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Recognition of Values of Traditional Villages in Southwest China for Sustainable Development: A Case Study of Liufang Village

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Abstract: With the implementation of China's Rural Revitalization Strategy, more and more traditional villages have been developed. However, due to the lack of value awareness, many rural planning policies are unreasonable, and therefore, characteristics disappear. In the past, the value identification of traditional villages mostly stayed in the general value description, which was not enough to highlight the unique overall value of the village. From the perspective of the cultural landscape, taking Liufang village in Liping County of Guizhou Province as an example, this paper interprets the value of cultural landscape from the concept of "long-term interaction between human and nature," and then carry out three value themes of "settlement landscape of Dong people in the low and middle mountain valley area," "agricultural landscape and activities of Dong people under traditional rice farming," and "spiritual landscape of Dong People's beliefs, systems and customs". Moreover, by interviewing local residents, this paper summarizes two aspects of Liufang village value consensus—traditional culture and landscape construction, as well as tourism development opportunities and challenges—and analyzes the relationship between them. The new attempt to identify traditional village's value in this paper lies in the combination of object value and subject perception, which is more conducive to the scientific formulation of traditional village protection and tourism sustainable development strategy.

Keywords: traditional village; cultural landscape; values; conservation; Liufang village



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1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

Traditional villages have relatively more cultural heritages in tangible and intangible forms and have high historical, cultural, scientific, artistic, social, and economic values [1]. Under the background of globalization, modernization, and urbanization, the importance of traditional village protection has become increasingly prominent [2]. However, at the same time, the large-scale and rapid urbanization process makes the conventional villages face the pressure of destruction and even extinction. This has aroused great international attention. Since 1992, the rural landscape has been regarded as a "continuous cultural landscape" by the UNESCO World Heritage Center in the Operational Guideline for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention [3]. In October 2017, the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) approved the Principles Concerning Rural Landscape as Heritage, which was adopted at the ICOMOS conference held in Delhi in December of the same year. It summarizes the value and characteristics of rural landscapes as tangible and cultural resources and emphasizes the universality of rural landscapes [4]. The rural landscape is an important part of human heritage and one of the most common types of continuous cultural landscapes.

Since the 1980s, the protection of traditional villages in China has been carried out gradually. In 1986, the State Council approved and transmitted the document “Notice on publishing the second stage of reports on the list of national famous historical and cultural cities”. It proposed, for the first time, to protect the buildings or villages with relatively concentrated cultural relics and historical sites or which can fully reflect the traditional style and features of a specific historical period and ethnic regional characteristics. In 2002, the law of the people’s Republic of China on the Protection of Cultural Relics brought the protection of traditional local settlements into the legal track for the first time [5]. In 2003, the list of the first batch of famous historical and cultural towns (villages) in China was published, including 12 recognized villages. In 2011, China launched the project of “protection of traditional Chinese villages”. By the end of 2019, 5 batches of 6819 villages were included in the list of protecting traditional Chinese villages [6].

On 18 October 2017, President Xi Jinping pointed out in the nineteen major reports that we should attach great importance to agriculture, rural areas, and farmers and implement a rural revitalization strategy. On 4 February 2018, the Opinions of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council on Implementing the Rural Revitalization Strategy were published. The file points out that “we should prosper the rural culture, adhere to the material civilization and spiritual civilization, inherit and develop the excellent traditional culture in rural areas, delimit the historical and cultural protection line of rural construction, and protect the cultural relics, traditional villages, traditional buildings, agricultural relics and irrigation engineering heritage” [7]. The implementation of the Rural Revitalization Strategy is an effective way to inherit excellent traditional culture. In September 2018, the CPC Central Committee and the State Council issued the Rural Revitalization Strategic Planning (2018–2022). The document pointed out that “To implement the Rural Revitalization Strategy, it is necessary to deeply tap the excellent ideas, humanistic spirit and moral norms contained in the agricultural culture, combine with the requirements of the times, and make creative transformation and innovative development based on protection and inheritance. This is conducive to the development of rural civilization in the new era, and further enrich and inherit the excellent traditional Chinese culture” [8]. It can be seen that rural revitalization promotes the revival of traditional villages to the national strategy level and clarifies the future development direction of traditional villages. It provides new motivation for the development of traditional villages and constructs a new urban–rural relationship, which is crucial for China’s current development.

1.2. Literature Review

With the implementation of China’s Rural Revitalization Strategy, more and more traditional villages are developed. The premise of the protection and utilization of traditional villages is a clear identification of value to prevent the damage caused by improper planning and development. In the Law of the People’s Republic of China on the protection of Cultural Relics, cultural relics’ value is divided into three categories: historical, artistic, and scientific [5]. The revised version of the value cognition in the Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China (2015) adds social and cultural values to the basic three ones [9]. Social value reflects the social benefits of cultural relics in cultural knowledge and spiritual inheritance and social cohesion. Cultural value reflects the characteristics of cultural diversity and the close relationship with intangible cultural heritage.

The Evaluation Index System of China’s Famous Historical and Cultural Towns (Villages) (Trial) was formulated in 2005. It is an effective basis for the application, selection, and dynamic supervision of historical towns (villages). The evaluation index system is divided into two parts: value characteristics and protection measures [10]. The value characteristics include more than 10 indicators, such as “the long history, the value of cultural relics, the celebrity influence of historical events, the scale of historical buildings, the typicality of traditional historical buildings, the scale of historical streets and lanes, the integrity of the style and features of the core area, the continuity of life in the core area, and intangible cultural heritage”. It can be seen that the value identification of China’s historical

and cultural towns (villages) pays more attention to the cultural security units, the original buildings of the living place, and the historical blocks but does not consider the integrity of the content and the continuity of the value. The Evaluation and Identification Index System of Traditional Villages (Trial), released in 2012, is a combination of quantitative evaluation and qualitative evaluation [11]. It is mainly divided into three aspects: traditional village buildings, village location and pattern, and intangible cultural heritage carried by villages. In this evaluation system, the value types are aesthetic, scientific, cultural, historical, archaeological, and other values.

