village was built, the people lived and worked in peace and contentment, and gradually multiplied into a larger village around it. From the end of the Qing Dynasty to the period of the Republic of China, there were four families in the village, which were Chen, Yang, Peng and Tian. In the north of the village, the west of the village, the south of the village and the east of the village, they have built their own distinctive residences, forming the ancient residential buildings with the architectural characteristics of the hilly area of Taihang Mountain in Anhe Village that people can see today, which are called "four major manors". Here, Chen Manor as an example, located in the north of the village of Chen Manor, its thick wall, carefully selected building materials, exquisite gate decoration, Chen courtyard is relatively concentrated, is a standard Siheyuan building, the main room is tiled house or building, the back wall is mostly bluestone, the front wall is mostly blue brick, white and gray pointed, the entrance door, there are shadow walls, brick carving exquisite, auspicious patterns. The gate building near the street is built with bluestone strips to form the third and fifth steps, and the exterior of the gate block is carved with many auspicious patterns, such as cranes and birthday stars. Gatehouse one-way slope bottle roof, double cornices, gatehouse on the decorative wood square hanging and hanging columns, hollow carving engraved with moire, pomegranate, grapes and other auspicious patterns, the door on the street wall is inlaid with stone hollowing horse stone. The rest of the "three major estates" are similar to the "Chen Manor", with complex and exquisite engravings, each with its own characteristics, among which, the courtyard of Tian's courtyard is mostly in the form of "Seven bundles of five" or "five bundles of three", mostly in two sets of courtyard or one into three sets of courtyard pattern. The main house is a ridge tiled house, with a town house beast placed on two corners of the ridge, and a tall horse wall with crenel style is built on the street roof.

2.2 Landscape and tourism environment -- Sunset in ancient village

It is not accurate to say that it is a scenic spot here, but it is a magnificent imitation ancient garden. It is called "ancient village sunset", it is a landscape cluster with rich cultural heritage and mellow ecological natural resources. Many landscapes can only be seen with the eyes, but it needs to be felt with the heart.

The round brick door on the back of the tall shadow creates a beautiful picture of the garden. It is similar to the Wu bamboo Pavilion in the Humble Administrator's Garden in Suzhou. The garden is full of strange stones and fine carvings. Longma arch bridge across the stream, quite a small bridge water garden mood. The stone carved auspicious beasts can be seen everywhere, simple and elegant, naive and naive. Different auspicious animals, representing different meanings, worth watching and tasting, the main building in the park is a two-story attic style, high gate with courtyard ancient residential. Two persimmon trees at the door, on behalf of all the best. The middle of the street door and roof ridge is decorated with a gourd, which means both good fortune and good fortune.

The interior furnishings are simple but not simple, the central hall is a woodcut relief flower rich picture, couplets: the room is not large, the fragrance is not much. The gate of the courtyard is also exquisitely crafted and ingenious. There are some luxuriant flowers and plants in the yard. Everywhere shows the master's style of literature. Traditional reliefs can be seen all over the walls. One of the pine crane, dynamic, crane shape realistic, simple and simple picture, simple, a few knives carved out a beautiful meaning. The two reclining Buddhas on the lion and elephant are lifelike and full of spirit. It is not only a treasure of garden art, but also a carrier and treasure house of stone carving art.

2.3 Folk culture and folk art

2.3.1 Folk culture

The most influential folk culture in Anhe village is the worship of the "nine lords". The major folk activity is the "carrying of the nine lords" ceremony. It is believed that during the Yuan Dynasty, Yang Jiusi from Xiaolu village in Nanzheng County, Hanzhong Prefecture, Shaanxi Province came to Shahe County to participate in the imperial examination. He advocated for promoting filial piety and suppressing evil deeds, and was revered as a dragon catcher by building temples for worship in Anhe village's Heshan area.

2.3.2 Folk art

Anhe Village boasts a variety of traditional art forms including traditional opera, ballads, and other artistic expressions, as well as ancient celebration methods such as folk fire rituals. Throughout its history, Anhe Village has established numerous performance troupes and civil-military fire brigades including singing classes, yangge teams, military bands, war drum teams etc. , along with self-entertainment forms like stilt dancing, lion dancing and dragon dancing.

Amongst these traditional skills are not only blacksmithing and embroidery but also various crafts such as winemaking, vinegar production, and firecracker making. However, due to passage of time, the traditional crafts have gradually declined, and now it's difficult to find them even if there's only one remaining blacksmith shop.

3. Problems in the protection and development of traditional villages

3.1 Villagers' awareness of participating in the protection and development of traditional villages is weak

Although the villagers have the ancient traditional villages and are trying to maintain their integrity, their enthusiasm in protecting the ancient local civilization is extremely low because they fail to fully understand the ancient local civilization and take up their own social responsibilities. Some villagers do not realize that proper development can bring positive changes to their homes, communities, culture, economy, etc., they still cling to their ideas, they do not realize that if they can make full use of resources, they can make their homes more beautiful and more prosperous. However, as some people are eager to integrate into the town, they will demolish a large number of old houses and make more efforts in decoration, decoration, greening, safety, fire prevention and other aspects, which will bring great damage to the history, culture and values of the home. It can be seen that the development of traditional villages should be kept in a certain degree, and the villages should be properly developed. On the basis of not demolishing the buildings of ancient huts and damaging the landscape, the village culture should be spread and the village economy should be developed.

3.2 The transfer of rural labor force leads to hollow villages

With the continuous advancement of urbanization, the environment of Anhe Village is also deteriorating. The infrastructure, living environment and employment opportunities of many villages are backward, which makes it impossible for many villagers to live and work in Anhe Village. In addition, the excellent living environment, good economic condition and excellent policy support in Beijing and Tianjin also make many young and middle-aged labor forces in Anhe village come here in pursuit of more development opportunities, so that most of the residents in Anhe Village are elderly. With the progress of society, many traditional villages are suffering from increasingly bad environmental impacts. Moreover, due to the lack of necessary financial support, the protection and development of these villages are still difficult, and may even die out.

