

# Study on the Changing Landscape of Traditional Korean-Chinese Villages: A Case Study from Changcai Village, Longjing City

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## ABSTRACT

With the ever-increasing rate of urbanization, an increasing number of people are devoting their efforts to study the conservation of traditional villages. Consequently, traditional villages are gradually becoming more visible to and valued by the general public. By studying the surrounding environment, road greening, plant life, and public facilities of the traditional Korean-Chinese Changcai Village in different time periods, this study analyzes the planar landscape and the elevation view landscape of the village from the perspective of landscape structural changes in traditional villages. Furthermore, it summarizes the reasons driving the landscape changes in Changcai Village as well as its developmental trends, with the aim of serving as a reference for future research on the conservation of traditional villages.

**Keywords:** Traditional Villages; Korean-Chinese; Landscape structure

## 1. INTRODUCTION

China has been an agrarian society since ancient times; the rural land area accounts for more than half of China's national territory. However, because of rapid economic growth and in order to meet the needs of the people, the Fifth Plenary Session of the 16th Chinese Communist Party Central Committee put forth the plan of building a new socialist countryside and carried out renovation in some traditional villages <sup>[1]</sup>. As a result, the cultural, architectural, and human landscapes of traditional villages have undergone great changes <sup>[2]</sup>. The same is true for the landscape conservation of traditional Korean-Chinese villages. Korean-Chinese, which is one of the ethnic minorities in China, is a migrant ethnic group with a unique national culture. This constitutes an important part of the culture in China <sup>[3]</sup>, and therefore, it is necessary to study the landscape structural changes in traditional Korean-Chinese villages for their conservation.

We considered the case of Changcai Village and investigated the changes in its landscape structure between 2006 and 2021 under the influence of China's Five-Year Plans. This paper analyzes the village

landscape structure from the plan and elevation views of the village, summarizes the changes in the landscape structure, and provides suggestions for the conservation and development of traditional Korean-Chinese villages.

## 2. OVERVIEW OF CHANGCAI VILLAGE

Changcai Village was established in 1883 and is a part of Jixin Town, Longjing City, Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, Jilin Province. It is situated southwest of Yanbian, 16 km away from Longjing City <sup>[4]</sup>. Changcai Village is a typical Korean-Chinese immigrant village situated in a primarily mountainous geographical environment, surrounded by an open terrain, with the mountains behind it and the Liudao River in front of it <sup>[5]</sup>. A small stream running through the village divides it into two parts, the old village on the west and the new village on the east. The village retains traditional Korean-Chinese architecture, such as warehouses and houses with plots in the yard to grow vegetables for household consumption. With the influence of policies such as land reform and a planned economy, the village has grown in size <sup>[2]</sup>. At the height of its development, the study site and Mingdong Village were jointly known as Changchai Village (Figure 1, Figure 2).



**Figure 1.** Satellite image of Changcai Village in 2021.

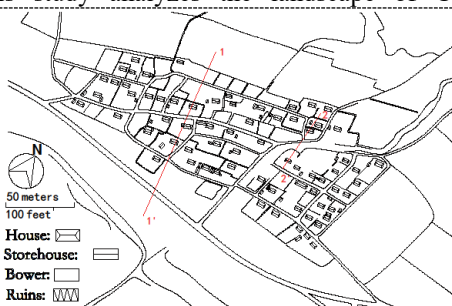


**Figure 2.** Panoramic view of Changcai Village in 2021.

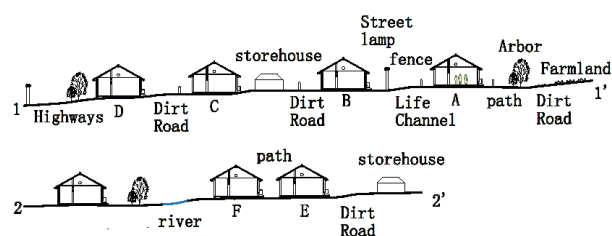
### 3. ANALYSIS OF LANDSCAPE CHANGES IN CHANGCAI VILLAGE

This study analyzes the landscape of Changcai

Village primarily in terms of its plan view and elevation view structure, and thereby summarizes the changes to the houses, public facilities, road system, water system, and the local vegetation (Figure 3, Figure 4).



**Figure 3.** 2021 Changcai Village plan view schematic.



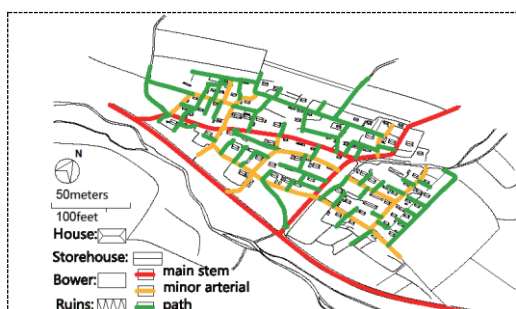
**Figure 4.** Concept plan of Changcai Village along cross-sections 1-1' and 2-2'.

