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# Spatial Distribution and Cultural Features of Traditional Villages in Beijing and Influencing Factors

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**Abstract:** Traditional villages are important part of Beijing, an internationally famous historic and cultural city. Exploring the spatial distribution and cultural features of traditional villages, and the factors that have shaped them, will help promote the protection and utilization of traditional villages in Beijing. ArcGIS spatial analysis, literature analysis, fieldwork and in-depth interviews were mainly carried out to analyze the spatial distribution and cultural features of traditional villages in Beijing and their influencing factors. The results show three main features. (1) The overall distribution of traditional villages in Beijing is random, although there are more traditional villages in the southwest and northeast and less in the southeast and northwest. Most of them are distributed along the higher piedmont plains or intermountain basins, and most of them are backed by hills and surrounded by rivers or along the ancient road. (2) There are some cultural commonalities among the traditional villages in Beijing, and nine typical traditional village cultures have been formed, including traditional residential culture, traditional folklore culture, the Great Wall garrison culture, mausoleum guarding culture, etc. (3) The formation of the spatial distribution and cultural features of traditional villages in Beijing is influenced by natural environmental factors like terrain, climate, and rivers, as well as human activities such as royal life, capital construction, ancient military defense, transportation, trade, etc. This study can provide a reference for the scientific protection and effective utilization of traditional villages in Beijing and all over the country.

**Key words:** traditional villages; spatial distribution; cultural features; rural culture; rural vitalization; Beijing

## 1 Introduction

Traditional villages are the carrier of China's long-standing traditional culture. The protection of traditional villages is vital for inheriting the excellent traditional rural culture and realizing rural revitalization. However, with the rapid development of urbanization and industrialization, many traditional villages have been seriously damaged, and now face problems like the loss of the original landscape, the distortion of architectural style, the decline of traditional culture, etc. The protection of the traditional landscape and inheritance of culture are very urgent. In March 2018, the General Office of the People's Government of Beijing Municipality

issued the guidelines on strengthening the protection and development of traditional villages, and released the first batch of 44 municipal traditional villages, of which 22 are also national traditional villages. On March 1, 2021, *Regulations on Protection of Beijing as a Historic and Cultural City*, released by the People's Government of Beijing Municipality, was officially implemented. These regulations pointed out that traditional villages are an important part of Beijing as a historic and cultural city, and provided a policy basis for the protection and development of traditional villages in Beijing. Combining the cultural features and inheriting the cultural context of traditional villages is of great significance for the construction of a national cultural center

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and the protection of Beijing as a famous historic and cultural city.

Many studies on traditional villages have been carried out. In recent years, the research hotspots include the value evaluation and construction of traditional villages, tourism development, spatial distribution and layout, cultural heritage and traditional villages as human settlements (Li et al., 2017). In the study of the spatial form of traditional villages, scholars have investigated the spatial distribution features and factors influencing traditional villages at different scales, such as the national and provincial scales (Li et al., 2015; Tian, 2020; Li et al., 2020). Some scholars have also paid attention to the landscape genes of traditional villages and believe that the sustainable development of traditional villages must ensure the integrity of the landscape genes (Liu et al., 2009). In the study of traditional village culture, scholars have focused on cultural gene identification and protection of the cultural landscape (Zhai et al., 2018), cultural inheritance (Yang and Liu, 2017), cultural preservation and activation (Zhang and Wang, 2018). Taking traditional villages in Beijing as the research object, scholars have focused on the protection and development of traditional villages, as well as the spatial forms and stakeholders of traditional villages. Scholars have studied the protection and development of traditional villages in Beijing from the perspectives of folklore tourism resources (Shi and Huang, 2015), protection systems (Song and Qian, 2019), inheritance and regeneration of features (Zhang, 2014) and the value evaluation of traditional villages (Li et al., 2019b). Some scholars have put forward the renewal and upgrading measures of traditional villages (Li and Yang, 2020; Gao and Wang, 2020) and the green development model (Tang et al., 2019). In terms of the spatial form of traditional villages in Beijing, scholars have studied the distribution features and laws governing the different spatial forms of traditional villages, such as squares (Xu and Xu, 2017), roads (Li, 2015), temples (Gao et al., 2020) and public space (Yue, 2020). Some scholars have analyzed the overall or regional spatial distribution features of traditional villages in Beijing using qualitative methods (Guo, 2014; Zhang and Gan, 2018). For the stakeholders of traditional villages in Beijing, some scholars have studied the perception and evaluation of different subjects on the protection and inheritance of cultural heritage (Tang et al., 2021); while other scholars have explored the spatial collective memory of villagers and tourists (Yang and Qian, 2019), tourist's perception (Li et al., 2019a), and villager's participation in the revitalization and construction of traditional villages (Su and Wang, 2019).

At present, there are many studies on traditional villages at the macro and micro scales, but few at the mesoscale. The distribution features of traditional villages are often studied while the factors driving the spatial distribution and the formation mechanism of cultural characteristics are rarely discussed. At the same time, in terms of research methods, relatively few studies integrate qualitative and quantitative

methods together. The number of traditional villages in China is huge and their cultures are diverse. Figuring out how to scientifically comb through and classify the numerous traditional villages is a major theoretical problem that needs to be solved. Based on these needs, this paper takes traditional villages in Beijing as the study case, combines qualitative and quantitative research methods such as spatial analysis, literature analysis and fieldwork, systematically analyzes the spatial distribution and cultural features of traditional villages in Beijing, and discusses the factors that have shaped them. The results can promote the scientific protection and rational utilization of traditional villages in Beijing and provide a reference for the traditional villages in other areas.

## 2 Research object and research methods

### 2.1 Research object

Beijing is one of the birthplaces of ancient mankind in the world, and also an important breeding ground for many of the dynasties in ancient China. With a long history and profound civilization, it is a world-famous historic and cultural city. In the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties, Beijing was the capital of China, from which more than 30 emperors ruled the country. Traditional villages are an important part of Beijing today, as a famous historic and cultural city. They are non-renewable and precious historic and cultural resources, record the local style and context, and carry rich national culture and ideological spirit. In 2012, the Chinese Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, the Chinese Ministry of Culture and other departments released the list of the first batch of Chinese traditional villages, which included 9 villages in Beijing. In 2018, the General Office of the People's Government of Beijing Municipality issued the guidelines on strengthening the protection and development of traditional villages and announced the first batch of municipal traditional villages in Beijing. So far, Beijing has 44 municipal traditional villages, of which 22 are national, covering 10 districts (Table 1).

