

Research on the Design of Rural Revitalization in Remote Areas of Yunnan Taking Wengding Village of Cangyuan as an Example

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ABSTRACT

Wengding Village is a representative of rural areas in remote areas of Yunnan, which known as "the last primitive village in China" and has a unique cultural charm. However, under the impact of the market economy, there are also urgent problems to be solved and strong protection development needs. Starting from the general situation of the Wengding Village and the problems in the status quo, this article has considered the protection and development of the original village of the Wengding Va nationality in many ways, and finally puts forward the development path from the perspectives of traditional building protection, building renewal design and tourism planning.

Keywords: rural revitalization, primitive villages, Wengding Village, protection and renewal

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2018, China proposed the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy, and put forward the general requirements for the rural revitalization of "prosperous industries, ecological livability, rural civilization, effective governance, and affluent living". Villages and towns together constitute the home of mankind. As a form of homeland, rural revitalization doesn't mean stubbornness and stickle to tradition. The traditional rural value system also needs to be reviewed in the context of the new era. Against the background of rural revitalization, "design intervention in rural construction" embodies both justification and necessity. Wengding Village, as the last primitive Va nationality village in China, is the representative of rural areas in remote areas of Yunnan. At present, the research on the Va nationality, especially Wengding Village, is more on the tourism level. The research on the Va nationality culture is limited to anthropology, ethnology, sociology, history and demography. And the research on "how design intervenes in Wengding Village" seems pale. Therefore, this article selects Wengding Village as the research object, and puts forward the protection and development of primitive villages with Va nationality characteristics in remote and poor areas, and conducts

in-depth analysis from the aspects of material culture and intangible cultural heritage. Through practical exploration, it tries to find a strategy suitable for the protection and renewal design of Wengding Village.

II. OVERVIEW OF WENGDING VILLAGE

A. Overview of the natural ecological environment of Wengding Village

"Wengding" means "clouds and mists" in Va nationality language. For Wengding Village, which is located in the vast mountains, with an average altitude of 1495 kilometers and a vertical height of more than 1000 meters, it is worthy of the name. Wengding Village is located between 98°57"-99°26" east longitude and 23°09"-23°40" north latitude. It belongs to subtropical low latitude mountain climate (as shown in "Fig. 1"), which is surrounded by mountains, dense forests, abundant water vapor, and forms a magnificent sea of clouds landscape all year round (as shown in "Fig. 2"). Many rivers flow through this area, and the developed water system has created rich and diverse animal and plant resources in Wengding Village. Being in it seems to be in a tropical rain forest. The unique natural ecological environment has put a thicker and more mysterious veil on Wengding Village.

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Fig. 1. Location map of Wengding Village.

^a Image source: Google Satellite Map



Fig. 2. Sea of clouds landscape of Wengding Village.

^a Image source: taken by the author

B. Overview of the economic development and tourism model of Wengding Village

The entire village of Wengding Va Village has jurisdiction over 3 natural villages, composed of 6 villager groups, with a total of 281 households, 1792 people and 746 laborers. Wengding Village is located in the remote mountainous area of southwest Yunnan,

at the junction of Cangyuan County, Yunnan and the Wa State of Myanmar. Due to geographical location and historical reasons, the traffic there is blocked and the language is not available. The local villagers have little communication with the outside world, which leads to the backward economic foundation, slow economic development, and low productivity of Wengding Village. Wengding Village is a typical

agricultural village. The economic income of most households in the village mainly depends on food planting, but because of their location in mountainous areas, the per capita planting area as well as the space for agricultural development is limited.

Wengding Village has been developing village tourism since 2004. For a long time, the income of the village landscape ticket is the main source of its tourism income. In recent years, in order to increase the villagers' tourism income, the government and tourism

departments have allowed villagers to participate in tourism management and operation activities, such as letting villagers sell tickets and have tickets checked, act as tour guides, and greet tourists by guarding the gates (as shown in "Fig. 3"). If it is in time for the festivals unique to the Va nationality, the people of the whole village will also perform the folk custom programs of the Va nationality, such as beating wooden drums and hair dances for tourists. But overall, the villagers of Wengding Village still have low tourism income.



