The Construction of the Protection Mechanism of Rural Landscape in the Process of Urbanization

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Abstract: With the accelerated development of urbanization, China’s rural landscape is declining. To create a “beautiful countryside”, the first thing is to protect the existing rural landscape. There are three aspects that need to be considered to structure the protection mechanism of rural landscape. Cultivated land is an essential part of the rural landscape. It is the basis of protecting the existing cultivated land in the countryside to establish and implement the cultivated land protection system. Rural cultural landscape is the cultural embodiment of the integration of rural society and natural environment. It should follow the principles of integrity, living and authenticity to protect the macro ecological environment and micro internal elements of the cultural landscape. Ecological conditions are closely related to the livability of the human settlement environment and cultural attribute of rural landscape. The construction of ecological civilization requires the government to take the lead and the masses to support, and then balance the benefits between ecologic and economic in the urbanization development.

Keywords: Urbanization; Rural Landscapes; Protection Mechanisms

1. Introduction

China’s rapid urbanization has triggered a sharp decline in rural landscape. The new generation of rural residents, attracted by external modernization, usually chooses to live in communities with greater employment opportunities and complete public services. The “hollowing out” of traditional villages seems to be an irreversible social trend[1]. At present, China’s rural construction often only pay attention to the planning of physical space, ignoring the protection and inheritance of rural arable land, culture and ecological landscape[2]. Therefore, we need to establish effective mechanism of rural landscape protection and integrate it into the planning system, which will make the use of local resources more reasonable. In addition, it will help to protect the cultural heritage better, maintain ecological environment more fully and achieve the goal of rural sustainable development ultimately[3].

At this stage, the researches on the overall protection of rural landscape mostly focus on the aspects as follows: planning, system guarantee, model construction, landscape design, lacking of consideration, analysis and systematic summary from the perspectives of cultivated land, culture and ecology, etc.

Cultivated land is not only an important means of agricultural production, but also a vital material condition for stabilizing economic and social order, guaranteeing food and ecological security, and promoting the coordinated development of urban and rural areas[4]. Also what Liqiu Zhou[5] made, showed a systematic analysis of the change of China’s cultivated land system and its implementation effect.

As a cultural landscape, rural landscape has been
systematically studied its value, protection principles, protection measures and other aspects since last 10 years. The research object is mainly the ancient villages in southern Anhui, such as Guizhou Miao village, Jiangnan water village and other famous traditional villages. In China, certain research achievements have been made in the study of village cultural landscape, especially ancient villages in southern China[5].

Since the 1980s, China has carried on the thorough research to the agricultural ecological development and has made the long-term development goal. In the new urbanization, with increasingly demand of rural landscape ecological function, agricultural ecological construction should be paid more attention to. In order to effectively promote agricultural ecological construction, it is necessary to make an in-depth analysis of the dilemma and outlet of agricultural ecological construction in the process of new urbanization, providing guidance for local governments to promote the construction of agricultural ecology[6].

2. Cultivated land protection

China is a big agricultural country. As an important means of agricultural production, cultivated land is an important part of the rural landscape[5].

2.1 Analysis of historical stages

Cultivated land protection system refers to the synthesis of policies, laws, regulations and other sets of norms related to cultivated land protection. It is a complete system, rather than being limited to a certain system or a certain policy[7]. According to the change of cultivated land protection objectives, after the reform and opening up carried on in China, the development of cultivated land protection system can be divided into three stages. The first stage was from 1978 to 1997, 1978-1997, which only carried out the quantity protection of cultivated land. In the second stage, from 1998 to 2012, both “quantity and quality” of cultivated land protection were emphasized. In the third stage, from 2013 to now, the “trinity” of “quantity, quality and ecology” of cultivated land protection system was emphasized. A series of supporting systems were also introduced accordingly[5].

2.2 Dilemma of cultivated land protection

Although Chinese arable land area and the population are large, the per capita arable land possession in China is less than half of the world. Due to the rapid expansion of urban scale, the lack of management and supervision of rural homestead, and the adjustment of agricultural structure, the amount of cultivated land decreased sharply, and most of the lost cultivated land was the high-quality cultivated land in the suburbs. In addition, cultivated land protection is also faced with the quality decline, serious degradation, shortage of reserve resources and other serious problems.

2.3 Way out for farmland protection

It is the guarantee of food security to maintain a certain amount of arable land. In order to make economical and intensive use of land and support Chinese long-term development, it is indispensable to scientifically work out and strictly implement master plan for land use. At the same time, it is necessary to standardize the land market, rationally allocate land resources, perfect and standardize the order of the land market, vigorously promote the bidding, auction, and listing and transfer system of profit-oriented land. In addition, we should also improve the utilization rate of land. With the gradual transfer of rural population to cities and towns, the rural residential areas can be replanned and rearranged. In the north, we should focus on the reconstruction of old villages and advocate comprehensive development and concentrated construction. In the south, the focus will be put on moving villages. The land sorted out can be reorganized for reclamation. Existing development zones should be cleaned up and rectified. And approval procedures for development zones should be improved at the same time. Natural disasters have also caused a large amount of loss of arable land, so attention should be paid to improve the ability to resist natural disasters[8].