3.3 Lack of infrastructure

At present, due to the lack of necessary financial investment, most of the streets in the villages are narrow except for the main roads, which is easy to cause traffic jams. Yes. In addition, the number of garbage collection stations, public toilets, tap water networks and sewage treatment systems in towns and villages is very small, lacking effective environmental protection. With the acceleration of social development, more and more behaviors such as littering and displacing pollutants have seriously affected the local social stability and economic development. In this situation, the quality of life and the quality of the environment of the inhabitants of traditional rural areas is greatly reduced, and the necessary basic facilities and public services are lacking.

4. Measures for the protection and development of traditional villages in the context of rural revitalization

4.1 Enhancing agricultural tourism and promoting agriculture through tourism

With the unique natural environment of Anhe Village and the convenient transportation provided by Taihang Mountain Expressway, we will fully utilize these natural resources to establish a modern ecological agricultural park known as "Taihang Rural Park" through systematic land reclamation, landscaping, management, and protective measures to meet people's desire for natural beauty. In addition to offering traditional sightseeing experiences, such as bonfire parties and agricultural education, we will also provide professional audio equipment for tourists while avoiding turning the scenic spot into a mere social media attraction. It is important to focus on economic development while preserving the village's distinctive characteristics.

4.2 Cultural guidance, enhance the protection and development plan for traditional villages

The natural landscape and folk culture of Anhe Village are unique, providing a strong historical and cultural industry advantage. However, in formulating the protection and development plan, it is essential to fully consider the local situation and approach village protection with a scientific and dialectical attitude in order to achieve sustainable development goals. With the promotion of rural revitalization strategy and the guiding principle of "prioritizing protection while considering development", it is necessary to improve the planning for protecting and developing traditional villages according to actual local conditions. This involves adhering to industrial development as the foundation, cultural inheritance as the essence, and striving to resolve conflicts between protection and development in order to achieve harmonious development of traditional village culture, economy, and environment. Attention should be paid to regional characteristics in releasing rural vitality, respecting cultural differences, and empowering rural economic revitalization.

4.3 Enhance infrastructure and improve residents' living environment

Based on the questionnaire survey conducted in Anhe village, it was found that most villagers believe that the village's infrastructure,

including transportation, sanitation, and network facilities, is relatively sound. However, some villagers feel that there is a need for further improvement in infrastructure development within the village. In order to enhance local social conditions, there should be a strong focus on developing infrastructure and public services. This includes active investment in road repair and maintenance to ensure effective waste management for improving the natural environment of the area. Additionally, regular inspections and maintenance of local education, healthcare, and social security systems are essential to guarantee local social stability and economic development. Simultaneously exploring a new rural governance model led by party building will help improve service efficiency while supporting industrial development efforts aimed at slowing down the outflow of villagers from rural areas and attracting more talent into these communities.

4.4 Facilitate the development of other industries through "tourism +" and drive the advancement of rural industries

The natural resources and cultural landscape of traditional villages provide unique conditions for tourism, enabling the seamless integration of traditional tourism with internet connectivity to facilitate easier access to information about traditional villages. By integrating tourism with various other industries, a diverse range of tourism activities can be organized, leading to the establishment of a comprehensive modern rural tourism system. The fusion of tourism and culture ensures holistic preservation and development of traditional villages, concurrently safeguarding both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Furthermore, distinctive tourism projects are tailored according to each village's unique cultural resources and strengths in order to cater to the needs of different demographics.

4.5 Preserve the original texture and emphasize the cultural significance of the village

The traditional Anhe village possesses distinct regional characteristics and harmoniously integrates with its surrounding environment in terms of site selection and layout, reflecting the ancient Chinese concept of "harmony between nature and man". Therefore, it is imperative to uphold the integrity and "original ecology" of traditional villages during preservation efforts. While ensuring the normal life of local villagers, it is essential to maintain the authenticity of buildings and landscapes within traditional villages, as well as prioritize the protection of their original layout without compromising architectural patterns or textures. Whether considering macro aspects such as architectural style, layout, and form or micro aspects like materials and sculptural shapes, preserving their original morphological characteristics is crucial. As times change, significant transformations have occurred in villagers' lifestyles and production methods, inevitably leading to some alterations in the features and forms of original architectural landscapes. These changes can be documented to create valuable historical and cultural information within villages, forming a tangible link to their past. When restoring dwellings in traditional villages, it is important to utilize appropriate building materials and construction techniques while maintaining their original layout and texture to preserve their traditional features. Furthermore, historical elements such as ancient trees, bridges, wells should also be preserved whenever possible to enrich the material connotation of traditional villages.

5. Summary

China's traditional villages are cultural heritages with a profound history, preserving historical traces and serving as the spiritual anchor of contemporary society. The overarching objective of the rural revitalization strategy is to achieve "prosperous industry, sustainable ecology, civilized village aesthetics, effective governance, and improved quality of life", which hinges on the protection and development of traditional villages. Within this strategy, traditional villages must harness their internal drive, unleash external potential, and firmly seize control over rural development initiatives. Looking ahead, I aim to prioritize cultural industries as the foundation for growth, concentrate on agricultural development, bolster tourism support by tapping into its rich cultural resources through thorough investigation and research efforts; all in pursuit of sustainable social progress while emphasizing circular economy cultivation and ecological sustainability to create an optimal living environment for villagers. We will continue advancing the development of traditional villages while safeguarding their cultural essence.

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