

"Eight Scenery" as a Cultural Form that Condenses the Memories of Ancient Chinese Countryside-Take Two Groups of "Eight Scenery" in Damin Village as an Example

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Abstract: The "Eight Scenery" is a popular culture in ancient China, which defines the cultural boundaries of the clan settlements, give a village a rich and diverse artistic image. This article takes Damin village in the middle of Zhejiang Province as an example to study the two groups of "Eight Scenery" and their poems in Yang family's genealogy of the village. This article aims to reveal the similarities and differences in cultural construction between the two groups of "Eight Scenery" by analyzing the evaluation scope, themes, content and combination relationship. The "Eight Scenery of Min Chuan" revolves around the living environment of the Yang family in Damin Village, constructing a two-circle cultural system inside and outside, and combines magnificent landscapes with specific daily life and beliefs. Half of the themes of "Eight Scenery of Huangcui hall" come from the village, and half are transplanted from four traditional Chinese classical cultural symbols. The selection of the "Eight Scenery" in the countryside can absorb the opinions of villagers, college students, tourists, etc. Therefore, the expression of rural culture is no longer limited to self-expression.

1. Introduction

In ancient China, the purpose of creating the "Eight Scenery" by cultural elites was to praise and spread the advantages and peculiarities of the natural wonders, myths, celebrities, legends, and technology of their hometowns. With the theme of "Eight Scenery", the poetry, calligraphy, painting, stone carvings, couplets and other related artistic and cultural activities created together constitute the "Eight Scenery Culture". As a popular culture in ancient Chinese landscape appreciation, the "Eight Scenery" is an important clue to analyze the cognition, observation, selection and history of ancient Chinese cultural landscapes.

The "Xiaoxiang Eight Scenery" is the most classic paintings in China, created by Song Di, a painter in the Southern Song Dynasty. Under its influence, Chinese literati groups have continued to create a large number of "Eight Scenery" poems and paintings around cities, towns, villages, royal gardens, residential gardens, temple gardens and their natural landscape environment. The

“Xiaoxiang Eight Scenery “Eight Scenery” has also become the common Lyric motif of poetry and painting in East Asia, which can explore the aesthetic differences between landscape in East Asia [1]. The language format also follows the “Xiaoxiang” models, that is, the first two represent place names or nicknames, and the last two represent features of the scenery and the time of occurrence. This fixed model also brings certain adverse effects, and is easy to lose cultural connotation. The famous literature Mr. Lu Xun regarded this “Eight Scenery” models after aesthetic solidification as a harmful pathogen that can subjugate the country. It is necessary for us to change our research horizons, understand the beauty of cultural landscape, and think about how to transform the “Eight Scenery Culture” into beneficial bacteria that tell Chinese stories. It is necessary to focus on the textual strategies and power relationship of the “Eight Scenery” to explain the cultural motives and social influences of this artistic phenomenon [2].

Some Chinese scholars define the academic concept of this cultural phenomenon as “landscape Assemble Appellation Culture”, emphasizing its multiple social effects [3]. The Chinese word “Pin” (the Chinese word “Pin” means to experience it carefully) is a unique concept category of Chinese traditional aesthetics, which can summarize the commonness of East Asian landscape aesthetics, that is, emphasizing the delicateness of enjoying the scenery like tasting food. Therefore, Jin Xuezhi defined the academic concept of “Eight Scenery” as “landscape architecture Pin-Ti series” [4]. As the core of regional culture, the “Eight Scenery” Chinese cities have been studied from the aspects of ancient and modern differences, cultural functions, image interpretation, community relations and so on [5-6]. The “Eight Scenery” of scenic spots, royal gardens and literati gardens have changed from cultural interpretation to recreation research [7-8].

With the development of China's rural cultural and ecological conservation and restoration activities, the cultural significance of the rural “Eight Scenery” recorded in Genealogy, such as the overall concept of the “unity of heaven and man”, the concept of Feng Shui seeking good fortune and avoiding evil, and the consciousness of symmetry and harmony, has been fully affirmed [9]. At present, some progress has been made in the cultural research of the rural “Eight Scenery”, such as poetic landscape design ideas, the overall characteristics of the village group, the cultural function and personality of the village “Eight Scenery” have been discussed [10-11]. The academic community have reached a consensus that the rural “Eight Scenery” is an important part of the rural cultural landscape heritage, have their own independent aesthetic cultural connotation and contemporary value.