By reviewing the value types and value carriers in the relevant national laws and regulations, we can see that the traditional village value is mainly defined in the framework of “historical, artistic, scientific, social and cultural values” of the Cultural Relics Protection Law. At present, there are two trends in the research on the traditional villages’ value. One is to expand multiple value types to evaluate traditional villages’ value through history qualitatively, society, art and culture, etc. [12–15]. The other is to classify the tangible and intangible carriers of traditional villages and then use the quantitative scoring method to measure their value [1]. For the first type, Xu and Sun studied the importance of traditional villages in Nanning from social ecology, history and culture, science and technology, art decoration, development and utilization, emotional identity, etc. [12]. Lu and Hu believe that traditional villages have the value of agricultural production, ecological value, life value and cultural heritage, enlightenment value, etc. [13]. Other scholars have added research value and functional value based on traditional village history, society, culture, art, and tourism [14,15]. It can be seen that the value judgment of traditional villages has gradually transferred from the traditional value to the modern use value. Unlike these qualitative value evaluation studies, Nie et al. constructed three categories and 20 subcategories of the value evaluation system from traditional village buildings, village location and pattern, and intangible cultural heritage carried by villages [16]. It directly measures the type and degree of value by using quantitative scoring. In contrast, the research approaches of cultural landscape value in foreign countries are mainly reflected in the perception of the cultural landscape by different groups [17–19], and the interaction between humans and nature to interpret its value [20–22]. Based on traditional interviews, research methods try to expand the cultural map [23] and ethnography [24] as value interpretation tools.

Generally speaking, the trend of the cognitive standard of traditional village value is gradually incorporated into the social and cultural values from the initial historical, scientific, and aesthetic values. However, the attention to ecology and humans’ value is not enough, and the value identification lacks a holistic perspective that integrates different goals and promotes sustainable development. This paper introduces a method of overall identification of village value, namely, cultural landscape, which focuses on the continuous interaction between humans and nature [25,26]. A case of Liufang village in the southwest of China is taken to conduct a profound study. The research result of traditional village values is conducive to the sustainable development of minority culture and ecological diversity. The purpose of the study is to analyze and reveal the value of the village as a methodology of the cultural landscape. At the same time, through in-depth interviews, we study the perception of the stakeholders on the village’s value and compare it with the conclusion of the cultural landscape method, which has an innovative significance. In this way, the value of the village and the direction and countermeasures of its protection and utilization can be determined more scientifically.

2. Research Area and Cultural Landscape Theory

2.1. Research Area

Liufang village is located in MaoGong Town, Liping County, Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture, Guizhou Province (Figure 1). Liufang village is also written as Liu Huang in history. It is said that an emperor fled here in ancient times; thus, it is named from the similar pronunciation Huangdi, which means “emperor” in Chinese.

Later, it was changed to Liufang, which means “living on from generation to generation”. The total territory area of the village is 6.512 square kilometers. There are three villager groups under the jurisdiction of the village, with a total of 179 households and 820 people. They are of Dong nationality, and the average annual income is only 2000 yuan [27]. In the 2013–2020 planning of protection and development of Liufang village, the planning land area is 40.46 hectares, including 6.37 hectares of construction land, accounting for 15.74% of the total land, 34.09 hectares of water area, and other lands, accounting for 84.26% of all in the planning area [27]. Liufang village is 4 km away from the township government and 37 km away from Liping County government. It is located on national highway 308. There is a bus from Liping county to Liufang village.

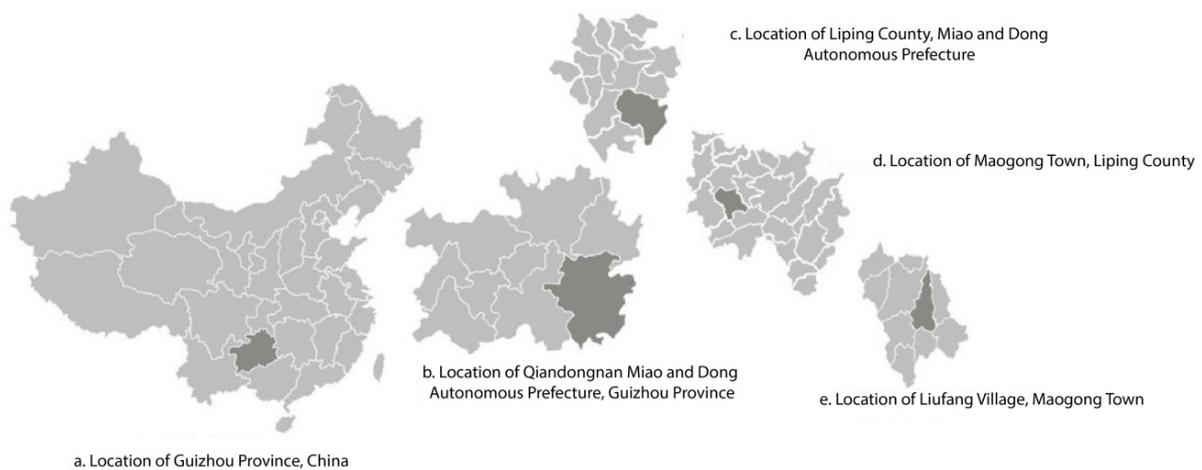


Figure 1. Location of Liufang village.

