

Methods and Strategies of Characteristic Town Construction under the Background of Rural Revitalization Strategy

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Abstract: Aiming to make strategies and provide methods for characteristic cultural towns' construction, this essay starts with the analysis of the strategic significance of the construction and deployment of characteristic cultural towns under the background of China's new urbanization and rural revitalization. Then from the perspective of design practice, it establishes the basic theoretical framework by analyzing the reasonable construction of design team, the reconstruction of cultural landscape in small towns, and the reorganization of symbol system and symbols of small towns, helping local residents establish cultural consciousness and self-confidence and boosting China's rural revitalization.

1. Introduction

After 40 years of reform and opening up, China's economy has developed rapidly and cities of large, medium or small, have also been established all over the country. But unfortunately, the same planning mode and cultural landscape of cities at all levels make the city style of China which should have been colorful stereotyped. In recent years, with the slowdown of urban development gradually, China has launched a new strategy for urbanization and rural revitalization, which transfers the focus of development from cities to the next level, such as villages, towns and rural areas. [1] However, in the construction of small towns, a similar situation has reappeared. If we don't realize that and hold the same development ideas in the next 40 years, the multiculturalism of villages and towns will not be successful in China, and the Chinese traditional cultures will not be flourished.

In 2016, the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of China issued a document which requires to build characteristic towns about 1,000 characteristic towns by 2020, ushering in the era of characteristic cultural towns' construction in China. It arouses national resonance like "A stone stirring up thousands of waves". Then there was an eagerness to "build characteristic cultural towns" in various provinces though there were both opportunities and challenges for small towns. So far, there are more than 2,000 characteristic towns in China, and the number has already exceeded the established target. However, in terms of quality, the construction of many towns does not meet the requirements of the policy. First, the stereotyped construction of characteristic cultural towns are common. Second, the problem of blind construction of cultural landscape is prominent. Third, the natural landscape is seriously damaged. It is not uncommon for characteristic towns being abandoned when they are built, and some other towns that have gained short-term heat fell into the convention of being places for vacation and tourism. The problem that "characteristic towns have no characteristics" has seriously affected the sustainable development of China's characteristic cultural towns.[2]

For the study of characteristic cultural towns construction, domestic scholars focus on construction mechanisms, development paths, industrial integration and talent management. A little attention has been paid to the design practice of construction itself. In fact, the construction of small towns is a practical problem rather than a mechanism problem. From a practical perspective, due to the lack of design resources and talents, governments and developers can only go to big cities to ask well-known design institutions for help. Since large design institutes and companies in big cities

have heavy tasks, their main focus will be on large-scale projects. For a large number of small and medium-sized projects in small towns, they just do it casually or simply copy the design from big cities. At the same time, because of the far distance between the design institutions and the small towns, designers couldn't deeply understand the local cultures. So they copy tiger from the model of cat at the cultural conception level, although the final design results meet the aesthetic standards in the universal sense, and the word "universal" is also a microcosm of the current situation.

To sum up, in order to overall promote the construction of small towns with Chinese characteristics, we should solve the following three problems, which are also the three key points that this paper focuses on: First, what kind of design team should we set up? Secondly, how to solve the core problems in design? Thirdly, is it feasible to establish cultural consciousness or not?

2. Design Methods and Strategies to Promote the Construction of Characteristic Towns

It is impossible to build the construction strategies and methods of characteristic cultural towns without the investigation and design practice of individual cases. This paper, taking the project of Luojiang Characteristic Cultural and Tourist Town in Dazhou City, Sichuan Province as an example, explores the local traditional folk cultures and the Red Army spirit at Luojiang town. With local university resources, we will organize a design team with both youth and strength, recreate the cultural landscape of the town, reorganize the symbolic system and symbols of the town, stimulate the cultural consciousness of the residents of the town, and finally find out a set of effective design methods and practical strategies, laying a solid foundation for further promotion of Luojiang Characteristic Cultural and Tourist Town.

