

“Protection” or “Destruction”: Taking the Cultural Heritage Protection of the Grand Canal in Huaxian and Xunxian Sections of Henan Province as Example

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Abstract : The Grand Canal of China has been in use for more than two thousand years. It runs through the central and eastern regions of China and communicates with the five major river systems of Haihe River, Yellow River, Huaihe River, Yangtze River and Qiantang River from north to south. It is a complex, systematic and comprehensive water conservancy project in the period of agricultural civilization and includes the three parts of the Beijing-Hangzhou Canal, the Sui and Tang Dynasties Canal and the Eastern Zhejiang Canal. It covers eight provinces and cities including Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei, Shandong, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Henan and Anhui. The Grand Canal is an important channel connecting the Central Plains and the Beijing-Hangzhou Canal, and it is also an important waterway trade channel. Nowadays, although the Grand Canal no longer bears the burden of communicating water transportation between the north and the south, the site of the Grand Canal is still a “historical museum” of the lifestyle of people who lived on the canal from the Ming and Qing Dynasties to the Republic of China. By means of literature reading and field investigation, this paper compares the different protection strategies of the Grand Canal in the region between the ancient villages of Huaxian and Xunxian, which witness the vicissitudes of canal water transport, to explore whether the protective renovation of historical and cultural routes is “protection” or “destruction”, and puts forward some protection suggestions.

Keywords : The Grand Canal, heritage conservation, cultural route, ancient villages, strategies

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