Liufang village is a typical Dong nationality village. According to the dialect and cultural characteristics of the Dong language, Dong areas are divided into South Dong and North Dong. Liufang village belongs to South Dong. For a long time, the Dong people in the southern region have lived together with inconvenient transportation [28]. They are less affected and impacted by the external Han culture. They retain the original cultural form of the Dong people and show the essence of the Dong culture. Liufang village, as a southern Dong village, remains the whole Dong culture. The village landscape space and traditional culture continue well (Figure 2). It is rich in tourism resources and lasts the traditional rice farming mode. It is one of the first villages selected as traditional Chinese villages in Liping County in 2012.



Figure 2. Typical village landscape of Liufang village.

The value formation of Liufang village has experienced a long historical evolution. Agricultural activities are its primary way of livelihood. The emergence, growth, and development of villages are all affected by agrarian culture. The system culture of Dong

nationality was also passed down through the cultivation of rice. As Liufang village has good continuity of cultural landscape, it is a representative village case of the research.

2.2. Data Analysis and Interpretation Methods

The study of cultural landscape originates from the themes of traditional cultural geography. American geographer Carl O. Sauer put forward the term in the 1920s. It attaches importance to the influence of different cultures on landscape and emphasizes human and nature interaction. He proposed that “cultural landscape is formed by natural landscape through the role of cultural groups. Culture is the agent, natural area is the medium, and cultural landscape is the result” [29]. As time goes by, culture and nature will change; therefore, the cultural landscape will also undergo continuous evolution. Since the 1980s, scholars have paid more and more attention to cultural landscape study [30]. In 1992, the World Heritage Committee adopted the concept of “cultural landscape,” which made it into the world heritage categories. At the 16th world heritage conference, cultural landscape was listed as a new type of cultural heritage. In 1992, the World Heritage Committee revised the Operational Guideline for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, and “cultural landscape” was defined as “the common works of nature and human”. Since then, the concept of “cultural landscape” has been accepted in the field of heritage, ending the opposition and separation between traditional natural and cultural heritage protection [31]. The research of cultural landscape has shifted from the emphasis on material space and form to the more complex issues of social culture and value system [26]. Based on the theory of cultural landscape and the practice of world heritage cultural landscape, the main research direction on cultural landscape and its value interpretation is formed [26]. Moreover, the cross integration of many fields and disciplines also provides a variety of means for interpreting the rich values of cultural landscape [23,24].

It can be stated that a cultural landscape is a landscape created by people consciously making use of the natural environment according to their own needs. It will evolve with the changes in human activities and the natural environment. It is a dynamic process rather than a fixed result. The concept definition and type division of cultural landscape all reveal the importance of the man–land relationship. Culture and nature should be considered together. That is to say, they should be comprehensively evaluated. The evaluation of cultural landscape has broken limitations of the classification and value evaluation of world heritage. Its overall value is far greater than the simple combination of its components. It is a whole system formed by a man–land relationship. In the interaction between humans and nature, tangible and intangible elements cannot be separated; thus, we must consider it as a whole.

Data analysis and interpretation methods include the following:

- (1) This study mainly uses the content analysis method to analyze the theme. Based on the literature and preset framework, this paper describes the value, carrier, and related groups of the rural cultural landscape in Southwest ethnic poor areas, redefines the value theme of the rural cultural landscape, and constructs the relationship between value themes.
- (2) Drawing lessons from Anselm L. Strauss’s analytical method of grounded theoretical paradigm and using NVivo software, this paper analyzes the in-depth interview data step by step, integrates the coding to extract the main category, and takes the current rural value cognition of various stakeholders as the whole to guide the interpretation of all categories.
- (3) Finally, these data are synthesized from the external perspective of the researchers, which are connected with the preset framework to provide a detailed and in-depth analysis and a comprehensive explanation. This paper does not aim to explore the mechanism behind the rural value cognition of the current stakeholders, and therefore, it does not make further theoretical model construction.

2.3. Traditional Villages as Typical Cultural Landscape

Based on the definition of a cultural landscape, a traditional village is a type of cultural landscape existing in a specific rural area. It is a joint work of long-term interaction between nature and humans and an essential type of cultural landscape created by human activities, including human actions. It shows the harmonious lifestyle of humans and nature and records rich historical and cultural information and traditional culture. Its elements involve not only natural elements (topography, climate, population, etc.), artificial elements (buildings, roads, agriculture, public facilities, etc.), as well as some intangible elements (history, religious belief, folk custom, language, etc.).

Traditional villages belong to a kind of cultural landscape, and therefore, it is very appropriate to study the related problems of conventional villages from the perspective of cultural landscape theory. It can provide a new perspective for the value cognition of traditional villages. It has profound enlightenment and guiding significance to study the value of the village cultural landscape from the long-term interaction between humans and nature. The value of traditional villages lies, in part, preserved in the process of change and development. We should understand them in the historical environment to explore their value and also pay attention to the relationship between traditional villages and people's memory, emotion, cultural belief, etc. In the process of their value formation, all aspects of society are shaping their value. Religious beliefs, rituals, and festivals, and other intangible cultural heritage are in the process of "organic continuation and sustainable growth". In other words, traditional culture is continuing to expand and enrich the value connotation of traditional villages.

The cultural landscape theory makes a comprehensive evaluation of the value of culture and nature, which breaks the traditional way of value evaluation of world heritage. It changes from focusing on a single cultural element to a comprehensive element formed by cultural and natural factors. The comprehensive understanding of heritage value by cultural landscape theory guides the direction of traditional village value cognition. As a typical cultural landscape, traditional villages' value lies in the ever-changing but always preserved parts, especially integrating various cultural shocks into their development, including historical and current potential value. Therefore, the first task is to recognize the value throughout the protection and development planning process of traditional villages. At the same time, it is necessary to consider people, production and determine the village value from the bottom up. At present, research on villages in southwestern ethnic areas from the perspective of cultural landscape is still relatively weak, and there is little qualitative research on the rural cultural landscape in southwestern China [32,33]. There are few views and methods that are effectively related to different disciplines such as culture, nature, society, and economy [34]. This shows that cultural landscape, as a methodology system, and its application are far from popular. Therefore, this paper will deeply study the value of Liufang village and the value perception of villagers under the cultural landscape methodology.

