



An Analysis of the Evolution and Protection of Traditional Village Architectural Features under the Influence of Tourism Development: A Case Study of Chengyang Eight Villages

Yishuai Zhang*

College of Tourism and Landscape Architecture, Guilin University of Technology, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Guilin, 541006 China

*530411370@qq.com

Abstract. In recent years, the rapid development of the times has brought great changes to rural construction. Traditional villages, as important carriers of traditional culture, have also been continuously affected. The Chengyang Eight Villages area, as the largest settlement of the Dong ethnic minority in Guangxi, preserves ancient traditions such as Dong stilt houses, costumes and ornaments, song and dance culture, and living customs. Moreover, the Chengyang Eight Villages Scenic Area has been rated as a national AAAAA scenic spot. Therefore, it is very necessary to study the impact of tourism development on the local architectural features. This paper studies the differences in building functions, appearances, and construction materials among areas within the scenic area that have experienced high, low, and almost no tourism development, thereby identifying the impact of tourism development on local architectural features. Based on this, further recommendations for the protection of architectural features are proposed for other traditional areas that have already undergone or are preparing to undergo tourism development.

Keywords: Chengyang Eight Villages, architectural features, tourism development

1 Introduction

Since the 1980s, China's rural cultural landscapes, including settlement landscapes and residential landscapes, have undergone rapid construction and development. Traditional dwellings are referred to as vernacular architecture. The residential landscape of Dong villages is a relatively specific type of material cultural landscape, serving as a carrier of Dong cultural heritage and showcasing the distinctive features of Dong villages and the spiritual outlook of the Dong people.

However, in the process of urbanization and modernization, the cultural landscape heritage of Dong villages has been continuously impacted, the characteristics of rural

landscapes have gradually disappeared, and the phenomenon of homogenization of traditional Dong residential landscapes has become serious. To this end, many experts and scholars have studied and analyzed the overall appearance of Dong villages. Existing research on the protection and renewal of traditional Dong dwellings mainly focuses on the continuation of traditional architectural features, the protection and renewal of dwellings in relation to tourism development and utilization, and the control and protection of architectural landscapes.

Scenic and tourism-oriented Dong villages have received widespread attention among villages nationwide. Chengyang Eight Villages (including eight natural villages: Ma'an Village, Ping Village, Yan Village, Pingtan Village, Dong Village, Dazhai Village, Pingpu Village, and Jichang Village) located in Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County, Liuzhou, Guangxi, have become a popular tourist destination due to their cultural and natural advantages. However, the existing landscape problems in Chengyang Eight Villages have led to negative evaluations of the rural landscape characteristics of some Dong villages. This paper analyzes the differences in architectural forms among the eight villages of Chengyang under different levels of tourism development, thereby exploring the impact of tourism development on the features of traditional village areas. Based on this, certain guiding recommendations are proposed for other traditional areas that have already undergone or are preparing to undergo tourism development.

2 Brief Description of the Current Situation of Chengyang Eight Villages

2.1 Overview of Chengyang Eight Villages

Chengyang Eight Villages is located in Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County, Liuzhou City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, 20 kilometers north of Guyi Town, Sanjiang County seat, covering an area of 12.55 square kilometers. Chengyang Eight Villages consists of eight natural villages, a large Dong village of a thousand households, including Ma'an, Ping, Yan, Pingtan, Dong, Chengyang Dazhai, Pingpu, and Jichang, commonly known as "Chengyang Eight Villages," each under the jurisdiction of three administrative village committees, inhabited by nearly 10,000 Dong people. The area is known for its many festivals, earning the reputation of "Township of a Hundred Festivals." Chengyang Eight Villages features hilly terrain, with higher elevation in the north, lower in the southeast, and the lowest in the southwest; the area is surrounded by mountains and crisscrossed by rivers; located in the mid-latitude region, it belongs to the humid climate zone of the mid-subtropics south of the Nanling Mountains; the annual average temperature is 17°C–19°C, with January being the coldest and July the hottest; annual precipitation is abundant, averaging 1493 mm, with more rainfall in spring and summer and less in autumn and winter; sunshine is relatively low, with an average annual actual sunshine of 1332.3 hours; the prevailing wind direction is north-northeast; the average annual frost-free period is about 320 days; the four seasons are characterized by simultaneous rain and heat, distinct cold and heat, frequent morning and evening fog, and suitability for cultivation throughout the year. Chengyang Eight