2.1 Setting up a Design Team with Strengths

For the problem of design team, we hold that the intellectual resources and design strength of local universities should be adopted vigorously and boldly. As early as 2014, the Ministry of Education explicitly put forward the idea of transforming local undergraduate universities into applied technological universities. Since then, local colleges and universities have established the overall goal of "training applied talents for local economic and social development".[3] Majors related with Art and design, having strong applicability, naturally become the vanguard of this reform. After years of development, the training of applied talents in local colleges and universities has gradually explored a training mode different from that in subordinate colleges and universities. Taking majors related with art and design as an example, training "market-oriented" designers who can serve the local areas as the goal of education and teaching has achieved initial results in terms of teaching results and talent output.

At the same time, the school-enterprise cooperation service mode for art design majors in local colleges and universities has enhanced the ability of design teams in colleges and universities. It is true that there is a natural gap between local universities and subordinate universities in terms of resources and capabilities. However, due to both the natural advantages of geographical location and the proper training mode, the establishment of design teams in local colleges and universities is still a good choice to solve the difficulties in the construction of small towns at present.

2.2 Rebuilding the Cultural Landscape of Towns with Cultural Connotations

The humanistic landscape is relative to the natural landscape. A natural landscape depends on the local topography and climatic conditions, while a humanistic landscape relies on local historical culture and humanistic features.[4] At the design level, they are equally important for building characteristic towns.

Luojiang Town is located in Tieshan Tourist Resort of Dazhou City. The surrounding natural landscape is rich and closely related. The cultural landscapes include red tourism IP such as "Shenjian Garden" and "Former Residence of the General, Zhang Aiping", with profound red culture accumulation. In order to promote the development of Luojiang Characteristic Cultural and Tourist Town and enhance the role of art in the construction of cultural tourism Town, the municipal government has established "515 Art Creation Cave" as a new cultural landscape project

of the Town, and is committed to building a comprehensive cultural industrial park integrating artistic creation, cultural creation incubation, art training, art exhibition and academic exchange.

“515 Art Creation Cave” is located in Baqu Culture Natural Village, Xiannvdong, Luojiang Town. It relies on the beautiful natural landscape of the village and the cultural landscape conditions of red culture and creates four exhibition halls with their own characteristics. Hall 1 is a cave art museum built on the basis of existing caves. Exhibition Halls No.2 and No.3 are formed by rebuilding the former site of stone barracks. The newly-built Hall No.4 is a youth art training center, which carries out special customized projects such as aesthetic education public education activities, weekend art summer camps, art parent-child activities, etc. It can connect domestic and foreign art galleries and art institutions, expand domestic and foreign art summer camp activities, and combine art training with the tourism industry.

In 2020, the opening of “515 Art Creation Cave” and the holding of art season activities marked that all exhibition halls have been officially put into use. More than 80 well-known artists from Germany, the United States, Italy, Canada, Argentina, South Korea, Britain, and other countries and China were invited to participate in the opening exhibition, displaying nearly 200 works including paintings, sculptures, installations and experimental images. This is the largest art event in Dazhou so far, which marks the formation of a regional international art highland with the trend of “local and international”. It will certainly promote development of culture and tourism in Luojiang Town, further promote the construction of Luojiang Characteristic Cultural and Tourist Town, and find the construction strategy and method system of characteristic Towns based on culture and art, which will play a very important reference role for Dazhou City to explore and build cultural and tourist characteristic towns with local characteristics.

2.3 Reorganizing the Symbol Marks of Small Towns with Cultural Thinking

The symbol marks refer to the symbolic meaning and knowledge background of specific activities in cultural space, and art is a typical symbol mark.[5] As an important measure to build a regional cultural center in Dazhou, the “515 Art Creation Cave” project is positioned as a local and international contemporary art park. Build a bridge between local and international cultural communication in artistic ways. In order to ensure the artistic and academic level of the park, well-known artists from all over the country are employed as artistic consultants to design the park; Many artists are invited from all over the world to have a deep understanding of local culture, and experiencing local life to create a large number of exquisite contemporary works of art with the current international vision and thinking. Both the exterior planning of the art park and the artistic works in the art museum make people feel the artistic atmosphere everywhere. In addition to the art museum, the park has also set up a painting studio to invite famous local artists to settle in. By holding influential artistic activities, this place will definitely become a name card for the construction of Luojiang Cultural and Tourist Town, and art will truly become a symbol for the construction of Luojiang Cultural and Tourist Town.