3. Recognizing Liufang Village's Value from the Perspective of Cultural Landscape

The formation and evolution of traditional villages produce value diversity, which promotes and base on each other. The villagers and their daily life are essential parts of the village landscape, reflecting the harmonious living environment, the use and adaptation of nature for people's survival, and the manifestation of people's lifestyle on the earth.

For Liufang village, farming is the villagers' primary way of livelihood, and the village also organizes space for the fundamental purpose of farming production, such as barns and animal pens. In addition to daily shows and life, there are many colorful cultural and entertainment activities in the local area. Affected by the geographical climate, only one rice season is planted in the local area; thus, there are many periods of no production. The drum tower, Fengyu bridge (also known as flower bridge), and stage are venues for playing Dong song, Dong opera, and Lusheng. At the same time, they are also spaces for

residents to rest. The Sa altar and drum tower are places for local people to worship and celebrate the festival.

The value of traditional villages is carried by the space, which is a very intuitive carrier to reflect the value. From the concept of “long-term interaction between human and nature” of cultural landscape perspective, this paper mainly sorts out three value themes: “settlement landscape of Dong people in the low and middle mountain valley area,” “agricultural landscape and activities of Dong people under traditional rice farming,” and “spiritual landscape of Dong People’s beliefs, systems and customs,” as shown below.

3.1. Settlement Landscape of Dong People in the Low and Middle Mountain Valley Area

The spatial form of a settlement is inevitably the product of the interaction of environment and culture. The location selection, spatial pattern, and residential construction of Liufang village reflect the local villagers’ attention to a harmonious relationship with nature.

3.1.1. Location Selection Based on View of Nature

MaoGong District, where Liufang village is located, is situated on the slope of the southeast edge of Yunnan Guizhou Plateau. The terrain is high in the northwest and low in the southeast. The whole terrain inclines from northwest to southeast. There are two kinds of terrain in MaoGong: one is the low and middle mountain area and low mountain canyon area, where the exposed rock is slate and sand shale; the other is the low and middle mountain valley area [35]. Liufang village is mainly located in the low and medium mountains. The rolling Dingren mountain backs the village, and the front of the village is flat and open. Dong people call it “the flat dam in front of the village is good for transplanting seedlings, and the green mountain behind the village is good for planting trees”. It is the result of this natural choice, which makes Liufang village stand on the hillside, ensures the cultivated land, and provides the source for building houses and cooking in Liufang village.

Liufang village mainly focuses on rice planting. The location selection of Liufang village belongs to a kind of classical mode. The rolling mountains behind Liufang village can be called “dragon vein”. The place where the mountains meet Liufang River and Liufang dam can be called “dragon head”. The village is built in such a “dragon head”. The Dong people call it “sitting dragon mouth”. The vein part behind the dragon’s head is fierce; thus, the villagers store ancient trees in the back mountain to form a Fengshui forest to suppress evil. The Fengyu bridge was built on the Liufang River to lock up the financial resources [36]. This is in line with the idea of taking power and accepting Qi in ancient Chinese geomancy.

3.1.2. Village Pattern with Typical Dong Characteristics

The layout of Dong settlements in southeast of Guizhou has obvious centripetally. Generally, the settlement center is composed of a drum tower and stage. Each family builds around the settlement center to conform to the terrain. The drum tower is surrounded. Production and living facilities such as ponds are interspersed between the houses. The granary is located at the edge of the settlement. Dong people live together and interact with each other very frequently. This feature is reflected in its public buildings, such as the continuous space from Fengyu bridge to the gate of village and drum tower. The highlight of this public spatial pattern also forms the unique village scenery of Dong village (Figure 3).

Drum tower and “Sa” altar are the most important public buildings in Dong village. Liufang village still has a historical drum tower, which was built in the Kangxi period (Figure 4). It has a wooden structure, with a length of 18 m and a height of six stories. Its construction area is about 64 square meters. There is a fire pool in the middle and a bench around it. It is a place for gathering villagers to discuss affairs. If there is something important in the fence that needs collective discussion, it will be taken in the drum tower.



Figure 3. The street pattern of Liufang Village.



Figure 4. Drum tower of Liufang Village.

In addition to the drum tower, there are some essential nodes of pattern in the Dong Village: gate, flower bridge, pond, granary, well, pavilion, etc. They form public and attractive communication spaces for residents' life. The entrance gate is one of the characteristic buildings in Dong village, which marks the border of the village and protects villagers' safety and property (Figure 5). It is usually built on the main road connecting the village with the outside world, and the construction technology also adheres to the wood construction skills of the Dong nationality. Moreover, the Fengyu bridge has the function of rest. It adopts the corridor bridge form, with eaves on the wooden bridge and seats for passersby to rest. There is a Fengyu bridge in Liufang village, named Mum's flower bridge of Liufang village (Figure 6). It was built in the Qing Dynasty. Due to disrepair and severe damage, it was rebuilt in 2005 and is still intact [37].

Water wells are the primary source of Dong People's living water. Almost any settlement has one or two water wells, which are necessary facilities in Dong People's daily life (Figure 7). The construction of water wells is carried out simultaneously with the construction of villages. There are well pavilions everywhere in Dong township, which are convenient for people to rest and drink. Most of the pavilions are located at the edge of the ridge, beside the wooden bridge, and at the mountain road entrance. They are for people to rest, enjoy the cool, and shelter from the rain. They are also for protecting healthy water (Figure 8). At the same time, the construction of pavilions on the col also blocks the village's wind outlet to avoid losing the wealth of the village.