### 2.2 Research methods

#### 2.2.1 Spatial analysis

In order to analyze the spatial distribution features of traditional villages in Beijing and further explore the factors influencing their spatial features, this paper used the ArcGIS spatial analysis method. By collecting the coordinate positions, elevations and other information of traditional villages, the spatial distribution features of traditional villages were obtained through nearest neighbor index calculations, buffer zone analysis and superposition analysis, laying a foundation for further analysis of the important factors.

#### 2.2.2 Literature analysis

In order to deeply understand the basic situation of traditional villages in Beijing and analyze their spatial and cultural features, this paper used the method of literature analysis, which involved the collecting and studying of a large

Table 1 List of traditional villages in Beijing

District	Number	Proportion (%)	National traditional villages	Municipal traditional villages
Mentougou	14	31.82	Cuandixia Village, Lingshui Village, Huanglingxi Village, Malan Village, Yanhecheng Village, Xihulin Village, Liuliqu Village, Sanjiadian Village, Jieshi Village, Weizishui Village, Dongshiguyan Village, Qianjuntai Village	Zhangjiashuang Village, Yanjiatai Village
Miyun	9	20.45	Gubeikou Village, Jijiaying Village, Linggong Village	Chaoguan Village, Hexi Village, Yaoqiaoyu Village, Xiaokou Village, Baimaguan Village, Huangyukou Village
Fangshan	6	13.64	Heilongguan Village, Shuiyu Village, Nanjiao Village, Baoshui Village	Liulinshui Village, Shiwo Village
Yanqing	5	11.36	Chadao Village	Dongmenying Village, Liugou Village, Nantianmen Village, Yulinbao Village
Changping	5	11.36	Changyucheng Village	Wanniangfen Village, Deling Village, Kangling Village, Maoling Village
Tongzhou	1	2.27	None	Zhangzhuang Village
Shunyi	1	2.27	Jiaozhuanghu Village	None
Pinggu	1	2.27	None	Xiniuyu Village
Huairou	1	2.27	None	Yangshudixia Village
Haidian	1	2.27	None	Cheerying Village
Total	44	100	See above	See above

number of documents, web pages and books about traditional villages in Beijing, and analyzed the basic situation, development history, and the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of significant traditional villages in Beijing.

### 2.2.3 Fieldwork

In order to prove the authenticity, accuracy and effectiveness of second-hand documentation and form a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of traditional villages in Beijing, fieldwork was carried out. From the list of traditional villages in Beijing, 18 traditional villages were selected for field participatory observations and research to further grasp the development status of the traditional villages in Beijing.

### 2.2.4 In-depth interviews

In order to obtain richer and more credible information about traditional villages, during the fieldwork in 18 traditional villages in Beijing, structured and semi-structured interviews were carried out to obtain the views and knowledge of the village committees, villagers and tourists regarding the local history and culture. The surveys and interviews were conducted from October 10 to November 15, 2020, with a total of 18 village committee staff, 30 villagers, 25 tourism operators and 25 tourists interviewed. The interviews centered on the resources, culture and history of the traditional villages, evolution of the culture and landscape, current situations of resource protection and cultural inheritance, tourism development and problems of preservation faced by these traditional villages.

## 3 Spatial distribution features of traditional villages in Beijing

The site selection of traditional villages in Beijing strives for conformity to nature and the integration of nature and mankind, so as to achieve the harmonious coexistence be-

tween mankind and nature. In the process of site selection and layout of traditional villages, many factors are fully considered, such as lighting, ventilation, water source, land, transportation, agricultural production, avoiding natural disasters and so on, forming the spatial distribution features of traditional villages with northern China characteristics.

### 3.1 Randomly distributed in general

Macroscopically, traditional villages can be regarded as having a point distribution, and the distribution types of point elements can be divided into three types: uniform, random and agglomeration. Traditional villages in Beijing are mainly distributed in Mentougou District, Miyun District, Fangshan District, Yanqing District and Changping District, and are relatively concentrated within their regions. Spatial statistical tools in ArcGIS 10.6 were used to calculate the nearest neighbor index of traditional villages in Beijing, in which the  $P$  value shows the significance level and the ANN index shows the distribution pattern of elements. In the case of  $P < 0.1$ , if the index is less than 1, the distribution pattern is clustering. If the index is greater than 1, the pattern tends to be discrete or competitive. In our study, the significance level was found to be  $P > 0.1$  which shows that there is no significant aggregation or discrete distribution features, indicating that the traditional villages are randomly distributed in Beijing in general.

### 3.2 More traditional villages are located in the southwest and northeast

Traditional villages in Beijing are mostly distributed in Mentougou District and Fangshan District in the southwest, and Miyun District in the northeast. According to the statistics, the number of traditional villages in Mentougou District and Fangshan District in the southwest of Beijing accounts for about 45.46% of the total number of traditional

villages in the city; Miyun District, Yanqing District and Changping District in the north account for about 43.17%; and there is one traditional village in each of Tongzhou District, Shunyi District, Pinggu District, Huairou District and Haidian District, together accounting for about 11.37% of the total number of traditional villages in the city. Mentougou District has the largest number of traditional villages, with 12 national traditional villages and 14 municipal traditional villages. The terrain of western Beijing is high while it is very low in the southeast, and most traditional villages are located in the outer suburbs of western Beijing and built in higher mountainous areas, which is conducive to avoiding flooding. At the same time, the ancient road passes western Beijing, with convenient transportation and prosperous commerce. In addition, with the Yongding River running through western Beijing, there are also sufficient water resources and vast fertile soil.

### 3.3 Distributed along piedmont plains or intermountain basins

Altitude is an important attribute of landform. The “extract

points by value” was selected in GIS spatial analysis tool “analysis by value” and Beijing DEM data (from Geospatial Data Cloud website) were input to obtain the elevation information of traditional village sites. There are 18 traditional villages distributed in hills and basins with an altitude of 200–500 m, accounting for 40% of all traditional villages in Beijing. There are 18 traditional villages distributed in mountainous areas above 500 m above sea level, accounting for 40% of all traditional villages in Beijing. In addition, a total of 8 traditional villages are distributed in plains and valleys with an altitude of 50–200 m, accounting for 17.78% of all traditional villages in Beijing, and one village is at less than 50 m above sea level. The piedmont plain is relatively higher, avoiding floods and meeting the needs of flood control and drainage. The intermountain basin has a gentle slope, thick soil layer and fertile soil, which is good for farming. At the same time, the mountain rocks are easily processed into pieces, which provides rich stones for the construction of houses. Therefore, generally speaking, traditional villages in Beijing are mostly distributed in areas with slightly higher terrain (Fig. 1).