#### 3.1. Plan view analysis of Changcai Village

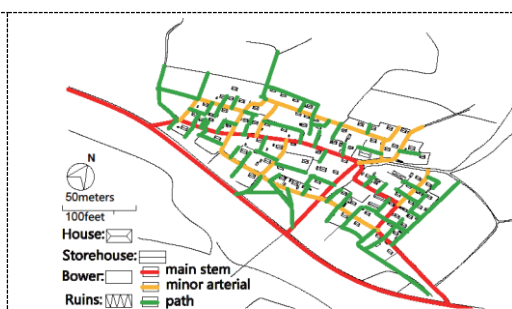
##### 3.1.1. Road systems.

Changcai Village is located next to a highway, and its roads are mainly highways, streets, and neighborhood paths. Apart from the primary roads, the remaining streets are distributed in a web-like network in a relatively organized spatial structure. Over a long period of transformation, the road system in Changcai Village has become refined and standardized. From 2006 to 2021, the number of primary roads in the village increased from 3 to 11. The number of secondary roads slowly increased

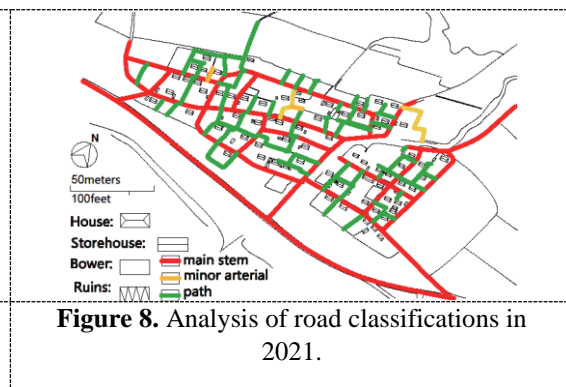
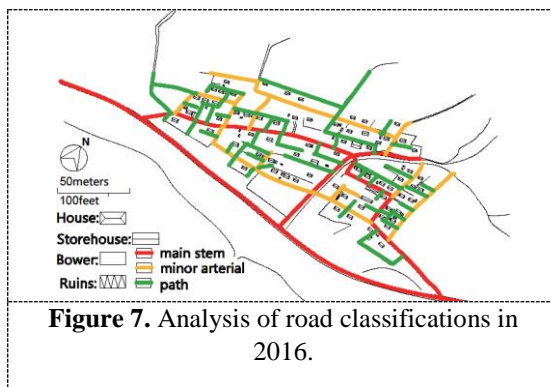
from 2006 to 2016, but then decreased from 2016 to 2021 as some secondary roads were upgraded to primary roads. The number of neighborhood paths also showed a decreasing trend. Due to considerable population loss, many houses are now deserted, which has led to loss of human traffic, and thus, desertion of the corresponding neighborhood paths (Figure 5, Figure 6, Figure 7, and Figure 8). With continuous renovations under the Five-Year Plans, the old dirt roads in Changcai Village have changed to concrete roads; however, some of the neighborhood paths between houses are still dirt paths. Though green belts of approximately 60 cm exist on both sides of the roads, they are yet to be populated with plants.



**Figure 5.** Analysis of road Classifications in 2006.

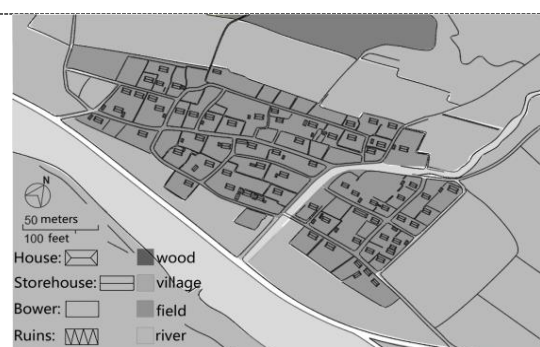
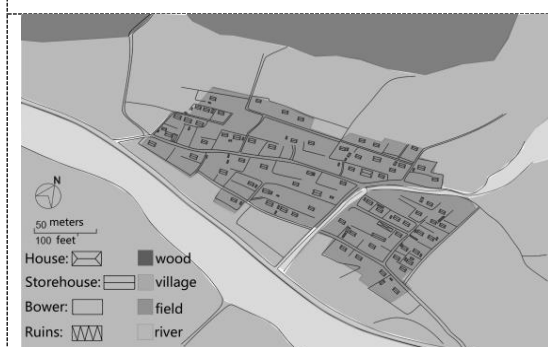
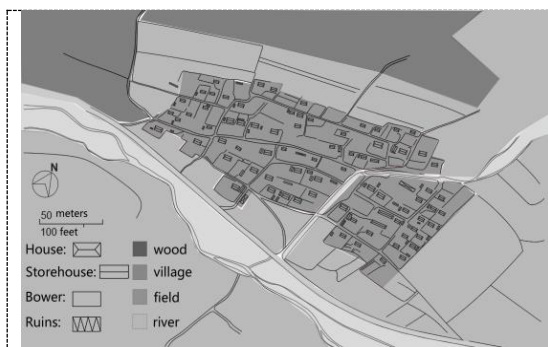