Figure 5. The new gate of Liufang village.



Figure 6. The Mum's flower bridge of Liufang village.



Figure 7. Kangning well.



Figure 8. Kangning well Pavilion.

3.1.3. Residential Construction Adapting to Nature and Society

There are three types of residential buildings in Liufang Village: high foot building, low foot building, and flat building. The house's main body is made of fir, and the roof is made of small green tiles or fir bark. The design of the house is in harmony with the climate, topography, and living habits of the southern mountainous area. There are stairs for people to pass, a main hall for guests, a bedroom for rest, a fire pool, and other auxiliary spaces.

Most of the high foot buildings in Liufang village stand on the half slope hill (Figure 9). If the slope is large, the back part of the house is directly erected on the slope sill, and the front part is elevated with wooden columns or connected with wave columns according to the terrain. It is similar to hanging columns, which is called "Diaojiao House". Most of the houses are two-story buildings. The first floor is relatively low and does not have a deck slab. Farmers directly use the ground to stack farm tools and raise poultry. The second floor is the principal living place.



Figure 9. High foot building in Liufang village.

Most of the low-foot buildings in Liufang village stand on the gentle slope's terrace (Figure 10). The column base is shorter than that of high foot buildings, generally about two feet above the ground, mainly for heat insulation and moisture control. There are also significant differences in the combination of internal space elements. The first floor is the main hall, the fire pool, and the bedroom. The second floor is divided into two parts, half

of which is used for storing sundries, and the other half as the bedroom. The rooms on both sides of the building are mainly used for cooking pigs and cattle. Livestock pens are usually set up on the terrace behind the house.



Figure 10. A low-foot building in Liufang village.

The flat buildings in Liufang village are mainly built on flat ground, directly with soil compaction or sandy soil as the ground, without an overhead heat- and moisture-resistant layer (Figure 11). The first floor is mainly for people to live in. The second floor is primarily for drying clothes and stacking sundries and has few bedrooms. Spacious porches are usually built in front of the flat houses. Aside from this feature, the first floor's functional layout is similar to that of the low-foot building.



Figure 11. A flat building in Liufang village.

3.2. Agricultural Landscape and Activities of Dong People under Traditional Rice Farming

Different ecological environments will also lead to different ways of production and life. Dong people live in an area with warm and humid weather all year round, with no severe cold in winter and no extreme heat in summer. The good natural environment creates exceptionally favorable conditions for the development of Dong agricultural production. To adapt to its environment, the ancestors of the Dong nationality ancestors developed a way of livelihood of rice farming thousands of years ago. It is said Baiyue people were the earliest rice growers in China. As the descendants of the Baiyue people, the Dong people's ancestors have a very long history of planting rice.

More than that, in the long-term production practice, Dong people have a good interaction with their ecological environment, forming production experience and customs,

such as raising fish and ducks in rice fields, cultivating a variety of rice products, and making full use of the natural environment for irrigation to maintain a relative balance between life and the ecological environment.

3.2.1. Traditional Rice Farming and “Rice–Fish–Duck” Ecosystem

The cultivated area of Liufang village is 1040 mu, with an altitude of 670. Rice fields can be divided into two types. One is relatively flat around the village’s foot. The other is built layer by layer along the village’s slope called terraces (Figure 12). It is constructed along the contour lines of high field stem and then extended along the left and right mountains, flattening landmarks, thus forming a horizontal slope field. Then, a second slope field is gradually built, and each paddy field roughly presents a strip.



Figure 12. Terraces in Liufang Village.

The ecological mechanism of rice–fish–duck is one of the most significant cultural characteristics of Dong society, and it is also a brilliant farming method in Dong farming. It refers to raising fish in the paddy field and grazing domestic ducks simultaneously so that the three grow synchronously, depend on each other, and restrict each other. The operators play the role of macrocontrol. Rice, fish, and duck are inseparable from daily life, festivals, and religious sacrifices. Their adherence to culture also makes the transmission of a traditional way of rice–fish–duck livelihood.

3.2.2. Diet Structure of Dong Nationality under Rice Culture

Liufang village is mainly engaged in rice farming, and therefore, its diet structure also shows strong characteristics of farming culture, which can be summarized as “no fish, no banquet; no wine, no feast; no glutinous, no Dong”. In terms of staple food, rice is the main part, especially glutinous rice. They occasionally eat millet, wheat, corn, sweet potato, etc. Glutinous rice is an indispensable food in local people’s daily life, and it is usually eaten by hand, not by chopsticks. During the busy farming season, the villagers will pack glutinous rice, rice wine, and pickled cabbage in rice pots in the morning and take them to workplaces for use. In addition, glutinous rice can also be used for wine making. Dong people enjoy drinking, and the wine is called Dong wine. It is used for hospitality and for self-drinking; thus, wine-making is widespread in villages.

Liufang village is rich in fishery resources. Dong people who live in such an environment often enjoy fishing and shrimp and have accumulated rich fishing experience and techniques. The warm, humid and hot climate in the Dong nationality area is suitable for the growth of rice and also suitable for the development of a variety of livestock, poultry, melons, fruits, and vegetables. The livestock and poultry commonly raised by Dong people are cattle, pigs, chickens, ducks, etc., which are also the primary sources of meat.

3.2.3. Cultural Activities Based on Traditional Agriculture

The agricultural production of solar terms generally accompanies dong's literature and art. From the beginning of spring, the whole nation is immersed in a harvest festival carnival. These large-scale communication events also launch literature and art activities. Rice is the foundation of all celebrations. Along with the periodicity of rice farming and the requirement of festivals, Dong people customize celebrating and praying for blessings at the stage of agricultural production. The life customs and beliefs about rice farming have gradually formed.