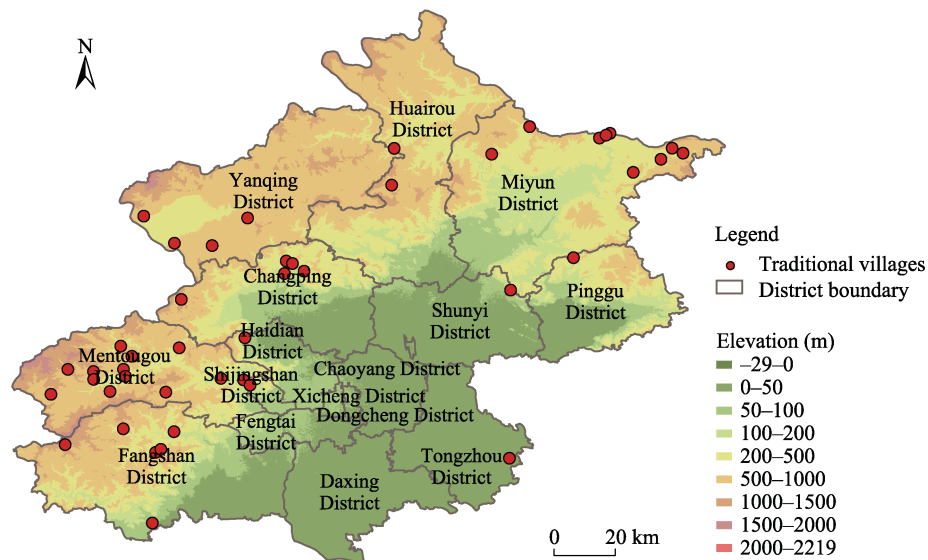


Fig. 1 Elevation distribution of traditional villages in Beijing

### 3.4 Close to the riverside

The buffer analysis tool in ArcGIS10.6 was used to buffer the river systems in Beijing at the intervals of 300 m, 600 m, 900 m and 1200 m, and then straight-line distance analysis was used to obtain the distances between traditional villages and adjacent rivers. Among the 44 traditional villages in Beijing, 8 are located within 300 m from the river; 12 are distributed within 300–600 m from the river; 4 are distributed within 600–900 m from the river and 2 are distributed within 900–1200 m from the river. Altogether, they account for 59.09% of all traditional villages, indicating that most traditional villages are distributed within 1.2 km of the river, so one obvious distribution feature is following the river. Rivers close to or flowing through villages can beautify the

environment, maintain appropriate humidity, provide domestic and production water for the villages, and meet people's traditional concept of “water gathers wealth” (Fig. 2).

### 3.5 Backed by hills

Beijing is located at the junction of the North China Plain and the Inner Mongolia Plateau, which is strongly affected by the northwest wind. Therefore, most of the traditional villages in Beijing are distributed around the mountains and backed by mountains, facing onto the sunny side, so as to have a natural barrier to block the northwest wind and form a good local microclimate. At the same time, Chinese traditional thought believes that places surrounded by mountains and rivers are livable geomantic treasure lands.

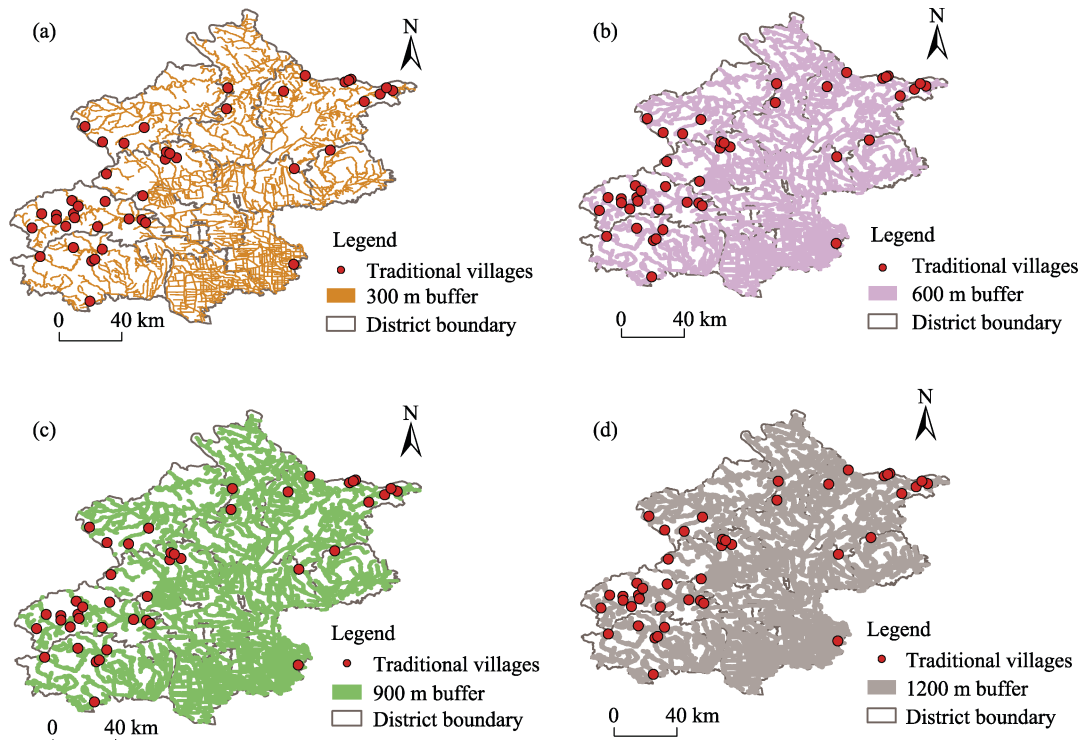


Fig. 2 Distances between traditional villages and adjacent rivers in Beijing

### 3.6 Along the ancient road

Many villages in western Beijing are distributed along the ancient road. The Jingxi Ancient Road mainly runs along the Yongding River Valley, Qingshui River Valley and Xishan Valley to the west and northwest, forming a criss-cross road network by connecting multiple main roads and branches. The ancient road is a vital channel connecting Beijing with the North China Plain and the Inner Mongolia Plateau. The villages distributed along the ancient road have convenient transportation and a prosperous commercial economy.

## 4 Cultural features of the traditional villages in Beijing

During the long history and development process, and influenced by factors such as nature, geography, politics, history, etc., traditional villages in Beijing have formed rich, diverse and unique cultures. This paper combed through and analyzed the cultures of the first batch of 44 traditional villages in Beijing. Based on the amounts and levels of cultural carriers, the preservation status of culture and corresponding carriers, the popularity and publicity of culture and official governmental development and marketing priorities, the predominant and subsidiary cultures of each traditional village were identified, and the cultural system table of traditional villages in Beijing was obtained (Table 2).