Fig. 3. Villagers greet guests at the gate with a unique way of the Va nationality.

C. Cultural overview of Wengding Village

There are many ethnic minorities in Yunnan. Among them, the Va nationality culture formed by the material wealth and spiritual wealth created by the Va nationality people in the long-term historical accumulation, with its unique folk style, bold national character and long-term mysterious and unpredictable appeal, has made the Va nationality become the nation with the most regional characteristics and cultural research value in Yunnan and even the entire China.

The Va nationality population in Cangyuan Va Autonomous County accounts for about 33% of the Va nationality population in the country, of which Wengding is a typical Va nationality ethnic village. It integrates the natural ecological landscape, the original settlement style and the original Va nationality culture, which shows the charm of the Va nationality village to the greatest extent. The Va nationality's cultural resources in Wengding Village are very rich, covering almost all aspects of the production and life of the Va nationality people. In terms of village style and features, from large settlement layout to single dwellings, Wengding Village has completely preserved the settlement characteristics of the Va nationality

people, the bar-style residential structure and the chicken cage thatched roof (as shown in "Fig. 4"). In the original worship of the Va nationality people, Wengding Village also completely preserved the village sacred spaces such as the village gate, the stone of village center ("Fig. 5"), totem pole ("Fig. 6"), sacred woods, wooden drum house ("Fig. 7"), the human head pile ("Fig. 8") and the cow head pile ("Fig. 9). In terms of folk customs, Wengding Village still has a strong Va nationality flavor. Whether it is the welcome ceremony when tourists enter the village, or the performances of many major festivals such as beating wooden drums and monihei (a traditional custom of the Va nationality used the bottom of the pot, cow blood and mud to smear the forehead to expel evil and pray for peace), they all reflect Va nationality's unique cultural atmosphere in Wengding Village.

^a. Image source: taken by the author



Fig. 4. Pole-style residential structure and chicken cage thatched roof.

a. Image source: taken by the author



Fig. 5. The stone of village center of Wengding Village.

a. Image source: taken by the author



Fig. 6. Totem poles of the goddess in the Wengding Village.

a. Image source: taken by the author



Fig. 7. Wooden drum house in Wengding Village.

a. Image source: taken by the author



Fig. 8. The human head pile of Wengding Village.

a. Image source: taken by the author



Fig. 9. The cow head pile in Wengding Village.

a. Image source: taken by the author

III. PROBLEMS IN THE CURRENT SITUATION OF WENGDING VILLAGE

A. The village hollowing out is serious

With the development of social economy, villagers began to go out to work in pursuit of better material living conditions. Due to the contradiction between the material life pursued by the villagers and the backward primitive space environment, many villages including Wengding Village are facing the phenomenon of "hollowing out". Traditional agricultural production is not enough to meet the needs of villagers to improve living conditions. The young male laborers in the villages gradually walked out of the original villages and became migrant workers. As time passes, only old people, women and children remained in the village, and the village became more and more hollow. The "hollowing out" of villages has led to the long-term or seasonal idleness of houses and farmland in the villages, low land utilization, major changes in the population structure, and the gradual decline of the agricultural industry. In the long-term "hollowing out" state, the village's overall environment and traditional dwellings can't be repaired and maintained, accelerating the village's decline.

B. Unscientific interventions

"Design intervenes in the village" is not simply to overthrow and redo, nor to stick to old ways and imitate the ancient, but requires long-term and scientific village protection and development planning. In many traditional villages, due to the deviation of policymakers' understanding of the national new rural construction policy, the positioning of the village's development goals is ambiguous, and it is too arbitrary in formulating the development direction of the village, which have led to the neglect of the "authenticity" principle of village protection, resulting in blind demolition of the old and construction of the new. At the same time, under the strategic background of Yunnan Province's vigorous promotion of tourism development, many traditional villages blindly followed the trend of developing tourism, a large number of new unreasonable tourism facilities, and destructive commercial transformation of traditional houses. These are all unscientific interventions, which not only will not lead to development, but will adversely affect protection and renewal.