**Figure 6.** Analysis of road classifications in 2012.



**3.1.2. Landscape vegetation.** Changcai Village is situated along a riverbank against a mountainous backdrop and is surrounded by mountains and forests. The large areas of flat land located to the northeast and southwest of the village are suitable for agriculture; hence, as a source of income, villagers cultivate corn on a large scale based on the natural terrain and local climate. From 2006 to 2021, the forested area of Changcai Village decreased as some of the woods were converted to fields for cultivation. With the

implementation of the “Beautiful Countryside” program, the local government planted a large area of Korean rosebay on the southwest side of the mountain, adding to the richness of the local species. Roadside greenery in the village has been shrinking every year, decreasing from about 40 trees planted in the village in 2006, to 30 in 2012, to 17 or 18 in 2016, and finally to less than 10 trees remaining in the village today. However, with continuous development, compared with that in 2006 when villagers mostly planted crops in their courtyards, more villagers today choose to plant flowers to beautify the landscape.

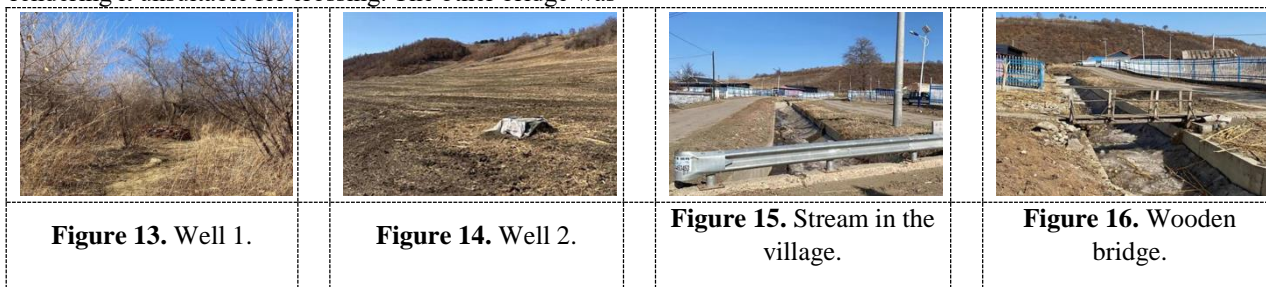


**3.1.3. Water bodies.** Since 2006, the water system in Changcai Village has two components, namely the well and the river. The local population built two wells on the western side of the mountain, which supply water to the

entire village for domestic consumption (Figure 13 and Figure 14). The existing drainage system has been modified so that water and sewage can be separated and partly flow into a stream of the river running through the village. There are two small bridges over the stream. One

of the bridges is constructed using wood (Figure 16); it is in a precarious condition due to lack of maintenance, rendering it unsuitable for crossing. The other bridge was

recently constructed using concrete and is well maintained.

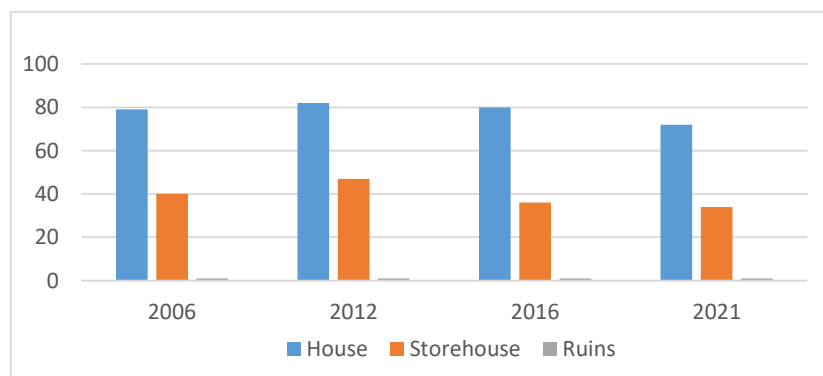


### 3.2. Elevation view analysis of Changcai Village

**3.2.1. Housing structures.** The traditional housing characteristics of the Korean-Chinese culture are well preserved in Changcai Village. In 2006, there were 79 houses and 40 warehouses in the village, as well as one archaeological site (Figure 9); in 2012, the number of houses and warehouses increased to 82 and 47 respectively, and the original archaeological site was preserved (Figure 10); in 2016, there were 80 houses and 36 warehouses, and the original archaeological site was still preserved (Figure 11); presently, in 2021, there are

