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Development Paths of Characteristic Towns in Underdeveloped Areas in Central China—A Case Study of Yichun, Jiangxi

Cuiping HUANG, Wei WU*, Xiying HU

College of Urban Construction, Jiangxi Normal University, Nanchang 330022, China

Abstract The demonstration effect triggered by the construction of Zhejiang's characteristic towns has attracted attention and learning from all over the country, and has set off a boom in building characteristic towns across the country. Under the dual constraints of industrial development and resource intensive use, the undeveloped areas of central China must find suitable development paths for characteristic towns. Taking Yichun City as an example, this article analyzes the advantages of Yichun City for developing characteristic towns combining its natural and economic conditions. In addition, the characteristic town development paths, such as vigorously promoting the construction of urban facilities, highlighting the characteristics relying on existing small towns, constructing an industrial chain of "ecology + leisure", highlighting cultural charm, and improving development grade, are proposed to provide useful reference for the development of characteristic towns in this type of underdeveloped cities in central China.

Key words Characteristic town, Development path, Yichun, Jiangxi

1 Introduction

Promoting the construction of characteristic towns in the new stage has become a strategic choice for accelerating regional economic innovation and development under the new economic normal. It is also an important platform and carrier for promoting structural reforms on the supply side and implementing kinetic energy conversion projects from old to new^[1]. From a global perspective, the characteristic towns such as Silicon Valley in the United States, Davos in Switzerland, Greenwich in the United Kingdom and Provence in France are famous. The construction of characteristic towns has become an important engine to lead regional economic development^[2]. From the domestic point of view, Zhejiang Province has opened the prelude to the construction of characteristic towns. The rise of characteristic towns coincides with the accumulation of Zhejiang's block economy and regional characteristic industry development and the demand for new growth points for economy. Characteristic towns have become new carriers to promote industrial agglomeration, industrial innovation and industrial upgrading. Most of central China is underdeveloped, involving a large number of towns and large population. Regional economic development is relatively backward. However, the cultural tourism resources in central China are abundant. In addition to protecting basic functions such as basic farmland, water resources and ecological environment, there are also many development demands in it. The rise of characteristic towns has undoubtedly brought new opportunities to the development of such areas. Combining its own resources to drive regional economic development, under the dual

constraints of industrial development and resource intensive use, the underdeveloped areas in the central region must find suitable development models for characteristic towns. However, the current discussion of the construction of characteristic towns mostly focuses on the large and medium-sized cities in East China, and the construction of characteristic towns in underdeveloped cities in the central region is less concerned. Zhang Xue took the pharmaceutical town of Pan'an as an example and proposed the upgrading of traditional industries and the development of industries with projects^[3]. From the perspective of global tourism, Xiang Dingwei and Qin Deli analyzed the planning of characteristics town in Zhongba Town, Guizhou Province, providing reference experience for building tourism-oriented towns in underdeveloped areas^[4]. Hao Huayong analyzed the gap between underdeveloped regions and developed regions such as Zhejiang from the aspects of regional space, industrial stage, urbanization level, scientific and technological level and cultural integration^[5]. The existing research has not yet played a good role in the development of the characteristic small towns in the underdeveloped areas of central China. Based on this, this article takes Yichun City, Jiangxi Province as an example and explores the development path for its characteristic town in combination with the natural and economic conditions of Yichun City, with a view to promoting the construction of characteristic town in underdeveloped areas of central China and providing useful enlightenment and reference for promoting industrial transformation and upgrading, enhancing new development momentum and improving effective supply capacity.