Combing through the cultures of traditional villages in Beijing indicated some cultural commonalities among the traditional villages in Beijing. Comprehensively considering

factors like commonality, spatial proximity and linear traffic, the significant cultural features of traditional villages in Beijing are summarized into 9 categories.

### 4.1 Traditional residential culture

Due to the similar natural climate and cultural background, the residences of traditional villages in Beijing show great commonality, displaying unique local forms and styles in the process of formation and evolution, and forming a traditional northern residential culture. First of all, in terms of residential site selection, traditional villages in Beijing pay great attention to Feng Shui (Geomantic Omen). Due to terrain, climate, traditional beliefs and other factors, people tend to settle in places close to mountains, facing water and leeward to the sun (Xue, 2015). Secondly, in terms of the form of residence, most of the traditional residences in Beijing are in the form of courtyards, which are divided into many types according to their specific functions and structures. There are different designs and considerations of the orientation, scale, entrance channel and gate form of the courtyard, which fully reflects the characteristics of geography, aesthetics and culture. In terms of residential construction, the pedestal, wooden frame, roof layer, ridge, wall and facade of the residences also show strong regional characteristics (Xue, 2015). At the same time, in terms of decoration, most traditional residences in Beijing are decorated from the door cover, door leaf, wall leg stone, door hairpin and pillar head to reflect the beautiful meaning and show the identity of the owner (Xue, 2015). Currently, a large proportion of traditional villages in

Table 2 Cultural system of traditional villages in Beijing

District	Village	Predominant culture	Subsidiary culture	Cultural carrier
Mengtougou	Cuandixia	Traditional residential culture, ancient road trade culture	Traditional folklore culture, the Great Wall garrison culture, surname culture	Mountain quadrangle complex in the Ming and Qing dynasties, commercial compound, folklore performance and activities
	Lingshui	Juren culture, traditional residential culture	Religious culture, traditional folklore culture, ancient road trade culture	Residential architecture in the Ming and Qing dynasties, Juren's former residence, the western Beijing taiping drum, Pingju opera
	Huanglingxi	Traditional residential culture, red culture	Mausoleum guarding culture, ancient road trade culture	Revolutionary sites, traditional residential buildings, ancient temple
	Malan	Red culture	Traditional folklore culture	Revolutionary sites, ancient buildings, story-telling in Beijing dialect with drum accompaniment
	Yanhecheng	The Great Wall garrison culture, traditional residential culture	Traditional folklore culture, red culture	Ancient walls, watchtowers, government office in feudal China, revolutionary martyrs' monument, opera performance
	Xihulin	Traditional residential culture, trading culture	Farming culture, traditional folklore culture, red culture	Firms, ancient residential buildings, stone carving, chastity plaque, ancient stage
	Liuliqu	Glaze manufacturing culture, ancient road trade culture	Traditional residential culture	Glaze manufacturers' residence and manufacturing sites, tea stall, Deng's residence
	Sanjiadian	Ancient road trade culture, traditional residential culture	Mining culture, religious culture	Liang's residence, Erlang Temple, Dragon King Temple
	Jieshi	Ancient well culture, traditional residential culture	Silver smelting culture, red culture, Chinese traditional medicine culture, religious culture	Han's well, Zimu well, stele, traditional residence, Dragon King Temple, Xiao Ke headquarters
	Weizishui	Traditional residential culture, traditional folklore culture	Religious culture	Ancient stone bridge, stone mill, traditional residential buildings, yangko opera
	Dongshiguyan	Ancient military culture, ancient road culture	Traditional residential culture, farming culture, religious culture	Cliff inscriptions, Shifoling ancient road, pyrograph on rice paper, weapons from the Han dynasty
	Qianjuntai	The Great Wall garrison culture, traditional folklore culture	Mining culture, ancient road trade culture, Anti-Japanese war culture	Western Beijing Fanhui folklore activity, ancient well, stele
Miyun	Zhuangjiazhuang	Traditional residential culture	Religious culture	Wanghuizhong residence, ancient stage, Dragon King Temple, Qinglong Temple
	Yanjiatai	Religious culture, traditional residential culture		Xiucai residence, Shengquan Temple, stele
	Gubeikou	The Great Wall garrison culture, religious culture	Traditional residential culture, red culture, ethnic culture	Ancient wall, barbican entrance, Yanglinggong Temple, ancient well, Gubeikou defense war monument
	Chaoguan	The Great Wall garrison culture	Anti-Japanese war culture, traditional folklore culture	Ancient wall, Wenshen Temple, watchtower, Chaoguan Villiage tragedy monument
	Hexi	The Great Wall garrison culture, traditional residential culture		Ancient wall, Lvzu Temple, mosque, prefect mansion, commander appointment stage
	Jijiaying	The Great Wall garrison culture, traditional residential culture	Anti-Japanese war culture	Ancient city gate, ancient castle, Yaowang Temple, Guanyin Temple
	Yaoqiaoyu	The Great Wall garrison culture		Ancient castle
	Xiaokou	Farming culture		Apple-planting industry
	Baimaguan	The Great Wall garrison culture		Ancient wall, watchtower, ancient castle
	Linggong	The Great Wall garrison culture, traditional residential culture	Red culture	Castle site, Erbaidazhi Temple, bricks, tiles and village site of the Liao Dynasty, Anti-Japanese cave
Fangshan	Huangyukou	The Great Wall garrison culture, farming culture	Red culture	Ancient wall, martyr memorial hall, honey ecological sightseeing valley
	Liulinshui	Traditional residential culture, religious culture	Traditional folklore culture	Shengquan Temple, Pantao Palace, traditional residence, ancient stage, Bangzi opera
	Heilongguan	Traditional residential culture, religious culture	Religious culture, traditional folklore culture	Xuandi Temple, Seven Holy Shrines, ancient town site, dragon festival
	Shiwo	Quarrying culture	Religious culture	Xiansheng Temple, Niangniang Temple, ancient well
	Shuiyu	Traditional residential culture, traditional folklore culture	Mining culture, ancient road trade culture, religious culture	Ancient residence, street house, Yang's residence and genealogy, ancient trade road, rock painting
	Nanjiao	Traditional residential culture, traditional folklore culture	Mining culture, red culture	Huo's residence, Xuandi Temple, Yinyin traditional musical performance, lion dance, martyrs' cemetery
	Baoshui	Traditional residential culture, food culture	Traditional folklore culture	Dragon King Temple, ancient grinder, Eight-eight Feast, embroidery, insole handcraft, Laodiaobangzi Opera

(To be continued on the next page)



(Continued)