C. The participation of villagers is not high

"Wengding" is a village name to outsiders, but it is a kind of memory and nostalgia for the local Va nationality people. However, due to the more serious "hollowing out", traditional villages are no longer the carriers of "homesickness" in the minds of many villagers, but have become synonymous with poverty

and dilapidation, and even become the object of some villagers eager to get rid of. Under the influence of this mental state, villagers are more inclined to build new reinforced concrete residences than to protect traditional houses. In addition, the benefits of tourism development to the villagers of Wengding Village are actually very small, which undoubtedly greatly dampened the enthusiasm of villagers in Wengding Village for the renewal and regeneration of the village. Although Wengding Village retains a relatively complete Va nationality's traditional cultural and religious activities, this traditional thought also to a certain extent constrains the villagers' views on the development of the village. This led to the slow development of Wengding Village.

IV. PROTECTION AND RENOVATION OF TRADITIONAL RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS IN WENGDING VILLAGE

A. Problems in the protection and reconstruction of Wengding traditional dwellings

1) Wengding's traditional dwellings are out of repair and damaged seriously for long years: When the author went to Wengding for investigation, the Cangyuan was in heavy rain, and the traditional houses in the old village of Wengding were particularly vulnerable in the wind and rain. Since most traditional houses use wooden structures, their ability to resist natural disasters is relatively weak. In addition, the Wengding Village is seriously hollowed out, many houses are in disrepair, and many houses are on the verge of collapse, making them uninhabitable. The wooden frame and interior furniture of traditional houses are damp, corroded, or moth-eaten for being uninhabited, which poses a great safety risk.



Fig. 10. The original dwellings that were crumbling in the rain.

^a. Image source: taken by the author

2) *There is a lack of scientific guidance on the behavior of new residential building and renovation:* Due to the rapid development of tourism, the traditional life concept of Wengding villagers has been impacted by external culture, which directly led to the increase of villagers' requirements for living environment and living conditions. With the change between the old and new generations of Wengding Village, the current traditional houses can no longer meet the expectations of the new generation villagers in the village for improving living conditions. Due to the relatively low cultural level of residents in poor areas and lack of cultural relics protection, they believe that traditional houses are very dilapidated and building materials are worthless. Even if they are repaired, they will not be able to achieve the safety and comfort of reinforced concrete structures, therefore, many people would rather demolish the traditional houses and rebuild the reinforced concrete houses. Because the architectural style is constrained by the construction technology and materials of the village itself, the new building lacks an overall design and simply imitates the existing building structure, resulting in a lack of coordination between the new and old dwellings, and as a result, the various architectural forms and structures in the village are mixed, destroying the style of the original old Wengding Village.

B. Strategies for the protection and reconstruction of traditional dwellings in Wengding

1) *Taking maintaining the "authenticity" of traditional dwellings as the principle:* It is necessary to increase the repair and reconstruction of damaged traditional houses. For rural dwellings with protection value, in the process of protection and reconstruction, the principle of maintaining the original style of the building should be maintained, while achieving the purpose of building protection and reconstruction, the cultural value of traditional houses should be maintained as far as possible. It is necessary to highlight the cultural characteristics of the original architecture of the Va nationality and avoid being impacted by foreign cultures. Efforts should be made to take regional culture as the design theme, combine the local climate and environment, and rationally use the unique structural forms and building materials of traditional houses to design each element of the houses.

2) *Focusing on strengthening the performance of traditional residential dwellings:* For the protection and transformation of traditional houses, there should be targeted measures to improve the performance of the original dwellings. Modern technology and new materials should be properly applied to the renovation

of traditional houses to ensure the sustainable development of the original dwellings. For example, measures can be taken to update the underground drainage system of traditional houses, and add skylights to solve the lighting problem without destroying the original building style. So that the original residential houses can meet the higher living needs of Wengding villagers to a greater extent.

3) *Strengthening the interior space design of traditional dwellings:* In the process of protecting and transforming the traditional houses of Wengding, attention should be paid to the protection and transformation of the functional aspects of traditional houses. It is not only necessary to pay attention to the building facade and the overall form, but also to the design and renovation of the interior space of traditional houses. While keeping the necessary national elements unchanged, it's needed to communicate with the villagers of Wengding Village more, fully understand their daily living habits, reform the internal space of the houses in a targeted manner, and integrate into the modern space suitable for human living as much as possible to change the current situation of poor living conditions inside the building.

