

Study on Spatial Structure and Evolvement Process of Traditional Villages' Courtyard Based on Clannism

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Abstract : The origination and development of Chinese traditional villages have a strong link with clan society. Thousands of traditional villages are constituted by one big family who have the same surname. Villages' basic social relationships are built on the basis of family kinship. Clan power controls family courtyards' spatial structure and influences their evolvement process. Compared with other countries, research from perspective of clanism is a particular and universally applicable manner to recognize Chinese traditional villages' space features. This paper takes traditional villages in eastern Zhejiang province as examples, especially a single-clan village named Zoumatang. Through combining rural sociology with architecture, it clarifies the coupling relationship between clan structure and village space, reveals spatial composition and evolvement logic of family courtyards. Clan society pays much attention to the patrilineal kinship and genealogy. In eastern Zhejiang province, clan is usually divided to 'clan-branches-families' three levels. Its structural relationship looks like pyramid, which results in 'center-margin' structure when projecting to villages' space. Due to the cultural tradition of ancestor worship, family courtyards' space exist similar 'center-margin' structure. Ancestor hall and family temple are respectively the space core of village and courtyard. Other parts of courtyard also shows order of superiority and inferiority. Elder and men must be the first. However, along with the disintegration of clan society, family courtyard gradually appears fragmentation trend. Its spatial structure becomes more and more flexible and its scale becomes smaller and smaller. Living conditions rather than ancestor worship turn out to be primary consideration. As a result, there are different courtyard historical prototype in different historic period. To some extent, Chinese present traditional villages' conservation ignore the impact of clan society. This paper discovers the social significance of courtyard's spatial texture and rebuilds the connection between society and space. It is expected to promote Chinese traditional villages' conservation paying more attention to authenticity which defined in the historical process and integrity which built on the basis of social meaning.

Keywords : China, clanism, courtyard, evolvement process, spatial structure, traditional village

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