Villages boasts rich natural landscapes and, due to limited influence from centralized authority, retains relatively intact folk culture and natural landscapes. At the end of 2007, Chengyang Eight Villages was selected as one of the first batch of "Chinese Landscape" villages [1].

The evolution of the architectural features of Chengyang Eight Villages is a long-term development process influenced by factors such as the social environment, economic conditions, and residents' ideas [2]. The geographical environment and lifestyle of Chengyang Eight Villages are the main factors affecting the evolution of the village's architectural features. Located in the southwestern part of Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County, Liuzhou City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, the area is mountainous with inconvenient transportation and a relatively backward lifestyle for residents. To meet living and production needs, houses were primarily constructed with earth and wood, using wood as the main building material. With economic development, social progress, and the growth of tourism, the traditional village architectural features are continuously changing. The impact of the social environment on the evolution of architectural features is profound and significant [3]. Chengyang Eight Villages was once a closed, backward, mountainous village with inconvenient transportation, a poor economy, and inadequate infrastructure. With economic and social development and increased tourism development efforts, the social environment of Chengyang Eight Villages has greatly improved due to factors such as improved living standards for local residents, changing ideas, and better transportation conditions. However, due to the uneven distribution of tourism resources, the development speeds of the eight traditional villages vary, leading to significant differences in architectural features among them.

2.2 Overview of Architecture in Chengyang Eight Villages

The architectural landscape of Chengyang Eight Villages mainly consists of Wind-Rain Bridge, drum towers, stages, and stilt houses. Among Chengyang Eight Villages, there are seven wind and rain bridges of various sizes, of which the best-preserved include Yongji Bridge, Helong Bridge, Wanshou Bridge, and Puji Bridge; there are eight drum towers. Typically, residential houses are built around the drum tower, following the ancient saying, "Build the drum tower before building the village" [4]. The drum tower and drum tower square together serve as the main venue for ceremonies and village affairs in the Dong community. The village stage is also a very important architectural landscape. The stage is built in the style of a stilted wooden building (ganlan style), consisting of an upper and lower level. The lower level is usually elevated, supported by four pillars. The stage is composed of two parts: the front and the back. The center of the front stage is where performers act; benches on both sides of the stage are for the band. There are entrances and exits for performers on both sides of the stage. The back-stage is where actors apply makeup, wait, and rest.



Fig. 1. Ganlan-style traditional architecture in Chengyang Eight Villages

In Chengyang Eight Villages, the architecture is primarily of the ganlan (stilt) style(Fig.1). The ganlan style is an architectural form that emerged for early residents to adapt to the natural environment. It involves raising the ground floor, concentrating human activities on the second floor, and using stairs to connect the elevated ground floor and the active second floor [5]. As early residents' activities were mostly near water sources and they needed to avoid wild animals, the ganlan style met the needs of early residents by elevating the ground floor, representing an early form of nest dwelling. In the past, buildings were mainly three-story wooden structures. After spontaneous modernization by villagers and scenic area renovations, buildings of four to five stories are now also present. From interviews with local residents, it was learned that the ground floor of the original wooden old houses in Chengyang Eight Villages was mainly used for storing farm tools, firewood, and raising livestock. The second floor served as the living and residential area for residents. The third floor was used as a warehouse and a drying terrace for grains [6]. Following village renovations and tourism development, many high-rise and low-rise buildings have also appeared in the village, serving as shops, guesthouses, and restaurants.