With the landing of the “515 Art Creation Cave” project, the artistic ecology of Luojiang Town has initially taken shape. On this basis, we should deeply explore the historical stories, humanistic characteristics and traditional culture of Luojiang Town. Luojiang Town is the Former Residence of General Zhang Aiping. According to the Former Residence construction of the Shenjian Garden, it belongs to the provincial cultural protection unit, provincial patriotism education base and a provincial national defense education base. It can be used as the original creative material, and based on the actual space conditions of Luojiang, the Ba culture, red culture and Shenjian culture can be creatively expressed in the form of picture books. With the walls as the medium, the facade of the old house will become a huge canvas of local culture, and comic strips connect story plots, telling local stories and promoting local culture. The picture will combine windows, residential buildings and pipe network lines to carry out comprehensive creativity, which will not only solve the architectural appearance problems faced by the organic renewal of old towns but also create the super visual senses of “people are traveling in a painting”. At same time, road and bridge piers and bridge opening are the main parts, combined with the facade of the house, the river surface and the

tidal flat, all-round acoustic and photoelectric interpretation is carried out, and create riverside art installations and waterscape art installations. Make use of wharf culture and ships, and have strong visual impact to drive online celebrities to visit and expand the night economy of the town, which not only ensures the landscape effect of the daily riverside belt but also carries the concentrated celebration of festivals, so as to improve the riverside landscape, let the symbol of art run through the whole style of the small town [6].

2.4 Stimulating the Cultural Consciousness and Self-confidence of Residents in Small Town

For small towns facing social and cultural transformation, the core task is to help local residents establish the concept of “cultural consciousness” through the re-understanding of traditional cultures. We should help them form a collective pride in traditional cultures, which will not only stimulate their recognition and self-confidence in their own culture but also encourage them to actively reconstruct traditional cultures and develop a coexistence of traditional cultures and modern cultures.[7]

Dazhou City is one of the origins of Ba culture and the heartland of activities of Ba people. As early as more than 4,000 years ago, it gave birth to a unique and thick civilization of Ba. Many things like Tiger button Chunyu with typical artistic characteristics of Ba culture, as well as Ba seals and painted pottery, laid a thick foundation for Dazhou culture and nurtured a group of masters of painting and calligraphy. The Ba culture is the cultural foundation of the region of Luojiang, Dazhou, and the preservation of the local cultural foundation is the first step to reach the local-international strategy. It is also because of the existence of Ba culture that a multi-line cultural system represented by Red Army and Shenjian in Luojiang Town has been derived. In the Ba culture, the people were brave and good at fighting and valuing righteousness. The geographical pattern of the Ba region has a high tactical advantage. This expounds the inevitability of Dazhou becoming a revolutionary area. Dazhou as an old revolutionary base area, it is an important part of Sichuan-Shanxi revolutionary base areas, making important contributions and great sacrifices to the victory of the Red Army’s Long March and the Chinese revolution. The Shenjian General Zhang Aiping embodies the character of the Ba people. Therefore, Ba culture connects with the red culture and Shenjian culture in Luojiang Town, and becomes the cultural name card of Luojiang Characteristic Cultural and Tourist Town for external publicity, thus stimulating the cultural consciousness and self-confidence of local residents.

3. Conclusion

In the context of rural revitalization in China, characteristic town construction are faced with both opportunities and challenges. The main points stressed in this essay are: Firstly, the construction of the characteristic towns and small towns is more a practical issue than a mechanism issue. Therefore, in order to overall promote the construction of small towns with Chinese characteristics, we should solve the problems of personnel training, team formation and designing methods in the practice. Secondly, for the design subject who serves for the characteristic towns and small towns should be rooted in the local area, the intellectual resources and design strength of local universities have naturally regional and emotional advantages, which provides convenience for in-depth understanding and excavation of regional history and cultures. Third, the ultimate goal of small town construction is not to create industries, but to stimulate the cultural consciousness and self-confidence of local residents and to create a charming town that is “suitable for settling, business and tourism” [8].

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