72 houses and 34 warehouses, and the village has added buildings such as a courtyard pavilion in addition to retaining the archaeological site (Figure 12) (Table 1). Under the new countryside policy, many houses in the village have been renovated, which has improved the functionality, usability, and safety of the houses, while retaining the Korean-Chinese house structure. The village now has straw houses, tile-roofed houses, renovated brick-and-tile houses, and a few new affordable housing projects built for poor households. Given that straw houses require annual repairs and that the major chunk of population in the village is elderly people, who are unable to perform physically intensive labor, villagers have replaced these with colored steel roofing.

**Table 1.** Changes in the buildings of Changcai Village from 2006 to 2021.



**3.2.2. Public facilities.** The original fences in Changcai Village were wooden, which were changed to iron fences under the reform policy; subsequently, these were replaced by earthen walls of brick and tile of about 1.4 m height. However, because the earthen walls are not strong enough and were prone to collapse, only some of the fences were replaced. As a result, the village now has two types of fences. All the streetlamps in the village have been changed to those used in the streets of Longjing City, making it more convenient for residents. Though a few trash cans can be sighted along the road, relatively few are currently placed, and their numbers could be increased. The northeastern gateway of the village was newly built in 2016 and has a parking lot. In addition, the open area in front of the village committee is used as a recreation area and has a notice board.

### 3.3. Analysis of landscape changes in Changcai Village

The houses, roads, water bodies, greenery, farmland, and public facilities in Changcai Village have undergone varying degrees of change from 2006 to 2021 (Table 2). An example is the renovation of houses, which improved the villagers' standard of living. Previously, the village consisted mainly straw and tile-roofed houses (with earthen walls), which were replaced by brick-and-tile houses. These houses are more practical and are better suited to the people's needs. The roads were also improved and repaired and upgraded from dirt roads to concrete roads, making it easier for villagers to travel. In terms of greening, in 2021, the government planted saplings on the green belt alongside roads in Changcai



Village. In terms of public facilities, trash cans, streetlamps, and notice boards were added. The changes in the landscape of Changcai Village are based on a

“people-oriented” approach, which is more “modernized” and enriches the lives of the residents.

**Table 2.** Table of landscape changes in Changcai Village.

Landscape	Formerly	Presently
Housing	Tiled-roofed houses and straw houses	Tile-roofed houses, straw (with colored steel roofing) houses, brick-and-tile houses
Roads	Highway, primary roads in villages	Highway, primary roads, domestic roads, neighborhood paths
Water bodies	River, water pumps in individual households	River, water wells
Greenery	Mountain forests	Mountain forests, Korean rosebay, yard greenery
Farmland	Rice	Corn, apple, pear
Fencing	Wooden fence	Earthen walls, iron fences
Public facilities	None	Streetlamps, trash cans, notice boards, etc.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The landscape of Changcai Village is a stable framework gradually formed over long periods of development since the immigration period. The geographical environment offered by the presence of a wide, open, and flat terrain provided the conditions for the formation and development of a village; thus, the residents used the natural landform as the traditional landscape of the village [7]. Between 2006 and 2021, the road system became enriched and the classification scheme became more detailed and standardized. Public facilities in the village also gradually increased, and people became more self-sufficient, relying less on the natural environment. The variation of landscape also matured with people’s needs, while retaining the traditional Korean-Chinese house structure and farming culture. This is also a result of the mutual integration between Changcai Village and the natural environment.

Changes in the landscape of Changcai Village are not only influenced by naturally occurring factors but also partly due to external factors. In terms of tourism, as Changcai Village lies close to the highway and is along the only route to the former residence of Yin Dong-zhu. As a result, the landscape of Changcai Village has changed to improve the beauty of the scenery along the highway. The village has preserved a blacksmith shop site from the Mingdong Village in the 1960s and several traditional houses, which can be opened up to the public as a touristic attraction and drive the development of the local economy. Through the analysis of the current situation of the landscape of Changcai Village, this study summarizes the landscape changes and serves as a reference for the conservation and development of traditional Korean-Chinese villages, with the hope of

breathing life into traditional Korean-Chinese villages and continuing their development in a sustainable and stable manner.

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