Dong opera and song of Dong nationality are also closely related to farming. All of them embody strong traditional rice culture. They are usually performed on the stage or drum tower ground in the village or in an open place. There is no special arrangement, and the performance is relatively simple. The costumes and props are ordinary or slightly beautified from the daily necessities of the nation. The stage of Liufang village's performance center is built in the activity site of Liufang village, covering an area of 60 square meters. It was built in 1998. The building is well preserved, with exquisite modeling and carving (Figure 13). There are wood carvings and colored paintings on the forehead of the stage. The top of the stage is made of local green tiles [37].



Figure 13. The stage of Liufang.

For the Dong people, Lusheng is a sacred musical instrument placed in the drum tower. It is also an essential carrier of festival entertainment in Liufang village's rice culture. For example, the "Lusheng Festival" of the Dong people is held to celebrate the harvest and express their inner joy.

The clothing culture of Dong nationality is also the reproduction of rice culture. As the main source of spinning and weaving, cotton and dyed indigo come from farmland and are the main economic crops in Dong township. In the past, people seldom went to the market to buy clothes, and the sources of clothing materials are all from their cotton and textile. Dong cloth is solid and durable with a tight pattern (Figure 14).



Figure 14. Dong cloth.

3.3. Spiritual Landscape of Dong People's Beliefs, Systems, and Customs

In Guizhou, the Dong culture is divided into north Dong and south Dong. South Dong people believe that all things have spirit. The folk belief is mainly primitive religion, and the worship of nature is widespread. In the eyes of the Dong people, the mountains, water, flowers, grass, trees, even bridges, wells, etc., which are often seen in daily life, have mysterious powers, and therefore, they regard them as gods and worship them. Among them, the worship of the grandmother God "Sa" is supreme, and it is the common ancestor of the southern Dong people [38].

The worship of the villagers is closely related to their environment. In the Dong rice culture, not forgetting their ancestors, praying for a bumper harvest and a prosperous population is closely linked with the continuation of the rice farming mode. The primary purpose is to hope for a safe life and smooth production without excessive begging greed. Today's Dong people still have these beliefs and sacrificial customs.

3.3.1. Nature Worship and Landscape Representation

The Dong people worship tree gods and believe that tree growth and leaf falling are encouraging signs. They even restrict the villagers in village rules and regulations and punish the destruction of forests. The villagers plant more "auspicious trees" at the village's edge to form a "Fengshui forest" to protect the village's safety. Fengshui trees are also planted near the stage, wells, or other public places, which can watch the prosperity of the village and provide shading as well. There are three kinds of ancient and famous trees in Liufang village, about 30 of which are well preserved (Figure 15). There are also relevant contents in the village's agreement to restrict this, in case someone destroys the ancient trees. The villagers believe that these old trees can ward off evil spirits. They are the patron saint of the Dong village and have been guarding the Dong family for generations.



Figure 15. Ancient trees in Liufang village.

3.3.2. Ancestor Worship and Landscape Carrier

Dong people generally believe that the soul is still alive after death, and they can maintain an authentic relationship with their family. They also believe that their ancestors can protect their family's safety, animals' prosperity, and the abundance of grain. Therefore, ancestor worship ceremonies will be held when family members die, and Sanskrit paper will be used to burn incense to worship their ancestors in festivals. Ancestor worship will also be stored when they encounter misfortune or significant events for help. With the long-term development, the Dong nationality's ancestor worship has become the content of the national customs. Meanwhile, these customs have a profound impact on the daily life and social life of the Dong people. Worship is also reflected in the sacrifice they make to the bridge. Fengyu bridge plays the role of an ancestral hall in the hearts of the Dong people. The sacrifice given away on the Fengyu bridge shows people's ancestor worship

and the concept of repaying kindness. If they are sick, they can build a stone slab bridge to pray. They believe “the bridge is solid and then people are healthy”. If the bridge is damaged, it should be repaired immediately. Otherwise, it will hurt people’s health.

3.3.3. “Sa” Worship and Landscape Construction

The Dong people worship “Sa,” believing that she is the perfect and beautiful guardian goddess and the highest idolatry of the ethnic group. From the first day to the seventh day of the first lunar month, “Sa” is sacrificed in the Sa altar, which is as important as the Dong village’s drum tower. It is the belief center of Dong people in one village. It is mainly built in the center of the village or the secluded place [39]. The Sa altar in Liufang village is located on the hill behind the ancient gate of Liufang village (Figure 16). It was built in the Qianlong period and is made of different size stones. The specific construction age is unknown. It is mainly to commemorate and protect the villagers and pray for blessings. During the spring festival, all the villagers go to Tanggong’s house to offer incense and pray for Tanggong to bless the village’s peace and the people. For hundreds of years, it has been admired from generation to generation and has been handed down to this day.



Figure 16. Sa altar of Liufang village.

3.3.4. Glutinous Rice Worship and Embodiment

The worship of rice also leads to many distinct traces of rice culture in traditional festivals and customs. Glutinous rice is used as a staple food in daily life and as raw material to produce many types of food with characteristics for festivals and festive occasions, such as Ciba for Chinese New Year and Zongzi for Dragon Boat Festival. It plays different roles in different festivals.

A festival on 3 March is held each year in memory of the swallows providing rice for everyone. To express their gratitude, villagers let out the eaves of the house to swallow the nest. In addition to thanking swallows for bringing rice, in Dong society, some people often believe that buffalo, which has made significant contributions to agricultural production, is the ancestor of their family. Some even hang ox horns on their doors and beams of building and regard it as an honor, indicating that they belong to buffalo’s descendants.