2. Materials and Methods

This study focuses on how the ancient Chinese family elites constructed the local cultural symbol system through landscape literature. Two groups of “Eight Scenery” and their poems will be investigated in depth around the Damin Village in Yang Family’s genealogical records of the mountainous area of central Zhejiang Province, China. It will explore the relationship between its theme composition and the rural environment, as well as the logic behind the ranking of the names of the “Eight Scenery”.

2.1. The development history of Damin village

Damin village, surrounded by the remnants of Dapan Mountains, is the birthplace of Oujiang River system. It is now under the jurisdiction of Shuangfeng Township, Pan'an County, and has four administrative villages: Min 1, Min 2, Min 3, and Min 4, which has always be the political, cultural, and economic center of the township.

2.1.1. Location motivation and environmental characteristics

In the third year of Huichang of the Tang Dynasty (843 AD), Yang Ying, the ancestor of the Yang family in Damin village, who was an official of Jiazhou, traveled through Jinyun County to live in seclusion after avoiding chaos and abandoning officials. He found that a place in the east of the county was easy to protect and suitable for living.

The mountains and rivers around here are beautiful, and the landscape environment structure is like a dish (its pronunciation is “Min”). The shape of the two mountains in the north of the village and the bridges over the stream in the village form a natural Chinese character “Yang” (the Chinese word of “Yang” means Sheep, Chinese surname). This convinces the villagers that here is an excellent place for the development of the Yang family (fig. 1).



Figure 1. Mountain, water and bridge together constitute the form of the Chinese surname “Yang”

2.1.2. First destruction and reconstruction

Because of the limitations of ancient architectural technology and the social unrest caused by the change of dynasties, the development process of Damin village was not smooth. The villager Yang Ji was defeated by the Qing court after raising the army of Late Ming Dynasty (1640S). Then the Yang family’ living environment for nearly 800 years was destroyed. Until the end of Shunzhi (1660S), the descendants of the Yang family returned to their hometowns one after another to start reconstruction, and set up a sacrifice hall on the north side of Hugong Hall in the eastern foothills to pay homage to the innocent souls. During the middle period of Kangxi in the Qing Dynasty (1700s), the Yang family’s ancestral hall, the imperial examination glorious archway, and the Fuchun corridor bridge for sightseeing were successively rebuilt, thus inheriting the family memory from the Tang Dynasty to the Ming Dynasty. Due to the development of handicrafts such as palace

lanterns and bamboo weaving, Damin Village gradually prospered from the end of the 18th century to the beginning of the 20th century.

2.1.3. Second destruction and reconstruction.

From the Republic of China (1911-1949) to the 1960s, Damin village once again became a place to escape chaos during the war. The Ningbo Middle School moved here, and the only relevant construction activities were the restoration of ancestral temples. Unfortunately, two fires in 1971 and 1977 once again damaged the contiguous ancient wooden buildings. The second round of reconstruction activities closely followed the development of traditional Chinese village protection and rural tourism. In order to awaken the memory of rural culture and promote the sustainable development of rural civilization, the residential buildings have been continuously optimized. Contemporary government officials have built ancestral halls and intangible cultural heritage into tourist attractions, which has made Damin Village an architectural space pattern of "one water and one horizontal, two mountains facing each other, and four districts sharing the glory".

2.2. The theme of “Eight Scenery” in Damin Village

The inheritance to Chinese family cultures to include the construction of physical space for tangible ancestral halls, archways and architectural plaques, as well as the creation of intangible artistic images such as ritual folklore, legends and beliefs, poetry. The compilation of genealogies in the past dynasties compiled these cultural expression histories into a book for future generations to inquire and explain. “Minchuan Yang Clan Genealogy” has been compiled since the Southern Song Dynasty. At present, there are only four versions of Jiaqing, Daoguang, Tongzhi, and Guangxu. They all contain two groups of “Eight Scenery” and related poems. According to the cultural images of the poems recorded in Yang Family's genealogy, it can be seen that the two groups of “Eight Scenery” differ from the choice of landscape themes and scenery features.