V. DESIGN INTERVENTION IN WENGDING — DESIGN OF WENGDING VILLAGE FOLK MUSEUM

The "design intervention in the countryside" people talk about is not only to protect the original dwellings, but also to add some new dwellings through scientific design methods to meet the requirements for the use of dwellings and tourism development, and then achieve the real "protection and renewal". Wengding Village has a lot of valuable material and intangible cultural relics, and a new folk museum is urgently needed to show the culture of Wengding Village. Building new dwellings in an original settlement such as Wengding Village have higher requirements for design. It is necessary to make the new dwellings fully fit the original style of the village, without abruptness and destruction, and also pay attention to the fact that it is improper to blindly imitate the ancient to create "fake antiques" of no value.

A. The status quo of the original folk museum in Wengding Village

Through investigation, it is found that the existing folk museum in Wengding Village has been in idle. The first floor was changed to sell souvenirs, but because the tourism industry has not developed enough, it is very depressed and there are few tourists. And the second floor is already vacant. The original block of the folk museum should be a gathering place for tourists from the entire village, but the status quo there is very deserted. As a public building in the village, the folk

museum has the same form as the residential houses and lacks its attractiveness. Based on the above situation, it was decided to transform and redesign the folk museum in Wengding Village. Efforts are made to infuse it with fresh blood to restore the function of its original folk museum and become an important tourist node in the village, thereby attracting tourists, activating the cultural value of the village, and enhancing the cultural self-confidence of the villagers of Wengding Village.

B. Plane analysis of newly-built folk museum

The newly-built folk museum uses the technique of breaking up the whole into parts, using the rectangular plane of the local "chicken cage" Va nationality dwellings as the motif, and arranging the rectangular planes reasonably together according to the flow of tourists visiting the exhibition through the courtyard. In the functional division, the logistics service area is separated from the exhibition display area, and the office flow line doesn't cross the visitor flow line. The various exhibition areas are connected in series. Visitors walk from the first floor to the second floor naturally, and finally return to the entrance hall to complete the closed circulation of the exhibition. In terms of functional layout, the new folk museum not only considers the display function, but also adds a lecture hall, coffee bar and several viewing platforms. The original souvenir sales function has also been retained and expanded, which is arranged close to the entrance hall and is located where the streamline must pass, which is convenient for attracting people. The newly-built folk museum not only meets the requirements of modern exhibitions, but also serves as a window for displaying the culture of the Va nationality. (As shown in "Fig. 11" and "Fig. 12")



Fig. 11. The first floor plan of the folk museum.

^a Image source: drawn by the author

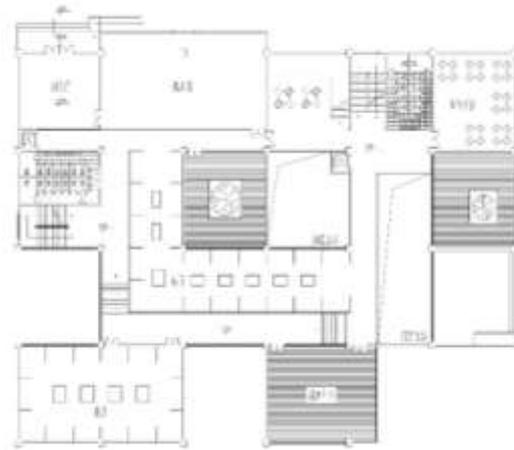


Fig. 12. The second floor plan of the folk museum.