District	Village	Predominant culture	Subsidiary culture	Cultural carrier
Yanqing	Dongmenying	Farming-reading culture	Traditional residential culture, religious culture	Plaque, mural, Juren residence, Yanwang Temple
	Liugou	Food culture, traditional folklore culture	Traditional residential culture, the Great Wall garrison culture, traditional Chinese medicine culture	Brazier Tofu Feast, The Winding Yellow River Array folklore activity, ancient residence, ancient wall, Chinese herbal medicine growing base
	Nantianmen	Traditional residential culture	Religious culture	Qixian Temple, Huxian Temple, Sheshen Cliff
	Yulinbao	Courier station culture, The Great Wall garrison culture	Traditional residential culture, traditional folklore culture	Ancient castle, Liu's Mansion, Town God Temple, Dengshanhui folklore activity
	Chadao	The Great Wall garrison culture	Traditional residential culture, traditional folklore culture, red culture	Ancient wall, ancient residence, Anti-Japanese war site
Changping	Changyucheng	The Great Wall garrison culture, food culture	Traditional residential culture, traditional folklore culture	Ancient wall, barbican entrance, Yongxing Temple, theatrical performance, petticoats feast, lantern festival
	Wannianfen	Mausoleum guarding culture	Traditional residential culture	Wanniang Grave, Imperial Concubine Mausoleum
	Deling	Mausoleum guarding culture	Traditional residential culture, farming culture	Deling Mausoleum, ancient well, ancient bridge, Shrine Warden
	Kangling	Mausoleum guarding culture, food culture	Traditional folklore culture	Kangling Mausoleum, Zhengde Spring Pancake Feast, calligraphy and engraving, folk music, embroidery
	Maoling	Mausoleum guarding culture		Shrine Warden
Tongzhou	Zhangzhuang	Traditional folklore culture		Dragon lantern festival
Shunyi	Jiaozhuanghu	Red culture, farming culture	Traditional folklore culture, traditional residential culture	Tunnel warfare site, orchard, temple fair, yangko folk dance, Pingju opera
Pinggu	Xiniuayu	Farming culture	Red culture	Yulu bergamot pear growing base
Huairou	Yangshudixia	Traditional folklore culture		Lianqiao Rice and Walk on Ice folklore activity
Haidian	Cheerying	Religious culture, ancient military culture	Food culture	Site of Qijiguang chariot camp, Adamantine Tower, stone buddha in the North Wei dynasty, Tauren Feast

Beijing retain rich traditional residential buildings, which are the representatives of traditional residential buildings in the north of China. Typical villages with well-preserved buildings and outstanding features include Cuandixia Village, Huanglingxi Village, Baoshui Village, Shuiyu Village, Nanjiao Village, etc.

#### 4.2 Traditional folklore culture

Folklore culture is the custom and living habit created, shared and inherited by the people living in a concentrated area, and involving production and labor, daily life, festivals, folk performances, traditional handicrafts, etc. In the long process of formation and development, some traditional villages in Beijing have formed rich and colorful folk cultures with unique northern regional characteristics and the condensation of people's wisdom, which has been inherited in various forms. These villages carry out folklore tourism with their unique festival activities, artistic performances and handicrafts, and have become traditional villages with folk customs as the main cultural features. Typical representatives include Weizishui Village, Yangshudixia Village, Zhangzhuang Village, Qianjuntai Village, Nanjiao Village, etc. For example, the original yangko in Weizishui Village was rated as the intangible cultural heritage of Beijing. The Lianqiao Rice folklore activity is an ancient traditional folk custom spread in Yangshudixia Village for more than 180 years which is a national intangible cultural heritage. People

eat "Lianqiao Rice" and "Walk on Ice" on the 16th of the first month of the year, and there are also theatrical troupe performances. The Dragon Lantern Festival in Zhangzhuang Village is a folk cultural heritage of Beijing, with a history of more than 300 years. Qianjuntai Village is the inheritance place of Beijing's intangible cultural heritage "Fanhui folklore activity". Nanjiao Village has folk activities such as the Yinyin traditional musical performance, lantern festival, lion dance, etc.

#### 4.3 The Great Wall garrison culture

In order to resist the invasion of northern minorities, the rulers of several dynasties in the Central Plains built the Great Wall at various scales. At the same time, a large number of forts, garrisons, fortresses and military settlements have been set up along the Great Wall to guard the border areas. There are eight sections of the Great Wall in Beijing, including Badaling Great Wall, Juyongguan Great Wall, Simatai Great Wall, etc. In the vicinity of these great walls, a large number of villages had also formed for military defense purposes. Most of these villages are located on the inner side of the Great Wall with dangerous terrain and a superior military position. Military defense facilities such as city walls, barbican entrances, beacon towers, gateways and city gates, have been built in the villages. In the past, these villages were used for both military defense and living. The construction and layout of the village not only considered



military defense, but also fully considered the production and living functions, forming unique traditional border villages. Such villages with the typical characteristics of Great Wall garrison culture and border guarding culture are mainly distributed in Miyun, Yanqing and Huairou districts, like Chadao Village, Gubeikou Village, Chaoguan Village, Hexi Village, Yanhecheng Village, Changyucheng Village, etc.

#### 4.4 Mausoleum guarding culture

As the capital of several dynasties, there are also many mausoleums of emperors and royal family members in Beijing. The Ming Tombs are located at the foot of Tianshou Mountain in Changping District. They are the tombs of emperors in the Ming dynasty, with 13 emperors buried here. In the past, there was a special mausoleum guarding organization, which arranged special personnel to guard the mausoleum, take charge of the incense, maintenance and cleaning of the mausoleum, etc. In the Ming dynasty, every mausoleum was built with a mausoleum guarding organization called Shengongjian (Shrine Warden), with eunuchs living on-site and guarding the mausoleum. In the Qing dynasty, not only the eunuchs guarding the mausoleum lived here, but so did all members of their families. Later, the mausoleum guarding organization was abolished, but the mausoleum households still existed. They cultivated the land allocated by the imperial court and were responsible for guarding the mausoleum. A large number of villages formed around the Ming Tombs. Typical representatives include Wanniangfen Village, Deling Village, Maoling Village and Kangling Village. These villages are generally distributed near the imperial mausoleum. Most of the villagers are the descendants of families guarding the mausoleums in the past. These villages still retain many historic sites such as ancient castles, ancient trees, ancient wells, ancient bridges, etc.