2.2.1. The theme sources of “Eight Scenery of Min Chuan”

It can be divided into three types. First, the natural elements of landscape, including mountains, cliffs, ponds, waterfalls, streams, springs and pools; Second, there are three artificial buildings, including temples, ancestral halls and bridges; Third, there are four meteorological scenes, including snow, dawn, sunrise, sunset and flying rainbow. Once the residential buildings are completed, there will not be much change in appearance. The unpredictable weather and seasonal phenomena can bring rich landscape images to the landscape environment and artificial buildings. The interaction of material elements with seasons and time points demonstrates the traditional Chinese aesthetic concept of time: "in accordance with the four seasons" (Tab. 1).

Table 1: Eight Scenery of MinChuan.

Chinese name's Pinyin	English translation
Shuangfeng Jixue	The mountain in the clear sky after snow
Guling Zhaoxi	The mountains are bathed in the dawn
Ruoji Feihong	The bridge crosses the river like a flying rainbow
Qixia Luozhao	The peak of the mountain under the sunset
Jiuche Longqiu	The Dragon God is entrenched in the lake
Quanfeng Qushui	The spring is abundant and the stream winds
Fengsi Jingshe	The monastery named Fengsi to worship ancestors
Xingfang Chanfang	The Buddhist temple named Xing Fan

2.2.2. The landscape theme sources of “Eight Scenery of Huangcui Hall”

Like “Min Chuan Eight Scenery”, this group also focuses the combination of Shanshui and seasons. It includes 4 local landscapes and 4 traditional classical cultural symbols. Landscape environment and local temples are also included in this group. The beautiful scenery of Damin village can be seen everywhere, which can bring many aesthetic associations. Similar landscapes, endowed with well-known cultural allusions, can bring people rich cultural associations. Therefore, the travel events of two famous figures of landscape literature, and the Fisherman and the woodcutter, which are classical literary images of the period of Chinese traditional farming, have also been implanted in the middle of this group of “Eight Scenery” (Tab. 2).

Table 2: Eight Scenery of Huangcui hall.

Chinese name’s Pinyin	English translation
Daihe Zhaosong	Dew drops from pine leaves, cranes have returned to their nests, but immortals have not returned
Tianmen Jicui	The mountains are as green as weaving because of the pine forest after the spring rain
Qushui Feihu	Drink water from a winding canal with one wine cup floating on it so as to wash away ominousness
Dongshan Nieji	Appreciate the pleasant feelings of Xie Lingyun, the ancestor of landscape poetry
Huangchuan Diaoxue	The fisherman fishing by the River in the snow
Qianling Qiaoyun	The woodcutter loomed in the mountains where the clouds rose
Shuangxi Yuese	The moonlight was reflected at streams
Xingfang Xiaozhong	The bells of Xingfan temple in the morning

2.3. The organizational logic of “Eight Scenery” in Damin Village

Research on topics such as the scope of selecting, location of scenic spots, and ordering reflects the ancients’ motivation for choosing to surround scenic spots. In the traditional period, family elite groups combined with the collective memory of the people, dominated the generation and dissemination of rural group scenery. This requires the evaluator not only to be familiar with the historical context of the village, but also to have a certain ability in poetry creation and appreciation. Due to the different creative motives of individual creation, the two groups of the “Eight Scenery” in Damin Village use different organizational logic to interpret the village's scenic landmarks.

2.3.1. The organizational logic of “Eight Scenery of Min Chuan”

It can be divided into two systems inside and outside the village. The upper part of scene(1-4) outline the residential space surrounded by the Grand View of the mountain and the landmark traffics attraction named Ruoji bridge in the heart of the village from the perspectives of morning, evening, winter and summer. The lower part of scene (5-8) is based on legends and beliefs, comparing the winding rivers and streams in the mountains to the residence of the Water Dragon King, and combines two Buddhist buildings to construct a cultural symbol system to protect Damin village. From the perspective of the degree of recognition, the first scene of the “Eight Scenery” is often the cultural venue for the most profound acceptance by the villagers. Interior first scene (1) and exterior first scene (5) outline grand views of the mountains and water around Damin Village, which is different from other rural settlements (fig.2).

