

Urban Cultural Heritage Protection and Cultural City Construction

Duan Zezhong

Abstract—At the intersection of history and modernity, inheritance and development, cultural heritage is a fascinating and weighty topic. How to inherit cultural heritage while carrying out modernization is worthy of thinking and exploration by every city and people. Cultural heritage is not only yesterday's glory, today's wealth, but also tomorrow's hope. Therefore, in the face of various problems and challenges in the protection of cultural heritage, it is necessary to examine it from the perspective of cultural strategy, and think and analyze it from the perspective of overall, macro, strategic and development.

Index Terms—Cultural city, cultural heritage, inheritance, participation, protection

I. INTRODUCTION

Cultural heritage has rich cultural connotations, reflects the past survival state and creativity of mankind, and has become a monument to urban civilization. This kind of cultural value can be transformed into valuable cultural resources, which have a positive impact on the spiritual life of modern cities in many ways. This dual nature of cultural heritage raises serious issues for us: their non-renewable nature requires us to properly and effectively protect them; their cultural values also require us to actively and rationally use them to serve the survival and development of reality. For cultural heritage, inheritance is the best protection, and development is the deepest promotion.

China is an ancient country of world civilization, and Chinese civilization has a long history and is the only one in the world. The process of urban development and evolution is recorded bit by bit in the memory of every city. Every celebrity's former residence, official mansion, temple, palace, pavilion, sculpture, stone carving, statue mural, tomb, monument, tower, square, well, bridge and other cultural relics, as well as a large number of historical facts and documents behind them, carry a wealth of historical, social and cultural information. More importantly, the traditional culture preserved in the city makes this memory more real. Through the urban style, ethnic customs, civic customs, etc. we can truly feel the accumulation of history.

Therefore, the protection of cultural heritage of a historic city is far more complicated than the protection of a group of ancient architectural complexes or an ancient cultural site, and at the same time, the impact on our real life is also more obvious. For example, the historical and cultural value of Chengdu lies in its status as an ancient city of the 'pre-Qin' Dynasty and the capital of 'Tianfu'. It has not changed its site

or its name for more than two thousand years. The regional cultural traditions with 'Shu' culture as the main body are unique and permeate all aspects of citizens' daily lives, forming an important connotation of Chengdu's urban culture.

Where does the city come from? How do we get to this day step by step? Only the bricks and tiles, beams and columns on traditional buildings can answer the common concerns of generations of residents. Through this cultural heritage, we can more clearly understand the pursuit of the city, and clarify how the city will move towards tomorrow and the future. Cultural heritage plays an increasingly important role in the city and has become a powerful witness to the life of the city. Today, in order to protect an ancient city wall, a cultural relic building, a traditional house, and a historical street in urban construction, many historic cities have adjusted their planning and design plans at all costs to preserve and restore them, in order to preserve the historical memory and the characteristics of the city.

II. A FAMOUS HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CITY

The key to the protection of cultural heritage is to balance different stakeholders with the correct concept and take the road of sustainable development. Urban construction and development should not cause the lack of urban culture, because the essence of a city is a humanistic city. Modern urban life requires cultural heritage, and development cannot be achieved without inheritance. The urban economy can develop "by leaps and bounds", but it is impossible for urban cultural resources to grow "by leaps and bounds".

After the establishment of the famous historical and cultural city system, a new model and new way of thinking have emerged in urban construction. Building a city based on the protection and promotion of excellent traditional cultural connotations, that is, studying the growth process of a city from a cultural perspective, rather than simply planning and building a city from a material perspective, adds a deep-level spiritual connotation that is more beneficial to expanding the achievements of urban civilization. For example, Shaoxing proposes to take the protection of "the whole city" as the ultimate goal, which is to combine the protection of "points", "lines", and "faces" with the protection of the ancient city pattern and traditional style, so that the protection space is expanded to the entire ancient city of 8.32 k m², reflecting the integrity of the protection of the ancient city. Protect and continue the traditional style of the ancient city, maintain the living environment of "small bridges, flowing water, houses, and awning boats", reflect the architectural style of "pink walls, dewa, sloping tops, and bluestone slabs", and highlight Shaoxing's local characteristics. "By strengthening the protection of the 'whole city', it has established a 'protection umbrella' for scattered cultural relics protection units, and also connected isolated 'cultural relics trees' into pieces, creating an original ecological 'cultural relics forest', giving

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Duan Zezhong is with the Moscow State University of Technology and the Arts, Russia. E-mail: duanzezhong@qq.com (D.Z.Z.)

full play to the overall effect of the protection of the ancient city.” [1] (see Fig. 1). The deep-level value of this action is the social morality, social responsibility and social mission that people jointly advocate and practice, that is, to protect urban cultural heritage and make cultural heritage a positive force for promoting urban economic and social development and improving people's quality of life.