3. Cultural village protection

In 1992, the world heritage committee defined the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage convention clearly. It claims that “The cultural landscape is the nature and humanity’s common work. It shows the humanized nature displayed by a kind of culture, which also refers to the need of human, especially in some practice that consciously created from the natural and modified natural sight.”[9] Rural cultural landscape is the
cultural crystallization generated through the wisdom of working people under the natural environment conditions in rural areas. It is the manifestation of rural regional culture and the witness of the development of rural natural environment landscape under the role of human beings\(^2\).

3.1 Protection principle

Britain is the first country to start the industrial revolution, and its methods and principles for the protection of traditional villages are of great reference significance. The core concept of traditional village protection lies in that the society generally reaches a protection consensus. At the same time, they protect the symbiotic relationship between traditional villages and the surrounding natural environment. The government sets up rural institutions specialized in the protection of traditional villages\(^1\). Based on this, the protection of cultural villages in China should also pay attention to the principles of integrity, living and authenticity.

3.2 Protection at the macro level

From a macro point of view, the integrity of cultural villages mainly lies in their interaction with the surrounding natural environment. Therefore, in the protection, the ecological environment should be protected as a whole. In the process of protection, the vitality of traditional villages should be maintained so that they can achieve sustainable development in combination with modern science and technology. Tourism development can be carried out, but at the same time, the normal life of local residents should not be neglected because of tourism development.

3.3 Protection at the micro level

From the micro point of view, in the process of the protection of rural cultural landscape, attention should be paid attention to the promotion and protection of material and non-material elements. First of all, in material terms, the rural cultural landscape is dominated by buildings. In the process of protection and restoration, appropriate reconstruction and reconstruction should be carried out according to the principle of authenticity and the needs of the times, supplemented by matching roads and greening projects. In terms of intangible protection, we can make full use of the broad market of cultural and creative products in China in recent years. Combined with rural traditional crafts to enhance the economic value of rural cultural landscape in the form of cultural and creative products, residents’ spontaneous inheritance and protection of rural intangible culture will be stimulated.

4. Related ecological protection

In the process of urbanization, the ecological function of rural landscape cannot be ignored. However, at present, there are still problems in agricultural ecological construction, such as imperfect resource guarantee system, insufficient public participation and imperfect administrative management mechanism\(^10\). In view of this, the ecological protection of rural landscape should be carried out from the following aspects.

4.1 Improve the legal and regulatory system

Local governments should cooperate with relevant agricultural departments to establish and improve the laws and regulations on agricultural ecology. And at the same time, the governments should strictly enforce the law according to the laws and regulations. In the process of perfecting laws and regulations, attention should be paid to the coordinated development of cultivated land protection, and the particularity of rural culture should be considered simultaneously to find the balance between production, culture and ecology.

4.2 Strengthen government governance

In terms of administrative management mechanism, it is necessary to clarify the scope of responsibility, assign responsibility to relevant individuals, and improve the reward, punishment and supervision mechanism. In the initial stage of protection, the government should also guide the public’s awareness of ecological protection, and invite relevant experts to carry out scientific mass ecological protection.

4.3 Develop ecological agriculture in an all-round way

On the basis of scientific and perfect modern agricultural system designated by local government, the establishment and development of agricultural circular economy should be promoted. At the same time, we should actively promote the development of green agricultural science and technology, encourage farmers and
related experts to jointly carry out agricultural technology research projects, and promote the ecological construction of agriculture according to local actual conditions. Therefore, while promoting the recycling of resources, we can improve the efficiency of the use of agricultural resources, and promote the overall development of China’s agricultural ecologicalization with the help of ecological agriculture. Thus, rural landscape in the basic agriculture can achieve economic and ecological balance.

5. Conclusion

Constructing rural landscape protection mechanism is a powerful measure to reverse the declining trend of rural landscape in the process of urbanization and implement the low efficiency of prevention, control planning and protection policy. Among the elements of rural landscape, cultivated land, culture and ecology occupy important positions. In the protection of cultivated land, the per capita area of cultivated land in our country is small and the reserve resources are insufficient, but the protection of cultivated land mainly depends on the government leading, so it is necessary to evaluate the effect of cultivated land protection policy to test the scientific nature and effectiveness of the system. Chinese culture has a long history, and the preservation of agricultural civilization largely depends on the rural landscape, which is a major part of the soft power of national culture. Therefore, the cultural attribute of rural landscape cannot be ignored. When constructing the protection mechanism of rural landscape, measures should be taken according to local conditions and the protection system should be formulated combined with the local cultural characteristics. In the new era, the construction of ecological civilization is attracting more and more attention. Compared with cities, rural areas have greater ecological functions. In the process of urbanization, ecological protection is a crucial link, which requires the government to strengthen ecological protection by improving laws and regulations, strengthening governance, and comprehensively developing ecological agriculture.

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