2.3.2. The organizational logic of “Eight Scenery of Huangcui hall”

This group of “Eight Scenery” revolves around a private building called “Huangcui”, shows that the author's creative motivation is to pay more attention to personal aesthetic experience and Literary Association. Scene (1-2) and Scene (7-8) come from the well-known real scene of the village, but the former have strong tone, and the latter has hazy atmosphere, forming a strong contrast. The middle part of Scene (3-6) are the author's imagination part, not a clear and real place. They did not specify the specific location of the four landscape names. But these landscapes seem to be everywhere. The combination of similar natural scenery and historical memory presents a dynamic landscape painting. Therefore, it can obtain people's greatest sense of identity.

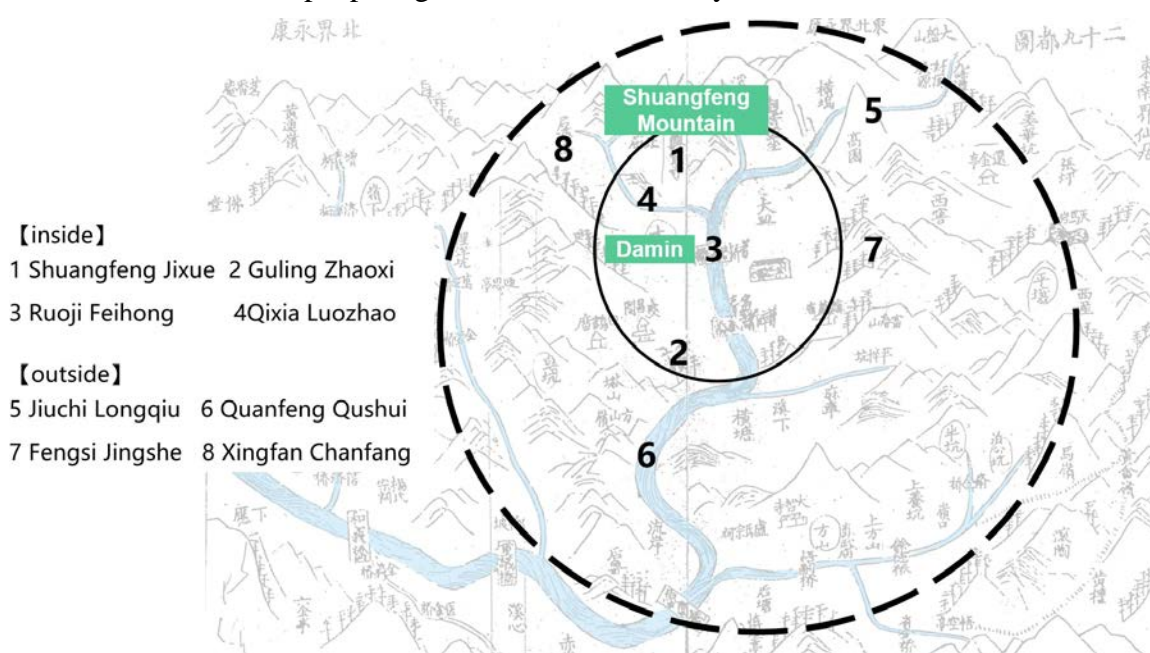


Figure 2: Schematic diagram of internal and external structure

3. Results & Discussion

3.1. Results

3.1.1. The generation time of the two groups of “Eight Scenery” is before the Qing Dynasty

According to the development history of Damin Village, the themes of the two groups of “Eight Scenery” were not included in the key family ancestral halls rebuilt in the Qing Dynasty. Their subjects are more descriptions of natural landscapes and legends, as well as people’s Buddhist beliefs. Their poetry creation was supplemented by descendants of the Qing Dynasty based on the Yang Family’s genealogy. Due to the loss of genealogies from the Tang Dynasty to the Ming Dynasty, this study cannot further to determine the specific generation time of “Eight Scenery” in Damin Village.