The biggest festival in Liufang village is on 6 June. Every family makes Zongzi and takes it back to their mother’s home. Every family is drying Dong cloth. Young men and women also use their leisure time to carry out some activities to become acquainted with each other between villages. In the evening, there will be Dong opera, Dong song, Lusheng, and other performances. The Peace Festival in Liufang village is also related to rice cultivation. It is held from September to October every year. It is celebrated after all the crops are collected home. On this day, duck soup will be stewed and glutinous rice flour will be used to make porridge. All of these mean peace and safety.

4. Cognition of Liufang Village's Value by Local People

After sorting out the value of Liufang village from the perspective of the cultural landscape, it is necessary to study the people's cognition and judgment of the village's values, and what is the carrier of these values.

4.1. Interviewee and Value Cognitive Consensus

4.1.1. Interviewee and Content

The village is considered a place where villagers have lived for a long time. People here have indisputable rights of survival and residence. It is necessary to pay attention to the value cognition and interest demands of local villagers and what kind of experience and feeling they have living here. This survey mainly focuses on local villagers. Liufang village has not been known by the outside world yet and has not been developed for tourism on a large scale. The interviewing group included 13 local villagers, including the village branch secretary and president of the organic association, 1 local expert, and 1 local guide.

4.1.2. Concept Extraction and Coding

Before analyzing the interview document, we first made some simple amendments to the interview text, supplement the pronouns in the original manuscript, or important words omitted in oral expression. Additionally, we also revised the different terms of the same thing, such as "ancient road" and "stone road" are the same thing. We used NVivo software for word frequency analysis, changed the word grouping method to "generalization," then merged some similar words, adjusted the minimum length of words to "2," and selected the top 25 words to display. In this way, we obtained more representative high-frequency phrases.

Next, the corresponding sentences of these 25 high-frequency words were sorted out step by step, and 51 initial concepts were extracted, which were preliminarily grouped, clustered, and summarized into 24 categories (Table 1). It should be noted that in the process, some sentences with the same meaning but without the same words should be artificially integrated into a group, such as "the water here is very clear, the water in the tap is flowing down from the mountain, you can drink it directly," "there is no big factory in Southeast Guizhou, there is no pollution, this water is natural and good". They all express "good water, good environment" and therefore were grouped together. This process makes up for the missing information due to the different ways of expression of the interviewees.

Table 1. Value cognitive consensus of Liufang village.

Category (24)	Main Category (6)	Principal Coding	Selective Coding
A1. Building tradition A2. Drum tower A3. Stone road A4. Bridge A5. Barn A6. Village Gate A7. Pavilion and Well A8. Traditional way of rice-fish-duck livelihood A9. Traditional festivals A10. Stage and Dong opera and song A11. Nature worship A12. "Sa" worship A13. Ancestor worship A14. Profound cultural heritage A15. Abundant resources A16. Convenient transportation A17. Tourism activities A18. Good environment A19. Natural organic food A20. Warm and honest people A21. Insufficient funds A22. Lack of talents A23. Villagers' cultural confidence needs to be strengthened A24. Traditional handicraft is declining	Public space landscape of residents inhabiting Agricultural landscape and cultural customs Spiritual landscape of belief and worship Great tourism development potential Excellent natural and humanistic environment Traditional culture inheritance and crisis	Traditional culture and landscape construction Tourism development opportunities and challenges	Value cognitive consensus of Liufang village

4.1.3. Cognitive Consensus

The extracted 24 nodes are gradually summarized and theorized to form 6 higher categories (Table 1), such as “great tourism development potential”; “recognition of natural and humanistic environment”; “inheritance and crisis of traditional culture”; “cultural customs festival and landscape”; “spiritual landscape under belief and worship”; “public space landscape”. Finally, in the process of principal and selective coding, we further explored the core categories, extracted two value themes of “tourism development opportunities and challenges” and “traditional culture and landscape construction”, and finally formed the cognitive value consensus of Liufang village.

4.2. Discussion of Value Cognition

On the one hand, residents’ value cognition is based on the residents’ value cognition of their own cultural traditions, including natural construction, rice culture, and living customs. On the other hand, it is based on the motivation of local economic development. They generally recognize the value of tourism resources and talk about the opportunities and challenges of tourism development. The bottom-up value recognition is consistent with the third part of this paper based on the cultural landscape. This proves the validity of the cultural landscape methodology in analyzing the village’s overall value.

4.2.1. Traditional Culture and Landscape Construction

According to the interviewees, they show their love and recognition for the overall environment and culture of Liufang village. They believe the traditional cultural landscape includes the local ecological environment, classic rice farming mode and terraces, traditional residential buildings, public buildings of Dong nationality, landscape embodying belief, worship and customs, hospitable and enthusiastic folk customs, traditional handicrafts, traditional festivals, etc. All of the carriers of value can also be developed into tourism resources.

The villagers believe the value carriers of Liufang village are Drum tower, Sa altar, slate bridge, Fengyu bridge, pavilion, Dong cloth, embroidery, straw and bamboo weaving, Dong opera, Dong song, landscape and terrace, folk customs, etc. It is suggested that these resources should be used for some tourism activities such as farming experience tours and folk culture tours. The villagers expressed their desire to develop tourism based on the village’s value, believing that tourism can promote the local economic development and retain talents.

There was also one expert among the respondents in the village. According to the expert interviewed, the value carrier of Liufang village is reflected in the integrated Dong culture, organic rice, representative village landscape, villagers’ self-management mode and internal social governance mechanism, paddy field, and rice tradition. This is consistent with the author’s professional point of view.

The local guide believes that the ecological agriculture of Liufang village is unique. It has not been commercialized yet. The farmland and buildings of the village are still a relatively traditional layout. The carrier is embodied in the layout of the village farmland, residential buildings, and villages. Some educational initiatives on environmental protection can be implemented in combination with agriculture. Visitors can enjoy a traditional community and experience the traditional culture here. This also indicates that Liufang village should combine its characteristics to develop tourism and should not disturb its regular life too much while developing tourism.