#### 4.5 Religious belief culture

China is a country with an agricultural civilization. Traditional farmers are based on the self-sufficient small-scale peasant economy, which leads to a psychology of paying attention to practical interests, and their religious beliefs also reflect their attention to their survival and production conditions. At the same time, China's traditional religious beliefs reflect the characteristics of the integration of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. Among the traditional villages in Beijing, some still retain many temples, reflecting the traditional religious belief and culture that existed in the past and still does even now. Guan Yu Temple, Dragon King Temple, and Niangniang Temple are the most common religious buildings. Typical villages with prominent religious culture and many religious buildings are represented by Liulinshui Village, Heilongguan Village, Cheerying Village, Lingshui Village, Changyucheng Village, etc. Liulinshui Village has Taoist relics such as Changxing Temple, Shengmi stone pond and Pantao Palace, as well as huge

statues of Laozi and ancient cypresses in the mountains. This village has a long history of religious belief and culture. Heilongguan Village has many ruins such as Dragon King Temple, Xuandi Temple, Taoist Tower and Seven Holy Shrines. It was once a holy land for the royal family and the surrounding villagers to pray for rain. Cheerying Village has a stone tower, stone Buddha of the Northern Wei Dynasty, Lvzu Cave, Guanyu Temple and other religious sites, giving it a strong religious atmosphere.

#### 4.6 Ancient road trade culture

Jingxi Ancient Road in western Beijing is one of the most important historic sites in Beijing. It started from Sanjiadian, connected various main roads from north to south, and formed a crisscross road network in Mentougou District. These ancient roads mainly include commercial transportation roads, military roads and pilgrim roads. Camels and horses transported coal, stones and fruits from the mountain area of western Beijing to the capital, and then transported the products of the capital back to western Beijing and even Inner Mongolia, Shanxi and other places, gradually forming a business trade road. Many traditional villages are distributed along the ancient road, and the development and evolution of the villages are greatly affected by the ancient road. Some villages took advantage of the superior position of the ancient road to set up post stations and develop commerce and trade, so as to provide conveniences for passers-by along the trade road. Some villages exploited their rich coal resources and developed a mining industry, while others relied on exquisite handicrafts to make glaze. In addition to the ancient villages with strong business cultures, there are also a large number of temples, historic sites, watchtowers and stone carvings along the ancient road. Typical traditional villages of trade culture along the Jingxi Ancient Road include Cuandia Village, Liuliqu Village, Sanjiadian Village, Dongshiguyan Village, etc.

Zhaitangchuan, near Cuandixia Village, produces coal, and the incoming and outgoing caravans must pass through Cuandixia Village, which brings the prosperity of commerce and trade. Some traditional residences in the village show the dual-use characteristics of commerce and residence. Liuliqu Village is an important traffic node on Jingxi Ancient Road and the only path for the ancient incense road. At the same time, it is also an important base for the manufacture of colored glaze, enjoying a reputation as the "Hometown of Colored Glaze". Sanjiadian Village used to be an important ferry and material distribution center on the Yongding River. Merchants gathered there and more than 300 commercial shops and dozens of coal plants were set up. The coal industry and commerce were very developed. Dongshiguyan Village is located at the intersection of the ancient road, which passes through the village, and this village took advantage of its location to provide accommodation services for passing businessmen.

#### 4.7 Red culture

During the Anti-Japanese War, people in Beijing (called Beiping at that time) fought bravely to resist the aggression of Japanese imperialism, showing magnificent patriotic enthusiasm and forming the unique red culture in Beijing. As the front line of the Anti-Japanese War, many areas in Beijing were involved, people had devoted themselves to the cause of Anti-Japanese War, and a number of typical Anti-Japanese War villages have emerged. Some villages still retain the Anti-Japanese War ruins, record the epic heroic deeds, and inherit the heroic spirit of the Anti-Japanese War. At the same time, some villages also retain the traditional village style and folk customs. The Anti-Japanese War ruins are integrated with the traditional village landscape, becoming typical traditional villages with red culture as the main culture. Typical representative villages include Malan Village, Jiaozhuanghu Village, etc. During the Anti-Japanese War, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China set up the Jirecha headquarters in Malan Village which is known as “The First Red Village in Western Beijing”. The village still retains the former site of the Jirecha headquarters, the former residence of general Shaw, and the ammunition depot, and it has also set up an Anti-Japanese War exhibition hall. Jiaozhuanghu Village is a famous “Tunnel War” village, known as “The First Fortress of The People”. The village has retained the ruins of the tunnel war, the former site of the militia headquarters, the watchtower, the “news tree” and other Anti-Japanese War ruins, and established the village history museum, a memorial forest of the Anti-Japanese tunnel war and red culture street.

#### 4.8 Food culture

Over time, traditional villages have formed unique local food cultures that rely on local food materials, cooking methods, eating habits and customs. Some villages have formed a unique food culture by virtue of local specialties and characteristic feasts. Taking the food culture as the core to drive the development of sightseeing and folk activities, a special type of traditional village featuring food culture was formed. Typical representatives include Liugou Village, Kangling Village, Changyucheng Village, etc. Liugou Village is the birthplace of the hot pot in Yanqing District. Its tofu feast is special regarding the number of pots, bowls and dishes, so as to provide an auspicious and beautiful meaning, forming a folk tourism brand of “Phoenix City-Hot Pot-Tofu Feast”. By using local agricultural and sideline products, Kangling Village has created a “Spring Cake Feast” including more than a dozen characteristic dishes, of which the “Zhengde Spring Cake Feast” has formed a certain brand effect.

#### 4.9 Farming-reading culture (Juren culture)

In the ancient farming society of China, some intellectuals combined farming with reading and took “Cultivation and

reading to bequeath to the family” as their values, thus forming a unique farming-reading culture. Among the traditional villages in Beijing, some villages with a strong farming-reading culture have produced emerging talents from generation to generation. Typical representatives are Dongmenying Village and Lingshui Village. In the history of Dongmenying Village, there were both civil and military Juren (successful candidates in the imperial examination). A large number of plaques, brick carvings and screen walls in the village are written with words and sentences such as: “The beauty of books never fades”, “Cultivation”, “Respect and righteousness should be passed down in families for thousands of years, books and knowledge should be inherited by the society for hundreds of years”, “The best traits in the world are loyalty and filial piety, the most promising plans in the world are farming and reading”, which give people a strong cultural atmosphere. Lingshui Village has a long history and prosperous literary style, which is called Juren Village. Today, ancient buildings such as Juren’s residence and temples are preserved in the village, and statues with the theme of the imperial examination are displayed, with a strong literary style.