Fig. 1. The ancient city of Shaoxing.

The level of protection of cultural heritage is closely related to the cultural consciousness of the city. In cities, the value of cultural heritage is diverse, and its history and connotation need to be truly explored. It is precisely because of the existence of these cultural heritage that the development of the city has the continuity of history. They enable urban residents to have a deeper understanding of traditional culture and enable foreign visitors to have a more authentic understanding of local history and cultural traditions. The report “Changing London-An Ancient City in a Changing World” published by the British Historical Buildings and Monuments Commission in 2002 pointed out that ancient architecture is not a burden to London's economic growth, but the foundation of London's current prosperity. Indeed, the most attractive places in London at present, and the places where people are most willing to live, work and visit, are those places where the historical environment is the most intact and the cultural heritage is the richest preserved. The protection of cultural heritage should be made an active force in urban development, so that urban construction can shift from a simple arrangement of houses and the construction of municipal facilities to a high-level cultural activity. And this kind of cultural activity precisely reflects the essential significance of urban construction behavior, that is, the city must not only provide citizens with a good material environment, but also provide citizens with a noble cultural space.

The protection of the material ontology of cultural heritage is of course important, but the rich connotation of the spiritual world extracted from this material ontology is even more important. Cultural heritage constitutes the humanistic environment for human survival and has special environmental value. “In the hearts of Xi'an people, this ancient city wall of the Ming Dynasty, which wraps the ruins of the Sui and Tang Dynasties, has actually gone far beyond the materialization concept of cultural relics and city symbols. A writer said that the city wall is the homesickness in the hearts of Xi'an people. She carries the emotions, memories and glories of history, and also bears witness to the past and future of the city” [2] (see Fig. 2). This kind of huge vastness of cultural space, this kind of retention of historical relics and

cultural treasures, is one of the greatest values of the city.



Fig. 2. Xi'an Ancient City Wall.

The protection of the ontology of cultural heritage is the top priority of cultural heritage protection. But what is even more shocking to people today is not the erosion of history by time, but even more ferocious is the man-made destruction. Incidents of destroying the body of cultural heritage have occurred frequently. First, the main body of cultural heritage was damaged in the so-called “renovation of dangerous old houses”. For example, “The sign ‘Cultural Relics Protection Unit of Qinhuai District, Nanjing: Qing Dynasty Residence’ is hung at the door of the old house. The stone strips at the bottom of the exterior wall are shoulder-high, and the red word ‘demolition’ is painted on it. The residential houses here were announced as the third batch of Nanjing cultural relics protection units on China's first ‘Cultural Heritage Day’ on June 10 this year.” [3] (see Fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Residence of the Qing Dynasty in Qinhuai District, Nanjing City.

The second is the damage to the main body of cultural heritage caused in the so-called “transformation of the old city”. For example, “Since 1980, there have been 4 cultural relics protection units in Tianjin, 16 district and county cultural relics protection units, and 160 cultural relics sites that have been demolished, accounting for about 1/6 of the city's cultural relics protection units” [4] (see Fig. 4).



Fig. 4. Tianjin Cultural Heritage Site.

The third is to cause damage to the main body of cultural heritage during the construction of capital construction projects. For example, “A Jin Dynasty site of important

archaeological value in Heilongjiang was damaged by construction. This destroyed 'Jijiatun No. 1 Jin Dynasty Site' is located near Jijiatun, Bin County. It is an ancient site involved in the Songhua River Dadingzishan Avionics Hub Project that is undergoing rescue excavations. The destruction of ancient ruins has caused the cultural relics and archaeology department to lose the only clue to the study of the connotation of the ruins." [5] (see Fig. 5).



Fig. 5. Jin Dynasty Ruins in Heilongjiang.

Fourth, the unreasonable use of one-sided pursuit of economic interests has caused damage to cultural heritage. Facing the continuous disappearance of Beijing's hutongs and Siheyuan, the French newspaper *Le Figaro* sighed: "There seems to be nothing to stop this cultural suicide. Beijing is turning its great culture into mediocrity." [6].

With the acceleration of urbanization, the construction of small towns and villages has also embarked on this path. The construction of new rural areas is understood as "new village construction". Thousands of traditional houses and thousands of historical streets and alleys, together with the living environment that has lasted for several generations, have also disappeared and disappeared under the bulldozers. The loss of culture can be described as very heavy!