4.2.2. Tourism Development Opportunities and Challenges

Most of the villagers believe the landscapes here have a long history and stories, i.e., they are part of the cultural heritage. There are many tourism resources in the village, which provide excellent opportunities for developing tourism. At the same time, they also hope that tourism can create without damaging the village environment and play a

positive role in traditional culture inheritance. The challenges for tourism development are mainly reflected in accommodation, capital, talents, etc.

- Accommodation issues

There are taboos on accommodation. Due to limitations of customs, there is no room for men and women (husband and wife room) in the local area. Neither lovers nor married couples can live together. If tourism develops, it is necessary to build a house without beams and incantations for tourists.

The scale of village tourism accommodation is small, and the quality needs to be improved. At present, the main house stay for tourists in the village is at the home of Wu Shixian, President of the organic rice association. Occasionally, other villagers arrange their own vacant houses to entertain tourists. However, with the increase of tourists, more villagers may need to put their empty houses and simply decorate them for a reception. In this way, villagers' income can be increased, and the people in the village can be sustained.

- Lack of talents

Young people leave the village to look for job one after another. Those who stay in the village are either hesitant to develop tourism or lack strength. The older villagers in the village hope young people tap into the needs of urban tourists and use the resources here. Tourists also need someone to interpret the local culture when trying to enhance their understanding of the village.

- Financial difficulties

On the one hand, the government has not provided much financial support thus far; on the other hand, it is challenging to sell organic rice. It is difficult for villagers to survive on organic rice alone. Aside from this, although tourism is developed, some villagers believe that it may disturb their lives. They hope that tourists can go to the public space under special people's guidance, avoiding being disturbed.

- Cultural confidence is not enough

The villagers' sense of cultural identity and self-confidence need to be enhanced. Although a small number of villagers expressed their willingness to develop tourism, their sense of cultural identity and self-confidence in their local culture are not high enough. They do not know the value of the village deeply. Moreover, due to the influence of foreign culture, some traditional cultures are facing loss. Thus, the villagers want to organize art groups in the village to pass on the young generation's culture and attract young people to stay in the town by tourism development. This has a positive effect on traditional culture protection, making tourism and conservation complement each other.

5. Conclusions

The typical agricultural landscape of traditional rice cultivation in Liufang village is undoubtedly the result of human being's adaptation to nature and the relationship between people. How long the history of glutinous rice cultivation is, how long the glutinous rice culture will be. A large area of agricultural farming needs a certain number of people's cooperation. The consanguineous family's work mode as a unit is a social structure to adapt to this kind of collective cooperative production mode, thus forming the Dong nationality settlement. In the long-term production practice, many inherent production customs and experiences have been included with its ecological environment. People never forget ancestors, believe all things have spirit, and pray for abundant grain and prosperous family. All of these are closely linked with the continuation of rice farming. Rice culture and Dong traditional culture complement each other, involving material, institutional, and spiritual aspects, forming an organic whole closely related.

Therefore, based on the village's integrity, this paper analyzes the values of Liufang village from the perspective of the cultural landscape, i.e., an integrative method. In this paper, three value themes of Liufang village were sorted out, namely, "settlement landscape of Dong people in the low and middle mountain valley area", "agricultural landscape and

activities of Dong people under traditional rice farming” and “spiritual landscape of Dong People’s beliefs, systems and customs”. Then, from the results of in-depth interviews, the results of local people’s value cognition can be divided into two parts. The first part is traditional culture and landscape construction, which is basically consistent with the result of the author’s analysis based on cultural landscape theories. The second part of residents’ value judgment is the opportunity and challenge of tourism development, reflecting the residents’ bottom-up demand for tourism development. On tourism development, they do not want the village to be destroyed by too many external things. They believe that Liufang village has preserved more traditional production customs and experience, which is unique and should be protected and utilized. The ecological environment should also be well treated while developing tourism. Moreover, the local expert said that villagers should participate in tourism as the main subject. The autonomy of villages and what they want to pass on are significant. Villagers have a strong demand for local resources to develop tourism, but they hope someone can plan and design it in depth. Although Liufang village has not been developed for tourism, these demands of residents are in line with the bottom-up community participation of traditional village’s tourism development [40]. Liufang village is very suitable for such a tourism development model. It is suggested that the development of tourism should be carried out gradually from tourism training measures, community tourism organization, participation rules and regulations, etc., especially with respect to economic policy, it is suggested a set of community participation bonus system be established that derives from community autonomy participation in tourism from bottom to top [40,41].

Understanding the value of villages from the cultural landscape perspective is a holistic value discrimination method, which focuses on the background value of traditional villages. The local residents’ cognition of their own cultural value is the background value and the value extended from it, which is highlighted as the utilization value of tourism development. This is consistent with the value trend mentioned in the previous literature [14,15], which pays more attention to social benefits, economic value, and utilization value based on traditional value. In terms of comparison with the previous studies on southwest minority villages, previous case studies mostly focus on the formation and change, pattern or characteristics of the cultural landscape and rarely involve value interpretation [32,34]. By focusing on the description of physical landscape elements, there has been less research on the social, economic, and cultural interpretation of landscape, especially on “people,” and less attention has been paid to local social stakeholders [33]. This paper, by contrast, attempts to take the cultural landscape as a methodology for in-depth interpretation of the village value and combines it with the value attitude and cognition of stakeholders, which has a certain innovative and scientific research value. This study can provide a new perspective and method for the value cognition of other similar conventional villages and can also be applied to different types of cultural landscape research. The research on the value cognition of village subjects will lay a good foundation for the next step of scientific and reasonable village planning of protection and tourism development. This paper’s limitation is that there were few local interviewees, and the different values of various interest groups were not deeply compared. These need to be improved in future research.

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