^a Image source: drawn by the author

C. Model analysis of the newly-built folk museum

The plan focuses on the renewal and protection of Wengding Village, and the original characteristics of the Wengding Village and the ethnic characteristics of the Va nationality can't be lost while developing and innovating. In order to match the texture of the settlement dwellings, the newly-built Wengding Village folk museum should try to avoid being too big and too renovated as much as possible, and use the scattered mass to arrange and subtract from the large blocks to form a number of courtyard spaces. The newly-built folk museum uses as many local materials as possible, and fully meets the use functions of exhibition, rest, experience and so on. It also follows the formal beauty rules of the original settlement dwellings in Wengding Village. The interleaving and overlapping of the wooden frame shows the construction characteristics of the pole-hurdle architecture, and at the same time has the Va nationality style. In order to highlight its public building attributes, glass materials are added appropriately to form a collision between tradition and modernity, giving people a strong visual impact. The building is laid out along the terrain, using a number of sloped roof boxes to dislocate the front and back as well as the up and down to form a rich indoor exhibition space and an outdoor courtyard. With reference to the overhead method of pole-hurdle building, a large amount of gray space is created in the building for tourists to rest and stay. The whole building will give visitors a modern space experience under the original style, and then give visitors a sense of mystery through time and space. ("Fig. 13")



Fig. 13. Effect picture of the newly-built folk museum.

VI. REFLECTIONS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN WENGDING VILLAGE

A. Improving tourism infrastructure

Nowadays, the road from Cangyuan County to Wengding Village has been repaired, which greatly improved the traffic conditions for traveling to Wengding Village, but there is still a lack of a tourist shuttle bus between Cangyuan County and Wengding Village, resulting in non-self-driving tourists traveling very much inconvenience.

In the future, it is necessary to improve the reception capacity of the scenic area of Wengding Village, especially in terms of room and board. It is necessary to improve the quality and service level of "agritainment" catering services. It's needed to cultivate villagers of Wengding Village to become chefs specializing in Va nationality style farmhouse meals, and use local farm vegetables as far as possible in terms of food materials. The agritainment restaurant should better reflect the Va nationality characteristics on the basis of keeping clean and tidy.

The existing village hotel is transformed from a traditional residence, the beds are extremely limited, the decoration is simple, and the facilities are old. The homestay in Wengding Village should be specially designed according to the standards of the tourist homestay to increase the beds and update the facilities. The indoor and outdoor style can maintain the style of

^a Image source: drawn by the author

the original Va nationality people's residence, but it must meet the modern living conditions.

B. Enhancing tourism culture and art expressions

Special design should be made to the landscape signs of Wengding Village scenic spots, including: display signs, signposts in the scenic spots, trash cans, landscape lamps, rest seats, etc. The local small environment can also be rendered in mysterious and original colors. Design ideas can be drawn from the Va nationality culture of Wengding Village, such as cow heads, gourds and other elements. The materials are selected from local wood or bamboo. Through the simplification and redesign of various ethnic elements, they are used on the various landscape signs of Wengding Village scenic areas to fully reflect the Va nationality characteristics, making tourists feel the unique local culture while strolling in the original village of Wengding. It not only strengthens the tourists' understanding of the Va nationality folk customs, but also enriches the internal landscape of the tribe. At the same time, it strengthens the local Va nationality people's sense of identity and belonging. ("Fig. 14")