In recent years, the number of cases of "protective destruction" that have caused damage to cultural heritage in the name of protection and utilization has increased year by year. Some cities have demolished almost all the traditional houses in the historical and cultural districts and completely rebuilt them. The newly built two-story building is arranged in a neat pattern, and the residence takes the form of a unit. People can't find any connection between this approach and "protection", nor can they see that it has the slightest relationship with the cultural origin of the historical and cultural district. Under the slogan of protection, these damages have also found dignified reasons. On the grounds of strengthening utilization, they blindly pursue the maximization of benefits, so that the destruction of cultural heritage occurs from time to time. For example, the Great Wall of Qi, located in Shandong, is the oldest Great Wall discovered so far and is known as the "Ancestor of the Great Wall." However, some passages were destroyed, and the "Fake Great Wall" bunting that imitated the Great Wall of the Ming and Qing Dynasties was displayed. Along the Great Wall of Qi, the "wonders" of the "real Great Wall holding hands with the Fake Great Wall" are not uncommon. Similar "repairs" have also occurred in many passages of the Great Wall. The city walls, gates, beacon towers, etc. that people repair as they please, whether it is building materials, craftsmanship, or appearance, are far from the truth of history. The restoration has become destruction, conveying false historical and cultural information to people. In the past, local

residents demolished bricks to build houses and natural damage were the two major factors that caused the destruction of the Great Wall. Today, the "city-building movement" aimed at promoting tourism has become the culprit of the destruction of the Great Wall. At the same time, there have been endless calls for "rebuilding the Yuanmingyuan" over the years, claiming to "reproduce the glory of gardening in the past." "As everyone knows, the historical witness value of the Yuanmingyuan as a ruin has far exceeded her value as a cultural relic" [7] (see Fig. 6). Of course, the protection of cultural heritage refers to the true historical heritage itself, not a copy, not an imitation, let alone an unfounded fake.



Fig. 6. Ruins of Yuanmingyuan.

III. COMPARISON OF THE CURRENT SITUATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE AT HOME AND ABROAD

At present, our country ranks third in the world in the number of world heritage sites. However, in the UNESCO "World Heritage List", about one-third of them are historic cities or historical urban areas of various countries, while among the 103 national historical and cultural cities in my country, only Pingyao and Lijiang are included in the list. Two cities. The important reason for this phenomenon is because the cultural heritage and historical features in many of our historic cities have been broken in urban construction and transformation. Compared with some European countries, the cultural heritage we protect is not too much, but too little. For example, in London, there are a total of 32 historical bridges on the River Thames in the city, and 8 bridges in the city center alone are protected; in Paris, there are 3,115 historical buildings in the city that have been properly protected so far; in Berlin, the government stipulates that all traditional buildings over 80-100 years old must be preserved unconditionally; in Madrid, no unit or individual may make any changes to the historical buildings in the city center, and they must be repaired and repainted in their original state every 20 years, otherwise heavy penalties will be imposed; in Rome, the Colosseum has partially collapsed under man-made and natural damage, However, people did not restore it, but used modern technology to scientifically reinforce the broken walls and ruins for people to inspect and watch. In my country, "In the process of high-speed urbanization, due to the blind admiration of the ocean, the joy of the new and the old, and the greed for the ocean by the leaders of some cities, under the action of these incorrect perceptions, many famous historical and cultural cities have been devastated by devastating destruction, and the historical style has

disappeared.”

In the past, some European countries, like our country today, have also experienced the impact of accelerated urbanization. For example, in the middle of the 19th century, the municipal governor of Paris at that time, G.E. The Paris renovation project presided over by Haussmann carried out a large-scale and drastic renovation of Paris. “To this day, Osman has been dead for more than 130 years, and Parisians are still condemning the ‘massacre’ of the old city of Paris that he led”, calling him a “lame planner” who destroyed countless historical and cultural heritage! Osman's transformation of Paris at that time had many similarities with the transformation of some historic cities in our country today. But the citizens of Paris have learned from the painful facts, so that many historical cities and cultural heritage have been preserved. For example, in the 1950s and 1960s, super-high-rise buildings had to gain a foothold in the heart of Paris, and the rapidly growing number of cars had to rush out of the wide avenues in the traditional neighborhoods. Real estate developers planned to demolish the narrow historical streets and old traditional buildings in the historic city. But when this cultural disaster is approaching, the first thing is for citizens to stand up, publish articles in newspapers, hold urban history exhibitions, and set up neighborhood protection organizations to promote the protection of cultural heritage. They believe that it is these traditional buildings and historical districts that constitute the unique historical and cultural space of the city, and all their spiritual and cultural roots are deeply rooted in them. Therefore, they have worked hard to defend this cultural space for decades, and finally these views have become the consensus of all Paris citizens today. An international perspective allows us to see the gap. In fact, the fundamental question lies in whether our economically rising cities are conscious, confident and capable of protecting and promoting their own culture in the 21st century, and whether they can have the correct development concept is even more critical.