3.1.2. Refinement and transplantation are two modes of constructing the “Eight Scenery Culture”

The idea of refinement means that the creators focus on the collective memory of the tribe, look around the characteristics of the natural and artificial environment inside and outside the village, to create an eight-view system. The grand view of landscape and geography is often the most stable

cultural icon in the hearts of the villagers. The logic of the combination of “Eight Scenery of Min Chuan” is that the upper part of scene (1-4) is a combination of mountains and bridges, and the lower part of scene (5-8) are a combination of water and religious buildings. The case of “Eight Scenery of Huangcui hall” illustrates two reasons why the literati adopted the method of transplanting classic images: one is that the landscape and scenery is relatively similar and cannot highlight the characteristics of the village; the other is that the literati wants to display their talents and expand the aesthetic experience of the villagers and tourists.

3.2. Discussion

3.2.1. Integrated innovation of two groups of “Eight Scenery” in the formation of image unit

The two groups of “Eight Scenery” of Yang Family respect nature, praise and appreciate people’s daily lives, reflecting a simple and optimistic attitude. It’s just that “Eight Scenery of Min Chuan” focuses on the collective memory of the family, and the other group focuses on the personal sightseeing and reading experience. The combination of natural and artificial landscape sites, supplemented by diversified seasonal features, provides different perspectives of appreciating rural beauty and can promote the in-depth development of people's aesthetic experience. A variety of contrast methods are used to render the atmosphere of each scenic spot, such as distance and distance, scale size, tone intensity and brightness, static and dynamic picture, virtual and real relationship, etc.

3.2.2. Historical Limitations and Contemporary Dilemma of the “Eight Scenery culture” in the countryside

In terms of creative subjects, most of the rural “Eight Sights” and poetry creation groups are rural residents and their friends, or local cultural elites, and few national celebrities participate in the selection of rural landscape. Therefore, the popularity of “Eight Sights” in rural areas is far lower than that in cities and temples. In terms of content, the two groups of eight scenes in Damin village do not systematically summarize the landscape sites, characteristic handicrafts and folk activities after two reconstruction since the Qing Dynasty and the 1970s. This shows that the subsequent landscape selection can be supplemented and optimized.

Currently, the Yang family’s cultural landmark sites and related intangible cultural heritage had been adapted and reconstructed into tourist attractions, and the activities of “Eight scenery” were basically neglected. Benefiting from the good natural environment, Damin village has been built into a more famous art sketching base of Zhejiang since 2015, and college students and artists have basically become half of the villagers. Obviously, reconstructing the ancient and modern shin, and the sharing of the villagers and tourists, is not only to continue the family history, but also a key link to awaken and restore the collective memory of the villagers and enhance cultural self-confidence.

3.2.3. Public participation in the selection and creation of “Eight Scenery” in the countryside

The “Eight Scenery” helps villagers and tourists to accurately identify and appreciate the ancient village cultural landmark system. The urban “Eight Scenery” such as Guangzhou can be organized by the government and related cultural tourism companies, online and offline public audition, expert team evaluation and other links, turning the selection process of scenic scenery into a collective action for the public to enjoy the beautiful scenery [12]. The rural “Eight Scenery” in Damin Village can make use of its own advantages and develop themed art creation with the help of college students’ sketching research courses. The course can extract some special nodes in Damin

village to create the thematic “Eight Scenery”. For example, the bridge is a key node in the pattern of the two sides of a stream in Damin Village, and also an important part of the Chinese character “Yang” landscape wins the association. We can create a series of landscape names of the bridge through the course to remind people to appreciate the importance of the bridge to the villagers and its landscape characteristics from different perspectives.

4. Conclusions

The renewal of “Eight Scenery cultures” in urban and rural areas, contains the creation of text and graphics, can be regarded as one as the manifestations of “Chinese-style cultural renaissance”. It is a fine tradition of Chinese aesthetic culture to respect nature and regard human beings and nature as living organisms. The two groups of “Eight Scenery” present two forms into cultural construction, which are important basis and clues to analyze the change of rural cultural environment and aesthetic cultural value. How to incorporate the new era factors on the basis on criticizing the old aesthetic norms, and use the “Eight Scenery” to construct a landscape poetic environment that “thinks about the past and the present”, so as to realize the inheritance and innovation.

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