3 Impact of Tourism Development on the Architectural Features of Chengyang Eight Villages

3.1 Changes in Building Functions under the Influence of Tourism Development

Ping Village, Yan Village, and Ma'an Village are renowned within Chengyang Eight Villages for their unique Dong culture and architectural style. As the core area of the Chengyang Eight Villages Scenic Area, they not only possess a long history but also carry rich ethnic culture. Over the past few decades, these villages have undergone significant tourism development and renovation, experiencing tremendous changes.

The impact of tourism development on these villages has been profound. Tourism development has transformed the traditional lifestyle, production methods, and eco-

nomic models of the villages. The original lifestyle and economic models have fundamentally changed. While tourism development has brought opportunities to traditional villages, it has also brought significant impacts and challenges to local residents.

On the one hand, with the influx of tourists, the functions of houses have also undergone tremendous changes. Original residential houses have been repurposed, mostly for commercial use. Three-story stilt houses have now become four-story or even taller guesthouses, shops, and other buildings. These buildings not only provide comfortable accommodation and shopping environments for tourists but also bring considerable income to local residents. The ground floor, originally used for raising livestock and storing farm tools, has been transformed into guesthouse lobbies, shop storefronts, and restaurants to cater to the opportunities brought by tourism development. This change has not only led to more rational use of houses but also injected new vitality into the local economy.

On the other hand, the arrival of tourists has brought different cultures and new modern lifestyles to local residents, impacting their living habits. In this context, the traditional living habits of the area have undergone drastic changes. Many original customs have disappeared, replaced by new modern living habits, losing the original flavor of the traditional Dong village.

In summary, Ping Village, Yan Village, and Ma'an Village have experienced many changes under the influence of tourism development, but they still maintain the traditional characteristics and style of the Dong people. These changes have not only rejuvenated these villages but also brought tangible benefits to local residents.

On the periphery of the core tourism area are Dazhai Village and Dong Village within Chengyang Eight Villages. Regarding building functions in Dazhai and Dong Village, the ground floor originally used for raising livestock and storage has, for the most part, been converted into living rooms and kitchens. However, some houses still maintain their original storage function, while the function of raising livestock has largely disappeared, relocated to newly built enclosures specifically for livestock outside the village.

Benefiting from the income generated by tourism development, the economies of Dazhai and Dong Village have developed to a certain extent. Many buildings catering to modern life and tourism have been constructed in the villages, such as shops, guesthouses, and village cultural promotion centers. However, due to the economic downturn during the COVID-19 pandemic, many tourism-related buildings are now idle and have not been reused.

In the three traditional villages farthest from the core tourism area, buildings have largely transformed into modern forms. These buildings are entirely designed to meet the modern living habits and needs of villagers. The ground floor, originally used as a warehouse, has become a living area. The third-floor warehouse and drying terrace have completely disappeared, replaced by modern house structures, resulting in a complete loss of the original traditional features.◦

3.2 Changes in Building Appearance under the Influence of Tourism Development

In Ping Village, Yan Village, and Ma'an Village, the three traditional villages located in the core tourism area, a considerable degree of traditional architectural elements has been preserved. Since the Chengyang Eight Villages Scenic Area features traditional Dong villages as its core landscape element, while undergoing modernization for tourism, in order to maintain the traditional village architectural features, the scenic area has extensively used wood veneer on building facades and tiled roofs to preserve the local traditional architectural style. Among the traditional buildings of Chengyang Eight Villages, the tiled roof is an important component, not only providing shelter from wind and rain but also serving functions such as drainage, heat insulation, and fire prevention. Although the appearance of houses in Chengyang Eight Villages has changed, this original appearance, as a highly distinctive aspect of its traditional architecture, is still present in the houses of Chengyang Eight Villages. Interviews with villagers revealed that the local government also provides certain financial subsidies to villagers willing to build tiled roofs.