IV. THE SITUATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN CHINA AT THIS STAGE

Cultural heritage is not an object that is solidified and unchanging in time and space. Cultural heritage is a broad system, a concept of development, an open system, and an eternal topic. The understanding of the protection of cultural heritage has also been in the process of development and change, constantly being tested, proven, revised, and enriched, and new content that is more in line with reality has been produced in practice. In recent years, on the one hand, the major demolition and construction-style urban transformation has led to a general sense of cultural loss, on the other hand, the rapid changes in the living environment have triggered people's spiritual return to traditional culture, and people's concept of cultural heritage protection is rapidly awakening, gradually becoming the focus of attention of the government and all walks of life, the continuous deepening and renewal of understanding has promoted the practice of protection work, showing a gratifying development trajectory.

“Single protection” and “overall protection” cultural heritage are important manifestations of the cultural value of a city, and cultural heritage depends on the background environment and exists. Only with the background environment can cultural heritage fully demonstrate its

historical, artistic and scientific values, and truly become the carrier of urban civilization. Only then can it be more respected by society, cherished by the people, and protected by the country. The protection and preservation of cultural heritage and the background environment are just like the relationship between trees and soil. When trees lose the soil, they lose the conditions for survival, lose their vitality, and become dead trees. Similarly, if the cultural heritage of the background environment is lost, it cannot reflect or fully reflect its due value, and it will become an isolated “bonsai”. We often see some historical and cultural districts. Because they are surrounded by high-rise buildings, walking through them is like watching the sky from the bottom of a well, which is difficult to reflect the original cultural and artistic conception. Some traditional architectural complexes have been developed into prosperous commercial outlets or bazaars due to the surrounding development, resulting in the loss of the historical status, ethnic style, geographical victory, and architectural feng shui reflected in the background environment of these traditional buildings. Although some cultural heritage itself has been protected and repaired, it still loses its former glory. The reason is that the surrounding environment of cultural heritage has been destroyed, which affects the social way of life on which the cultural heritage body depends or the foundation of cultural inheritance, which directly leads to the damage of the value of the cultural heritage body. The protection of cultural heritage should follow the principles of authenticity and completeness. The principle of authenticity requires that the historical status quo ante of cultural heritage must not be changed, and that all historical information possessed by cultural heritage must be protected as much as possible. The principle of integrity requires that cultural heritage and its surrounding environment be taken as a whole, and the protection is not limited to itself, but also its background environment, especially for historic cities. Protect the overall environment, so as to reflect the original historical appearance. For historic cities in the process of accelerating urbanization, the contradiction between “protection and development” is more prominent, and the overall responsibility for protection is more difficult. In this regard, Mr. Xu Pingfang pointed out: “Mistakes in policy and weakness in the protection of famous historical and cultural cities are the main reasons. Until now, the regulations on the protection of famous historical and cultural cities that have been called for many years have not been issued, let alone special laws. The basis for the protection of famous historical and cultural cities can only be to take the car of the “Cultural Relics Protection Law, a few simple provisions, this is a very serious problem.” He also pointed out: “For the protection of famous historical and cultural cities, the idea proposed by the urban planning department not to protect the complete ‘relics’ of ancient urban planning as a whole, but to selectively protect some subjectively prescribed historical and cultural districts is wrong. The concept of historical and cultural blocks was transplanted from Europe, and it is not in line with the historical characteristics of the overlapping development of ancient Chinese cities.” I believe that the practice of identifying historical and cultural districts in historic cities that preserve real historical information and historical features more completely, and focus on areas that reflect certain historical periods and local characteristics, as historical and cultural districts for protection, is of rescue and protection significance at this stage. However, Mr. Xu

Pingfang's view on the overall protection of historic cities is undoubtedly very correct and very important. In fact, it is warning us that we cannot replace the overall protection of historic cities with the protection of historical and cultural districts.

V. CONCLUSION

The existing cultural heritage in a city can often constitute a materialized history of urban development. It is a rare physical evidence and important carrier of the splendid culture of the city, and it is also the only material channel for citizens to contact and communicate with distant ancestors. The accumulation of cultural resources is an important expression of a city's cultural taste, and it is also a vivid manifestation of a city's cultural personality. As the carrier of urban cultural characteristics, cultural heritage, the protection of them is the enrichment of cultural resources. As a complex and systematic social project, the nature and content of cultural heritage protection determine that it cannot become a discipline of self-appreciation, but it will inevitably receive widespread attention from the people. Only by playing a reasonable role and being paid attention to and shared by the public in a specific way can cultural heritage be sustainably

protected and have a stronger vitality.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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