### 5 Factors driving the spatial distribution and cultural features of traditional villages in Beijing

According to the theory of man-land relationship, human beings are dependent on the earth, and the natural environment affects the regional characteristics of human activities and restricts the depth, breadth and speed of human social activities. At the same time, human beings have strong subjective initiative, which can recognize, utilize, change and protect the natural environment (Wu, 2008). The man-land system is a complex and open giant system composed of two subsystems, the natural environment and human society, with a certain internal structure and functional mechanism (Zhao and Ding, 2012). As a form of man-land system, the natural environment and human society within the traditional village system also influence and interact with each other. The factors which influence the spatial distribution and cultural features of traditional villages in Beijing are very complex, and they are comprehensively influenced by the natural environment, location conditions, social and economic development level and many other factors. The above research shows that there are significant features in the spatial distribution and cultures of traditional villages in Beijing. According to the man-land system theory, the drivers of these features can be summarized in two categories, one is the natural environment and the other is human activity (Fig. 3).

#### 5.1 Natural environment factors

##### 5.1.1 Terrain

Terrain is an important natural environmental factor affecting the distribution of traditional villages, influencing the

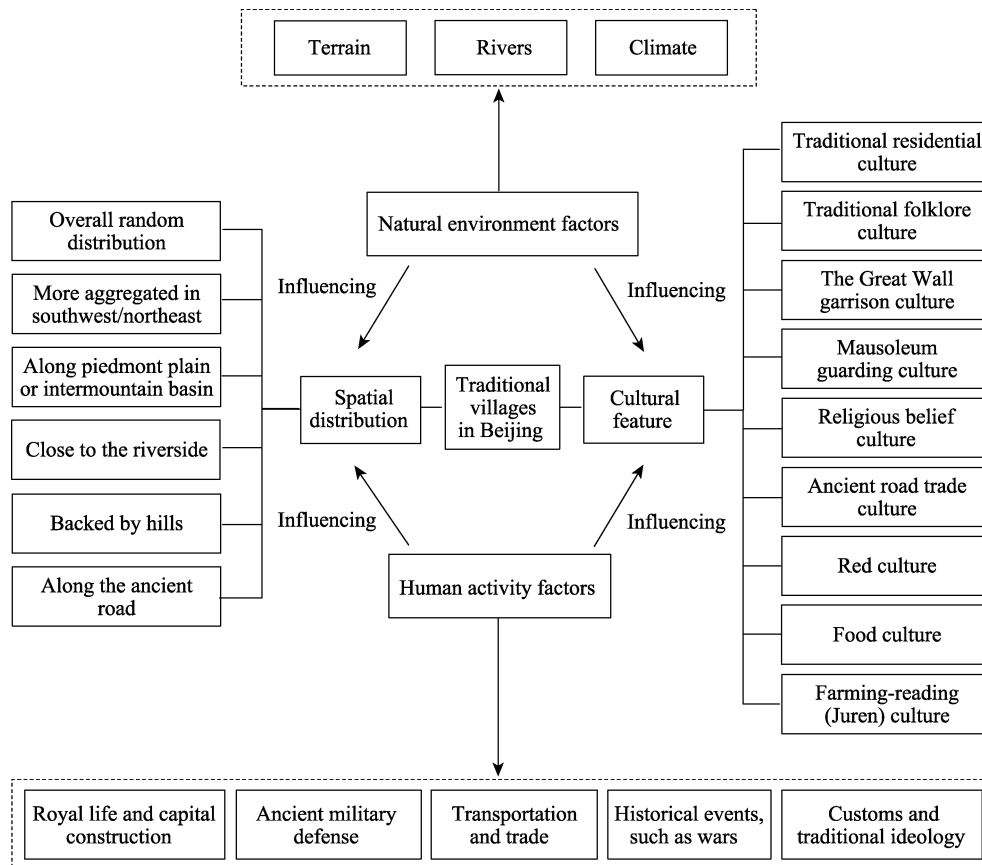


Fig. 3 Factors driving the spatial distribution and cultural features of traditional villages in Beijing

site selection, scale, layout, external transportation, personnel exchange and architectural form of villages of a region (Zhao and Tian, 2020). Places with flat terrain, convenient transportation, favorable production conditions and a low residential construction cost have great attractiveness for people to carry out their living activities (Guan et al., 2017). The traditional agricultural society determines that people's survival and life are inseparable from farming. Therefore, land issues are very important for people to consider when choosing a place of residence. Generally speaking, people will choose an area with relatively flat terrain that is conducive to farming as their residence. At the same time, the slope of the terrain will also be considered, as the terrain with a certain slope is conducive to drainage and avoiding flood disasters.

#### 5.1.2 Rivers

There is an environmental concept of "mountains as the skeleton and water as the blood" in traditional Chinese culture and people tend to get close to nature and live in places that are integrated into mountains and rivers (Liu, 1998). Therefore, the hydrological factor is important in the formation of traditional villages. Abundant water, lush grass and fertile land are beneficial to agricultural production and people's living and working (Yu et al., 2020). Since people's production and life are inseparable from sufficient water sources, when selecting the site of the village, people gener-

ally choose to live near the river in order to obtain sufficient domestic and production water. At the same time, the areas near the water have a better ecological environment, which is beneficial for the formation of a livable microclimate. Rivers also play a role in shipping, transportation and land leveling. Some relatively straight and navigable river sections can facilitate people's trade and transportation.

#### 5.1.3 Climate

Traditional villages are strongly affected by climatic factors such as sunshine, temperature and precipitation which will affect the site selection and distribution of traditional villages, as well as the building materials used in the villages (Chen et al., 2018). Beijing is located in the North China Plain and is greatly affected by the northwest wind. Therefore, people will generally choose to live in a location close to the mountain in the north, which can block the invasion by the northwest wind. At the same time, in the construction and layout of residences, people will also fully consider the factors such as lighting, ventilation and heating, and adjust the wall materials, wall thickness and opening directions of doors and windows, so as to obtain a good living environment.

### 5.2 Human activity factors

#### 5.2.1 Royal life and capital construction

As a crucial military town in the north of China and the im-

perial capital of previous dynasties, the villages in the suburbs of Beijing are obviously affected by the royal life and capital construction. Many villages have formed due to the construction or function of the capital. Some traditional villages in Beijing are named after “tomb” or “mausoleum”. As the imperial capital of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, a large area of land in the suburbs of Beijing is occupied by the cemeteries of royalty and nobles. These tomb owners hire special tomb guards to watch over the cemeteries, and the residences of these tomb guards have gradually evolved into villages, which are named after the name of the tomb or the surname and identity of the tomb owner, such as Wanniangfen Village, Deling Village, Kangling Village, etc.

#### 5.2.2 Ancient military defense

In order to enhance the ability to resist foreign enemies, the central governments of previous dynasties have set up a large number of military settlements, garrisons, fortresses and guard stations in the border areas of Beijing. The people here were both farmers and soldiers to protect the border from invasion. Later, most of the settlements formed for the purpose of military defense gradually lost their military role and evolved into traditional villages that retained the rich Great Wall garrison culture, like Gubeikou Village, Chadao Village, Yanhecheng Village, etc.

