Survival and Protection of Traditional Chinese Villages in the Context of Urbanization

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Abstract The traditional village is the witness of farming civilization, but also the most important carrier of China’s excellent traditional culture. However, in the process of high-speed urbanization, more and more traditional villages get gradually depressed and have problems of survival crisis. Fully exploring the value of traditional villages and protecting and activating them have attracted wide attention. This paper firstly introduced definition of traditional villages and analyzed the influence of urbanization on traditional Chinese villages. Then, it came up with recommendations for survival of Traditional Chinese villages in the context of urbanization from establishing the protection mechanism, raising the protection awareness, and strengthening dynamic inheritance, to provide some ideas and methods for protection and upgrade of traditional villages.

Key words Traditional village, Urbanization, Survival, Protection, Dynamic inheritance

1 Introduction
Urbanization is the only way of modernization, is a great support for promoting coordinated development of urban and rural areas, and also an essential path for solving issues concerning the agriculture, farmers, and rural areas. After several decades of development, China has made great achievements in urbanization, and the urbanization rate has increased from 17.92% in 1978 to 57.35% in 2016, making China become a country with fastest urbanization. With the rapid progress of urbanization in China, numerous rural residents constantly flow to cities, rural land use patterns, living environment and social ecology are constantly changing, which exerts an enormous impact to survival of traditional villages. The traditional cultural forms such as traditional festivals and languages are gradually disappearing, worshipping and sacrificing and cultural life public space are gradually shrinking, the foundation of traditional culture is constantly being eroded, and many villages are facing the problem of disintegration. Since the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Housing and Urban-rural Development and other ministries and commissions launched the protection of traditional villages, 4153 villages were determined as traditional villages. This basically alleviates the situation of rapid disappearance of traditional villages. However, with problems of culture loss and block brought about by urbanization, it is of great theoretical and practical significance to exploring effective ways of traditional village protection and development.

2 Definition of traditional villages
As to the definition of traditional villages, the Ministry of Housing and Urban-rural Development, State Administration of Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Culture, and Ministry of Finance jointly issued Notice on Implementing Survey of Traditional Villages. In this notice, traditional villages are villages generated at early stage, having rich cultural and natural resources, and having certain historical, cultural, scientific and artistic, economic, and social value, and should be protected.

General, people get used to calling villages generated in history ancient villages. These villages have a long history. Despite changes in dynasties, the evolution of their forms and contextual heritage still accumulates rich historical information. The designation of ancient villages is widely used in social activities and academic researches, and has been generally accepted. In September 2012, the first meeting of the Traditional Village Protection and Development Expert Committee decided to change "ancient villages" to "traditional villages", to give prominence to cultural value and inheritance significance. The traditional villages are formed in the process of long-term farming civilization, condensing the memory of history, reflecting the progress of civilization, containing rich historical information and cultural landscape, are precious heritage of Chinese farming civilization. As a country with a long history of farming civilization, China has numerous traditional villages with different forms, styles and long history in vast areas. Traditional villages not only have the functions of historical and cultural heritage, but also have great value for advancing the process of agricultural modernization and promoting the construction of ecological civilization.

3 Influence of urbanization on traditional villages
3.1 Rapid disappearance of traditional villages Urbanization is the trend of human civilization and economic and social development, and is the only way for the backward agricultural countries developing to modern industrial countries. In 2011, China’s urbanization rate exceeded 50% for the first time, which marked China’s urban population surpassed the rural population for the
first time, and the agricultural country is undergoing great social changes. Urbanization brings about the increasing concentration of production, culture or consumption, politics and life, and its driving force and attraction to grab the resources of the surrounding villages break the original balance of traditional Chinese villages and lever the traditional rural social structure. Traditional villages are disappearing at an alarming rate due to a variety of human and natural reasons; some traditional villages were leveled to the ground or swallowed by urban expansion; some traditional villages became "hollow villages" due to migration work of numerous rural residents; some villages were demolished for political performance in the new socialist countryside construction; some villages were excessively developed under the business mode of being eager for rapid profit; some traditional villages were arbitrarily disintegrated and became dilapidated. At the same time, in vast rural areas, traditional agricultural farming methods become rapidly obsolete. Traditional villages are undergoing dramatic changes in cultural form (particularly ideology) of inheritance from generation to generation, moral concept, and value orientation, and their internal structure is also facing danger of disintegration.

3.2 Cultural loss and block of traditional villages Urbanization is a natural historical process. It is not only reflected in the migration of rural population to cities, but also embodied in changes of rural life to urban life in the value, life attitude and social behavior. In the process of urbanization, rural traditional culture, relying on the long-term accumulation of generations of the villagers and inheritance and transmission of value concept and code of conduct, still plays a special role. However, the combination and disappearance of a large number of traditional villages have brought about great changes in the original livelihood patterns, interpersonal relationships and traditional customs; rural population and hollow industries bring about tremendous changes to social space of traditional villages; the traditional cultural forms such as traditional festivals and languages are gradually disappearing, worshiping and sacrificing and cultural life public space are gradually shrinking, the foundation of traditional culture is constantly being eroded, and many villages are facing the problem of disintegration. In the context of advancing urbanization, the rural civilization, which remains in weak position, has been absorbed and remodeled by advanced urban civilization, and the traditional village culture and agricultural civilization have been gradually changed. The modernization is extending to every traditional aspect, and villagers' traditional concepts are undergoing huge changes. Urbanization drives the development of rural economy, but also deteriorates the problem of hollow villages. People living in villages are mainly elderly and children left behind, and fewer and fewer people live in traditional villages. The village development lacks subjects. As a result, inheritance of traditional farming culture is weak and cultural inheritance of traditional villages gets blocked.