On the periphery of the core scenic area, the two villages of Dazhai and Dong Village have benefited from some of the gains of tourism development. In areas close to the core scenic area, buildings often use reinforced concrete or solid bricks as their foundation, while the upper levels retain traditional wooden structures, and the top floor features traditional tiled roofs. The number of tourists in Dazhai and Dong Village is relatively lower compared to the core villages of Ping, Yan, and Ma'an. These two villages also lack tourism development. However, due to their proximity to the core area, the scenic area and local government have regulated the appearance of buildings in Dazhai and Dong Village. The architectural features of these two villages remain relatively traditional, presenting an overall unified, orderly, and symmetrical form. The main buildings generally use traditional colors, with exterior walls painted in a wood-colored exterior paint to maintain the overall architectural style of the scenic area and reduce a sense of fragmentation. However, some houses built in the past have not been painted with the coffee-colored exterior paint. Some of these houses use bricks for the ground floor, with wooden materials still used for the upper floors on top of the brick foundation, presenting a transitional form between tradition and modernity. Others are built entirely of bricks with no exterior decoration, leaving the building materials exposed, which damages the harmony of the traditional features in this area.

Within the core areas of Dazhai and Dong Village, the application of building materials differs somewhat from areas close to the core. A large number of buildings use solid bricks and concrete for the first floor. The second and third floors continue to use traditional wooden structures. Many houses exhibit a combination of tradition and modernity. According to information gathered from interviews with local residents, houses in the core areas of Dazhai and Dong Village have not benefited much from tourism revenue. However, due to their proximity to the core area, they remain under the regulation of the scenic area and local government, maintaining traditional architectural features with fewer large-scale modern renovations. However, due to past fires in Cheng-

yang Eight Villages, the government, for fire safety reasons, required villagers to replace the wooden structure of their houses' first floors with brick and stone materials. Although the government renovated villagers' houses for disaster prevention and risk reduction, these renovations have also damaged the traditional Dong architectural features in Dazhai and Dong Village.



Fig. 2. Changing Buildings in Chengyang Eight Villages

In the outermost villages of Pingpu, Pingtan, and Jichang, having received almost no benefits from the tourism industry and being far from the core tourism area, these villages have long lacked policy support from local government and the scenic area. The development of buildings within these villages has been entirely driven by villagers' spontaneous renovations and constructions. In these three villages, modern building materials are widely used for renovation and construction. Buildings in the villages have almost entirely transformed into modern forms with white painted facades, square houses (Fig.2), and flat roofs. Some houses still have exposed bricks. The original traditional architectural features have nearly completely disappeared, with only very few, almost abandoned, old wooden houses and houses with brick ground floors and wooden second and third floors remaining.

3.3 Changes in Building Materials under the Influence of Tourism Development

The traditional house structures in Ping Village, Yan Village, and Ma'an Village have gradually disappeared, replaced by modern buildings using building materials such as bricks, reinforced concrete, and other modern materials. Although building materials have changed, developers still pay attention to maintaining traditional Dong style in appearance. The exterior walls are decorated and wrapped with wooden materials to create a traditional feel. At the same time, the top floor or roof of the house still uses traditional wooden tiles to ensure harmony with the surrounding traditional architecture.

Dazhai and Dong Village, located on the periphery of the core tourism area, have benefited from some of the gains of tourism development and have stronger economic development than the three villages on the outskirts of Chengyang Eight Villages. However, because they are not in the core area, the local scenic area and government provide

less assistance to Dazhai and Dong Village. As a result, most buildings in Dazhai and Dong Village have been renovated and built spontaneously by villagers. To meet their own needs for modern living patterns and due to government considerations for disaster prevention and risk reduction, villagers have partially modernized the original houses, replacing the wooden building materials of the first floor with bricks.

In the three traditional villages far from the core scenic area, the entrance road to Pingpu Village is relatively narrow. Buildings on both sides of the road are almost entirely constructed using modern materials, with only a very few preserved old wooden houses. Near the drum tower, some houses, with the support of local government subsidies, adopt a form with brick and concrete on the ground floor and wooden structures on the upper floors. However, most houses are still built entirely with modern materials, retaining only tiled roofs and upturned eaves.

Pingtian Village, among the three villages with almost no tourism development, is relatively closer to the core tourism area. The terrain of Pingtian Village is relatively flat. Near the village entrance, many farmlands and old wooden houses are preserved. Near the drum tower, some wooden houses are also preserved. However, in the hillside area between these two zones, buildings are almost entirely constructed using modern materials, and some houses do not even retain wooden structured roofs.