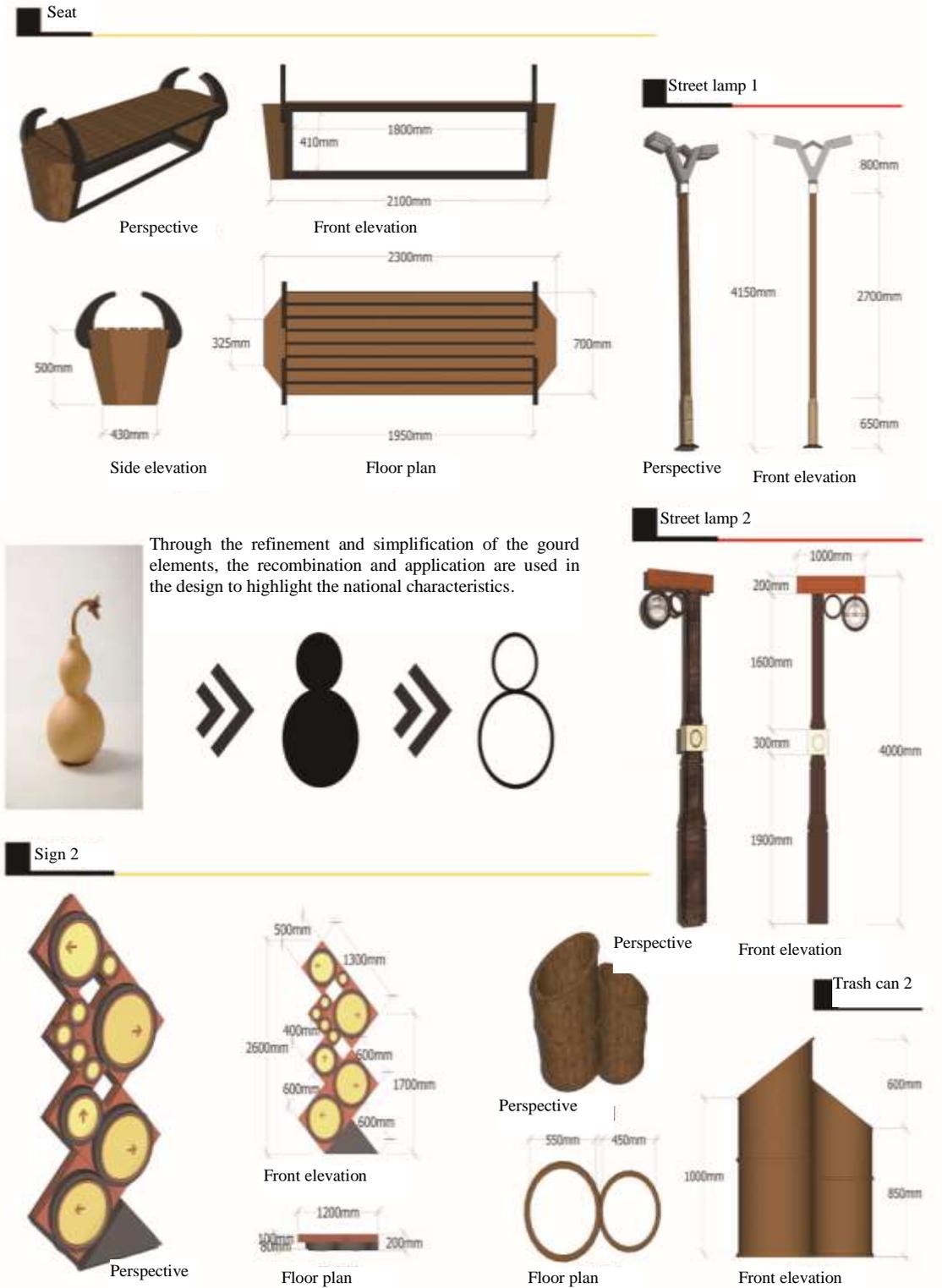


Fig. 14. Landscape sketches with Va nationality characteristics.

a. Image source: drawn by the author

VII. CONCLUSION

Wengding, the "mist-shrouded place" in the Va language, is illusive and hazy, cold and distant, and mysterious. Its beauty really matches what many people say — "a Arcadia where time has gone backwards for 400 years". However, Wengding is not really a paradise without trouble and suffering. On the contrary, it is full of problems to be solved urgently. In this era of rapid development of material life and cultural life, where Wengding Village goes is a question that everyone who is intoxicated by its beauty needs to think about. Taking Wengding as an entry point, can it extend to traditional villages in other remote areas of Yunnan, and evoke the long-lost homesickness of rural and urban people through the strategy of rural revitalization? The answer is yes.

As a generator of villagers' production and life from generation to generation, a traditional village is a veritable living cultural heritage. Therefore, the protection of traditional villages during rural revitalization should be a "living eco-museum" type of protection, which protects the material heritage, such as the protection and renewal of traditional houses, and at the same time, it is also necessary to reproduce the living culture such as intangible cultural heritage, for example, the reproduction of the original life style and folk customs.

It's needed to take into account the inheritance of traditional culture and the development of the village economy. It's necessary to carry out reasonable and scientific tourism development on the basis of protecting its simple and original traditional culture, improve the village's infrastructure to meet the villagers' increasing pursuit of living conditions, improve the existing "hollow out" situation, enhance the pride of villagers in the traditional culture of the village, and let more villagers consciously invest in the construction of the village. Through scientific design methods, fresh blood will be injected into the traditional villages to realize rural revitalization and reshape a period of nostalgia.

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