2 Advantages of Yichun City in developing characteristic towns

2.1 Developed transportation network and superior geographical location Yichun City is an important hub area in the

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* Corresponding author. E-mail: wuwei@jxnu.edu.cn

western Jiangxi Province. It is located in the common hinterland of the three provinces of Jiangxi, Hunan and Hubei, with good traffic conditions and a Mingyueshan Airport. The existing air routes have been spread across major cities across China with convenient transportation. In the future, the railway network connecting Shanghai in the east, Yunnan in the west, Wuhan in the north and Guangzhou in the south will be developed. The railway network will be developed. The Shanghai – Kunming Expressway and Nanchang – Shangli Expressway are connected to Nanchang and Changsha. The Tonggu – Yichun Expressway connects the downtown of Yichun and Tonggu. The superior location conditions provide a solid foundation for Yichun to participate in the construction of the "Belt and Road", integrate into the Yangtze River Economic Belt, built a regional central city in western Jiangxi and lead the economic development of the western Jiangxi.

2.2 Rich natural resources and good industrial base Yichun City is rich in resources within its jurisdiction. Among them, selenium-rich hot springs and tantalum-niobium ores are the most precious. Wentang's hot spring is the only high-quality hot spring in China that can compete with the French Aix hot spring, with obvious physical fitness and anti-cancer effects. Yichun's tantalum-niobium ore is the largest mining and selection enterprise in China and the production base of tantalum-niobium raw materials. The deposit contains various metals such as tantalum, niobium, lithium, rubidium and cesium, and has high comprehensive utilization value. There has been a national-level Yichun Economic and Technological Development Zone and a number of established industrial parks in Yichun. The pillar industries such as lithium-ion new energy, bio-medicine, electronic information, electromechanical and new materials have been basically formed. The modern service industry led by tourism has developed rapidly.

2.3 Profound cultural heritage and pleasant ecological environment Yichun has a long history and profound cultural heritage. It is an important birthplace of the west of Gan traditional culture. A group of characteristic cultures represented by moon culture, Zen culture, hot spring culture and farming culture have started the local cultural brand of Yichun. The tourism slogan of "the capital of the moon, the holy place of Zen and the town of hot springs" has enhanced the competitiveness of the cultural tourism industry. Yichun culture provides a continuous source of power for regional development. The air quality in Yichun area is high quality all the year round. Both the major rivers in the territory have reached drinking water standards. A good ecological environment not only contributes to the development of green industries. Moreover, it is also uniquely advantageous in attracting foreign investment.

3 Paths for developing characteristic towns

3.1 Vigorously promoting the construction of urban facilities Compared to developed regions, underdeveloped cities have lower levels of urbanization. The construction of urban supporting facilities has not been perfected. In order to promote the construc-

tion of characteristic town, it is necessary to vigorously promote the construction of urban supporting facilities, starting from three aspects: construction of transportation facilities, special tea support and tourism facilities. In terms of transportation facilities construction, traffic is a key influencing factor for both the industrial development and the tourism development. Therefore, it is necessary to promote the improvement of the transportation system inside and outside the town. In term of supporting industries, the development of the industry requires the support of excellent supporting facilities. Therefore, a good job must be done in supporting the core industry. Scientific research bases, education and training facilities, industrial museums and other industrial supporting facilities can be introduced to promote industrial development. Considering the supporting facilities for tourism, it is needed to improve the travel services including accommodation, dining, shopping and entertainment.

3.2 Highlighting the characteristics relying on existing small towns The central and western regions should not blindly follow the example of Zhejiang and other eastern developed regions to open up new areas to create characteristic towns. In a county with a certain scale of urbanization and industrial base, it is possible to gradually follow the planning of new areas in the eastern region to create characteristic towns. Relying on natural resources, a composite industry model can be developed, based on ecological agriculture, supplemented by processing industry and enhanced by ecological leisure industry. Beautiful landscape, fresh mountain air, dense vegetation, and rich agricultural products provide the foundation for the oil tea town industry, thereby forming a culture of oil tea, reshaping the pastoral scenery, experiencing farm life, and leading high-efficiency agriculture. A consolidated economy development framework can be established to break the barriers of administrative divisions in the oil tea towns and urban areas and surrounding areas, emphasizing that the formation of economic units is based on function, instead of geographical division, as a criterion for differentiation. Based on the oil tea industry as the core, other developed industries can be integrated, realizing the integration of creativity, operation, research and development, manufacturing, marketing and service in industrial operation, and building a consolidated economy development framework, thereby maximizing regional characteristics.