Jichang Village, among the three villages, has relatively inconvenient transportation. It still retains many old wooden houses, and craftspeople engaged in making traditional Dong costumes can still be found. However, there are many buildings in the village that are completely modern in style, retaining no original traditional features. These buildings are constructed entirely with modern materials, abandoning the original wooden materials. These three villages have neglected the protection and inheritance of traditional architectural features.

3.4 The Role of Tourism Development in Different Areas

Among the eight traditional villages of Chengyang Eight Villages, Ping Village, Yan Village, and Ma'an Village are the core development areas of the scenic area, having undergone the most tourism development and renovation. In these three villages, the traditional architectural features are also the best preserved. Even newly constructed buildings, with the help of local government and the scenic area, use wood veneer to maintain the traditional Dong architectural style. At the same time, some buildings adopt a construction method using modern building materials for the core supporting structure while using wooden structures for the exterior, ensuring good structural support and reliability while also using wood to express the traditional architectural style. However, in terms of the village's cultural atmosphere, the villagers in these three villages have abandoned most of their original cultural customs, transitioning to modern living habits. Many original cultural customs exist only for performances. Therefore, the local area should pay further attention to the construction of the local cultural atmosphere.

In Dazhai and Dong Village, benefiting from some of the gains of tourism development due to their proximity to the core tourism area, they still retain a considerable number of houses with wooden structures in terms of maintaining architectural features.

However, due to considerations for disaster prevention and risk reduction, as well as rapid local economic development and policy control that is less stringent than in the core area of the scenic spot, many houses have undergone modern renovations. Some houses have even completely adopted modern materials and abandoned the original traditional architectural features, resulting in damage to the architectural features of Dazhai and Dong Village.

In Pingtan Village, Pingpu Village, Jichang Village, and the three villages farthest from the scenic area, having received almost no benefits from tourism development, development has been left to local initiative. In this context, after spontaneous renovations by local villagers, many houses have abandoned their original traditional architectural features, constructing buildings that meet modern living needs. Original tiled roofs have become modern flat roofs, wooden components in the buildings have disappeared, and buildings are constructed entirely with modern building materials, resulting in significant damage to the original architectural features.

In summary, each village of Chengyang Eight Villages exhibits varying degrees of change under the influence of tourism development. While protecting traditional architectural features, we should pay more attention to the cultivation and inheritance of cultural atmosphere. Through policy guidance and reasonable development, efforts should be made to maintain the natural beauty and profound cultural heritage of Chengyang Eight Villages, making it a unique scenic area that integrates nature, history, and culture.

4 Recommendations for the Protection of Scenic Area Architectural Features

4.1 Material Aspect

The government and scenic area should increase support, continuously maintain traditional architectural features, and treat traditional village protection and tourism development as a systematic project, with relevant government departments actively participating [7]. First, the government should rationally plan the relationship between village building protection and tourism development, avoiding a "one-size-fits-all" approach. In the planning process, full consideration should be given to the economic interests of villagers, avoiding excessive demolition and construction. At the same time, respecting the opinions and suggestions of villagers, facilitating full communication between them and local government and relevant departments, and widely soliciting opinions are essential. Second, the government should increase investment to support the construction of local infrastructure and public facilities. The government needs to strengthen the protection of village historical and cultural heritage, ensuring the integrity and continuity of the original architectural style. Reasonably develop and utilize village historical and cultural heritage, providing local residents with employment opportunities, increasing economic income, and improving living standards. Furthermore, education and training for village residents should be strengthened to enhance their cultural literacy

and awareness of protection. Publicity and education efforts should be intensified so that local residents can consciously protect the village's historical and cultural heritage.