3.3 Excessive development of tourism in traditional villages In the present urban civilization-dominated society, as a part of urban consumption, traditional village culture has gradually become fast food of urban culture. Many areas take tourism as the development path of traditional villages and take getting listed in Traditional Chinese Villages Catalog as a great opportunity for developing tourism. Once villages get the title of traditional villages, they will have the appeal of countryside tourism. In order to cater to demands of tourists, local government and village residents attach great importance to development but pay little attention to protection of traditional Chinese villages. They care mainly about the operation, but care little about management. Based on living or development needs, they deliberately adjust the form of their historical culture or village culture, change their historical buildings or traditional culture. These bring about gradual or sharp changes in form of villages or restoration and reconstruction of villages. Ancient buildings that should be protected become home hotels. White mud and red paint cover the long-term deposition of villages and groundless legend has changed the history of villages. Although the appearance of the villages is changed, the indoor space becomes larger, and villages attract numerous tourists, and it increase income, the original simple and unsophisticated nature of landscape in traditional Chinese villages gets destroyed, and the unique value of traditional villages is losing. Besides, continuous stream of tourists bring a lot of domestic rubbish and sewage, and high load of work pressure makes traditional Chinese village get exhausted, and ancient villages generated through thousands of years of historical accumulation are losing their appeal.

4 Recommendations for survival and protection of traditional Chinese villages in the context of urbanization

4.1 Establishing traditional village protection mechanism First, it is required to formulate laws and regulations. In the process of protecting the traditional Chinese villages, corresponding legislation should be handled first. Then, protection of traditional Chinese villages has laws and regulations to comply with, is handled in accordance with laws and regulations. Specifically, it is recommended to make clear scope and criteria of protection of traditional Chinese villages, divide protection responsibilities, formulate corresponding supervision provisions, and establish law enforcement and supervision mechanism. Only through establishing a long-term supervision mechanism, can make the traditional Chinese villages get really protected. The establishment and improvement of national policies and regulations are prerequisite and also the fundamental guarantee for protection of traditional Chinese villages.

Second, it is required to formulate development plan. In line with characteristics and special needs of survival and protection of traditional Chinese villages, it is necessary to define the protection areas and construction control zones, formulate control and guidance policies, take planning measures of protection and management, to safeguard cultural heritage, human environment, and intangible cultural heritage from damage, and implement control measures for various natural and human factors threatening safety of traditional Chinese villages. Also, it is recommended to come
up with ideas and methods for promoting sustained development of traditional Chinese villages, and make adjustment of product structure and industrial structure according to natural and cultural resources of traditional Chinese villages. All levels of government should include the traditional village protection funds into the budget, increase the financial support, and provide subsidy for traditional Chinese villages formulating protection plan, repairing the historical conservation areas and ancient buildings, and implementing protection of intangible cultural heritage. For traditional Chinese villages formulating protection plan, it is recommended to start protection from cultural quality education with ideas and methods for promoting sustained development of traditional village culture, so as to mobilize the individual and whole society to participate in the protection of cultural heritage of traditional Chinese villages.

### 4.2 Raising the awareness of protecting traditional Chinese villages

In recent years, from the government to the academic circle and common people, the awareness of protection of traditional Chinese villages is enhancing. As early as the late 1990s, academic circle constantly calls upon protecting traditional Chinese villages. Researchers actively explore practical and feasible protection approaches. Since April of 2012, the protection of traditional Chinese villages was included into national cultural strategy. With conscious protection awareness, villagers will not dismantle old houses and abandon the traditional agricultural production and lifestyle at will; government managers will not lump together the tourism development and village protection; investors participating in village development will not neglect agricultural culture, and will not build villages into hollow scenic spots; if every consumer realizes precious value of traditional Chinese villages, they will not make the action of violating the protection principle have soil for survival. Only through cherishing by heart, may it be able to cultivate a sense of conscious protection. Therefore, it is recommended to start protection from cultural quality education, moral education, and laws and regulation formulation, and material and non-material incentives, widely undertake protection and propaganda of traditional Chinese villages, and raise the awareness of people for agricultural culture and value of traditional Chinese villages. The villagers are the direct producers of the village culture and the practice people of protection. Therefore, it is of great importance to stimulate protection awareness of villagers and enhance self-love and self-confidence of culture. We can try to use popular form to organize protection activities of the traditional Chinese village culture, so that the villagers will participate, feel the culture, and really understand the connotation and value of the village culture. Besides, we advocate that villagers should be organized together to form the collective of protecting the traditional village culture, and jointly contribute to the culture protection and development traditional Chinese villages.

### 4.3 Strengthening the dynamic inheritance of traditional Chinese villages

The traditional Chinese villages have heritage of life and production form and dynamic inheritance, contain deep accumulation of farming civilization, is the fresh carrier of China's thousands of years of history and culture, and maintains the most profound nostalgia of the Chinese people. Dynamic inheritance of traditional Chinese villages should adhere to the organic integration of village space, history and value, abandon potted landscape type traditional villages, lay equal stress on protection of village structure texture and landscape pattern protection, protection of material and cultural heritage and intangible heritage, and protection of production and living environment, to realize the harmony of human, materials, and living. It is required to follow the principles of rational development and utilization, carry out scientific planning and arrangement of traditional Chinese villages, protect the historical and cultural heritage of the existing traditional Chinese villages and improve the road, water, and heating and communication infrastructure, provide convenience for residents who are unwilling to move out, and help them to keep original lifestyle and cultural customs. Under the premise of not destroying the overall pattern of traditional Chinese villages, the implementation of the beautiful countryside construction should give prominence to the modern civilization, unique national style, local characteristics, and the continuation of cultural context, to truly realize "seeing mountains and water, and remembering nostalgia".

### References