3.3 Building an characteristic industrial chain of "ecology + leisure" Towns in underdeveloped cities lack a good industrial base in the secondary and tertiary industries. In particular, the development of high-end manufacturing and production services industries is relatively backward. Therefore, the development of characteristic towns needs to start from their own industrial conditions and resource advantages. Industries that meet the actual situations of the town and have comparative advantages can be chosen to develop. Ecology is the characteristic connotation of the town, and an important resource industry, representing energy and value. It has a strong influence and penetration. Based on ecology, Yichun can develop other distinctive industries to achieve greater

value. There are limitless possibilities. The first is to promote "ecology + leisure tourism". Relying on the ecological resources of the town, ecological genes can be integrated into the traditional leisure industry to create ecological and healthy leisure tourism projects. The second is to promote the "ecology + health holiday". Through refining the connotation of medical care and combining traditional Chinese medicine, a full-age health and holiday industry with health and medical regimens as the core will be built from diet, accommodation, entertainment and many other aspects.

3.4 Highlighting cultural charm and enhancing development grade

The underdeveloped regions of the central and western China lag behind the eastern regions in the stage of economic development. However, the advantages in cultural resources endowments are obvious. In particular, some traditional villages, ancient buildings and intangible cultural heritage give these regions a rich cultural heritage. This is also a unique advantage in the future to create a characteristic town and highlight the cultural taste. To create a characteristic town in an underdeveloped area, it is necessary to demonstrate cultural charm to enhance the development taste, including protecting the external cultural carrier and cultivating the inner cultural qualities. The external cultural carrier covers historical celebrity human resources, ancient villages, cultural sites, intangible cultural heritage, *etc.* Backward areas must handle the relationship between protection and development. Under the premise of protecting the integrity and authenticity of the culture, the developed form and progress must be well planned. Within the carrying capacity of resources and environment, tourism should be developed in moderation. Destructive development must be prevented resolutely. Cultural and creative enterprises can be introduced in a timely manner. Through combining tradition with modernity through cultural creativity, fresh lift is brought to the old and heavy culture with technology and information technology, which is easier to be accepted by young people.

4 Conclusions

Promoting the construction of characteristic towns is of great significant to underdeveloped cities. In developed or developing countries, the construction and development of small towns have played

a positive role in promoting industrial development and urbanization. Therefore, China has proposed to promote the construction of characteristic towns, promoting a new round of urbanization with the development of characteristic towns. For less developed cities, the construction of characteristic towns is a major opportunity, conducive to the optimizing industrial structure, utilizing industrial resources, promoting urbanization and promoting the development of new urbanization. Taking Yichun City as an example, combining the natural and economic conditions of Yichun City, this article analyzes the advantages of its development characteristic towns. At the same time, the development paths for characteristic towns are proposed, including vigorously promoting the construction of urban facilities, highlighting the characteristics relying on existing small towns, building the "ecology + leisure" characteristic industrial chain, highlighting the cultural charm, and improving the development grade to explore regional industrial characteristics, cultural heritage, and ecological endowments, drive regional economic and urbanization development, and make up for the lack of urbanization and urban-rural integration in underdeveloped areas in central China, thus providing useful reference for the development of characteristic towns in this type of underdeveloped cities in central China.

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(From page 29)

sided view of the problem. Folk custom has its advantages, but still needs to abandon the old-fashioned and unhealthy atmosphere. So, it should look at folk customs from a dialectical perspective. It should inherit and develop its essence, and stop and eliminate the dregs. In targeted poverty alleviation process, it should not only rationally use folk custom but also make best use of the advantages and bypass the disadvantages, and select a more appropriate development way.

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