As direct participants in the protection of traditional villages and tourism development, local residents should consciously maintain the traditional features of the village and actively participate in the protection and development of the village. First, they should enhance environmental protection awareness, avoiding excessive use of modern materials during construction. At the same time, the architectural style of the village should be uniformly designed, with appropriate renovations carried out while maintaining the original features to better suit modern life. Second, actively participate in village construction, such as house renovation, road construction, etc., and consciously engage in the protection of traditional villages. Actively participate in village management, strengthening communication and exchange with the government, community, and outsiders.

To protect and inherit the village's architectural style, scientific and reasonable planning needs to be formulated. First, formulate architectural style planning based on local actual conditions and tourism development directions [8]. Second, enhance residents' awareness of participation. Local residents have a certain degree of participation in architectural style design, residential renovation, environmental improvement, etc. Therefore, enhancing villagers' awareness of participation is crucial. Furthermore, increase publicity efforts to achieve coordinated development between protection and tourism development. Strengthen training and education, providing local residents with professional knowledge and skills training in architectural style, strengthen connections with the outside world, invite professionals for targeted training, and improve residents' awareness of protection through lectures, exchange meetings, and other forms.

On the above basis, local talent from traditional villages should be actively cultivated, encouraging them to return to their hometowns and contribute their strength to the development and protection of traditional villages. Only local people understand how to better inherit and promote the traditional features of the area.

4.2 Cultural Aspect

Building cultural experience centers is a key measure to enhance the visitor experience. For example, establishing a Dong song and dance experience center, a Dong specialty food hall, etc., allowing tourists to gain an in-depth understanding of traditional Dong culture while appreciating and tasting. Additionally, attention should be paid to improving tourist satisfaction by providing quality services and facilities, allowing tourists to leave with fond memories during their journey.

Besides cultural experience centers, themed guesthouses can also be opened to attract more overnight visitors. The creation of guesthouses should fully integrate traditional Dong cultural elements, allowing tourists to experience the local customs and practices of the Dong people during their stay. In this way, tourists can not only enjoy a comfortable accommodation environment but also gain a deeper understanding of traditional Dong culture.

On the other hand, building traditional culture exhibition halls makes it easier for tourists to understand the history and culture of the Dong people. The establishment of

traditional culture exhibition halls allows tourists to intuitively learn about traditional Dong architecture, ethnic crafts, local customs, and other aspects. The exhibition methods can include text, images, physical objects, and other forms, enabling tourists to gain a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of Dong culture during their visit.

In addition, tourists can be shown the production process of handicrafts and delicacies with Dong characteristics, allowing them to personally experience the hospitality, singing, and dancing talents of the Dong people. Such experiences can both increase tourists' enjoyment and enable them to better understand and respect traditional Dong culture.

During the construction of tourism service facilities, we should appropriately renovate and decorate buildings with ethnic characteristics, integrating them with modern tourism. This will preserve the characteristics of Dong architecture while meeting the needs of modern tourism, making it a platform to attract tourists for visits, study, and experience of minority culture.

In the development of tourism service facilities, the focus should be on the visitor experience, making them feel at home during their journey. By continuously optimizing and improving tourism service facilities, new vitality can be injected into the development of traditional villages, while on the basis of inheriting traditional culture, they can be transformed into tourist hotspots that attract visitors.

In summary, optimizing the construction of tourism service facilities and enhancing tourism reception capacity are important measures to promote tourism development, protect and inherit traditional Dong culture. Only by continuously improving the quality of tourism services and the visitor experience can more tourists be attracted, promoting tourism development and injecting new vitality into traditional villages.

5 Conclusion

The modern economy is developing rapidly, and many areas with traditional culture have begun to develop tourism. However, the development of tourism can have favorable or unfavorable effects on local features. While focusing on the positive impact of tourism on the local economy, attention should also be paid to its impact on local culture. While developing the economy, the inheritance and protection of traditional features should not be forgotten. Tourism development and the protection of traditional features should be combined to promote each other and develop together. This paper analyzes the impact of tourism development on the architectural features of traditional villages, identifies the positive or negative impacts brought about, and finally puts forward some suggestions for traditional villages that have already undergone or are undergoing tourism development, hoping that tourism and traditional protection can promote and support each other, leading to better development strategies.

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