#### 5.2.3 Transportation and trade

Many traditional villages in Beijing are formed under the influence of traffic and people's trade activities. In the past, there was a large amount of trade and commodity exchange between the mountainous areas in the west of Beijing and the urban area of Beijing, thus forming a large number of trade roads, which were collectively referred to as the Jingxi Ancient Road. In order to facilitate trade activities, people set up post stations, shops, coal yards, stone yards and other processing plants in areas with superior locations along the ancient road, thus forming a large number of traditional villages. At the same time, there are many temples in the western mountainous areas, and a large number of pilgrims go into the mountains to burn incense and worship the Buddha. They also need accommodations and other services provided by the local villages. The representatives of these villages include Cuandixia Village, Liuliqu Village, Sanjiadian Village, etc.

#### 5.2.4 Historical events

During the period of the Republic of China, the traditional villages in the suburbs of Beijing were greatly affected by the scuffles of warlords, the relocation of the national capital to the south, the Japanese invasion, the War of Liberation and other events. During the Anti-Japanese War, a number of traditional villages became very involved in resisting Japanese aggression. Some of these villages still retain Anti-Japanese War ruins, martyr cemetery and a lot of heroic stories, and have become typical traditional villages with red culture, such as Jiaozhuanghu Village and Malan Village. Since the founding of new China, especially after the reform

and opening up, many traditional villages in the suburbs of Beijing have been demolished or comprehensively transformed due to economic development and urban expansion. Therefore, many villages have disappeared or changed greatly, and relatively few traditional villages have been well preserved.

#### 5.2.5 Customs and traditional ideology

The customs, living habits and religious ideology of people in a region deeply affect the characteristics and formation of villages. The traditional Feng Shui concept, settlement concept, customs and religious beliefs formed in the people's long-term life have had a profound impact on the layout and site selection of villages, public building functions, architectural modeling design and so on. For example, public buildings such as Guan Yu Temple, Town God's Temple, and Dragon King Temple are commonly found in traditional villages in Beijing, which are inseparable from the people's long-formed religious beliefs and thoughts. Some traditional villages have a strong literary style with a large number of couplets, plaques and Juren residences in the villages, forming a strong cultural atmosphere which is inseparable from the ideas of local villagers advocating the farming and reading culture.

Overall, among the factors affecting the spatial distribution and cultural features of traditional villages in Beijing, the natural environment has a greater impact on the spatial distribution of traditional villages, and also has a certain restrictive effect on the development of the regional social economy and the formation of culture. In contrast, the formation of cultural features is more affected by human activities.

## 6 Conclusions and suggestions

### 6.1 Conclusions

Using ArcGIS spatial analysis, literature analysis, fieldwork and in-depth interview methods, this paper deeply analyzed the spatial distribution and cultural features of traditional villages in Beijing, and their driving factors. This analysis led to three main conclusions.

(1) The overall distribution of traditional villages in Beijing is random. There is a distribution pattern of “more in the southwest and less in the southeast; more in the northeast and less in the northwest”, of which Mentougou District has the largest number. Traditional villages are mostly distributed along piedmont plains or intermountain basins with slightly higher terrain; they are mostly distributed in places surrounded by mountains and rivers; and many of them are along the ancient trade road.

(2) Traditional villages in Beijing show cultural commonalities and have formed rich, diverse and unique cultures. The nine typical characteristic cultures of traditional villages in Beijing are traditional residential culture, folklore culture, the Great Wall garrison culture, mausoleum guarding culture, religious belief culture, ancient road trade cul-

ture, red culture, food culture and farming-reading (Juren) culture.

(3) The spatial distribution and cultural features of traditional villages in Beijing are mainly affected by natural environmental factors like terrain, rivers and climate, but they are also influenced by human activities, including royal life and capital construction, ancient military defense, transportation and trade activities, historical events like wars, as well as people's customs and traditional ideology.

## 6.2 Suggestions

Based on the abundant and scientific research results above, we put forward some suggestions for the preservation, development and utilization of traditional villages, which can hopefully promote the cultural protection and rural revitalization of traditional villages in Beijing. Firstly, while protecting and utilizing traditional villages, we should fully consider their different spatial distributions and cultural features, and then take holistic and targeted protection and utilization measures. For example, due to the influences of river distribution and traffic lines, traditional villages show linear distribution features and cultural commonalities. In the protection and utilization of such traditional villages, the villages in the entire linear region should be protected and developed as a whole, so as to maintain the uniqueness of the regional cultural characteristics and the integrity of the spatial pattern. Secondly, it is favorable to build the cultural tourism belt of traditional villages and develop linear tourist routes, so as to enhance the overall image and form the overall benefit of traditional villages. Thirdly, for traditional villages with cultural commonalities and similarities, they can learn from each other and share their experiences of cultural protection and inheritance, so as to improve the effectiveness of the protection and development of traditional villages. In tourism development, a full understanding of cultural commonalities is conducive to emphasizing individuality, developing tourism differentially, forming a cluster complementary effect, and avoiding homogeneous competition and image masking effects. Fourthly, it's critically important to get local villagers involved in the protection and development of traditional villages in order to draw on more wisdom and support during the process of rural development and comprehensive revitalization of the rural culture, economy and society. Lastly, in the choice of the traditional village tourism development mode, we should start from the spatial and cultural features of the village, choose the mode and path suitable for the development of the village, and avoid inaccurate positioning, mechanically copying or destroying the local spatial distribution features and cultural context.

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## 北京传统村落空间与文化特征及成因分析

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**摘要:** 传统村落是北京历史文化名城的重要组成部分, 揭示传统村落的空间与文化特征及其成因有助于促进北京历史文化名城的保护利用与传统村落全面振兴。采用 ArcGIS 空间分析法、文献分析法、田野调查、深入访谈等方法分析北京传统村落空间分布特征、文化特征及其成因。结果表明: (1) 北京市传统村落整体呈随机分布; 分布格局为“西南多, 东南少; 东北多, 西北少”; 多沿地势稍高的山麓平原或山间盆地分布; 多靠山临水、沿古道布局。(2) 北京市传统村落存在文化共性, 形成了传统民居文化、民俗文化、长城守边文化、守陵文化等九种典型的传统村落特色文化。(3) 北京市传统村落空间以及文化特征的形成受到地形、气候、河流等自然环境的影响以及皇家生活、都城建设、古代军事防御、交通、商贸等人类活动的影响。本研究可为北京市以及全国的传统村落科学保护和有效利用提供参考依据。

**关键词:** 传统村落; 空间分布; 文化特征; 乡村文化; 乡村振兴; 北京