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Practice and Features of Neo-Chinese Style in Rural Landscape in Zhejiang Province

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Abstract Neo-Chinese style is popular nowadays and it is wildly used in rural landscape, with only few theories. Under the background of rural revitalization, this paper discussed practice types and design features of neo-Chinese style in rural landscape. Some typical and famous villages of Ningbo, Quzhou and Lishui cities in Zhejiang Province were chosen as cases in this paper. It is committed to providing some theories, inheriting rural culture and promoting rural revitalization.

Key words Neo-Chinese style, Rural landscape, Design features

1 Introduction

In recent years, rural tourism and road trips are more popular and meet a new opportunity, which is accelerated by normalization after the COVID-19. The uniqueness of rural landscape is the key reason why tourists choose to travel. Rural tourism is helpful for village going further with plenty of attraction. However, how to create uniqueness? How to make the uniqueness fresh and sustainable? These are all important issues.

Among numerous villages in China, ancient villages are undoubtedly promising for their uniqueness, containing a lot of human memory and emotion, which can make them homesick. Therefore, plenty of rural landscape more or less focuses on old Chinese style, either ancient or be similar to ancient. Although people miss it, they are not satisfied with its appearance with the progress of the times and aesthetic awareness, and they hope to find new in it such as new times, new looks and new feelings. In these situations, neo-Chinese style appeared, which results in new looks for ancient villages, or new ancient looks for new villages, and it makes rural landscape more unique.

At present, there are few theories for neo-Chinese style in rural landscape, most of which are limited in one aspect, either inheritance of Chinese culture in one type village or interpretation of one Chinese culture. For example, Xu Yanling illustrated how to show artistic conception of traditional Chinese painting in rural landscape in a new way^[1]. Ye Jienan *et al.*^[2] pointed out that the culture should be combined with the space and developed together in landscape construction of cultural heritage villages. In addition, the research on architecture generally focuses on the style, function, materials, technology and the like. For instance, Zhou Liang^[3] considered that the traditional building culture should be

combined with the times and showed in the style, function, materials, *etc.* Xue Chunyan^[4] thought that Chinese auspicious culture in dwelling design should be evolved into the function, materials, structure, technology and so on with modern design requirements, which will be more functional, more artistic and more concise. These design methods of neo-Chinese style are applicable to rural landscape whose perspectives are incomprehensive, and the theories are backward compared with numerous cases during rural revitalization. Therefore, it is necessary to have a deep look into the related content from a comprehensive perspective, and it is possible to create rural landscape in an exacter way for the times.

2 Connotation of neo-Chinese style in rural landscape

Neo-Chinese style is long-standing as a design style. In the 1930s, Liang Sicheng put forward and developed it, which was called "New and Chinese"^[5]. It was considered to keep Chinese and chase for the new. Thus, it is a modern style which inherits and innovates in old Chinese style, containing both old and new. It has been promoted to a design thought and trend with the development of neo-Chinese style, which is not only discussed on design style but also deep known as design essence like design conception, method, *etc.*^[6].

Therefore, rural landscape with neo-Chinese style is a result of the creation of rural landscape with its design thoughts and methods, which is divided into natural landscape and human landscape. The former refers to forests, fields, rivers, *etc.* The latter is more complex containing both material landscape like settlements, buildings, public space, *etc.* and immaterial landscape like religious belief, rural customs, crafts, *etc.* In addition to nature, intimacy, richness and practicability, it should have the following characteristics during rural revitalization.

(i) Extension of service object. With the development of rural tourism, tourists have been the most important service object except its residents, whose need should be considered more. In addition to a view, there are also other activities like taking pho-

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tos, waking memories, missing hometowns, experiencing cultures, *etc.* Designers should do more based on deep investigation and extensive collection of rural information, combining ancient and modern^[7].

(ii) Participation of industries. Industry is the base of rural revitalization, on which the planning and design of rural landscape should depend rather than just a view. Only through basing on the industry can it achieve the aims of ecological protection, economic growth and sustainable development^[8].

(iii) Innovation between old and new. Neo-Chinese style is a combination of the old and the new, the traditional and the modern. Its design methods should be more diversified rather than just the style, which could be achieved by function, experience, *etc.*

2 Analysis on practice of neo-Chinese style in rural landscape

There are many villages famous for great development during rural revitalization in Zhejiang Province. We selected some of which in Ningbo, Quzhou and Lishui cities as cases in this paper. Some develop tourism for better ecological environment, some develop industry and the service for characteristic agriculture, and some develop itself for unique settlement. By analyzing neo-Chinese style in them, we found that there are 4 types in all.

2.1 Rural scenery with a new look by planning The nature of rural landscape lies in its scenery, which is very important in the country. In ancient times, the scenery is resulted from the nature, sometimes, the coincidence. At present, it's designed by imitation or recreation of nature with the progress of society and technology. For example, mountains of tea and cherry blossom in Dalan of Yuyao City constitute a picturesque view of the countryside, based on the development of agriculture and the design technique of landscape art, as well as the peach in Xikou, Fenghua of Ningbo. In addition, the agricultural landscape takes on a new look which is natural, generous and rural, such as fields of golden rape flower, green tea or rice with a large scale in many villages. Thus, they become hot tourist destinations in the countryside.

2.2 Poetic image with a new conception by scene-setting Zhejiang Province is made up of 70% hills, 10% water and 20% fields. Some villages have natural landscapes with a river or mountains, and they are very poetic. While rural tourism is more and more popular, the poetic image is progressing as well. For example, Lishui is known as the hometown of Chinese Photography. There is Dinghu Peak and Zhutan Mountain in the background, the Fairy Causeway in the middle, Dinghu Lake and its reflection in the foreground in Xiandu, Jinyun, which is like a fairyland when cloud and mist wreath. Furthermore, the scene of a farmer with one plow and one ox, a farmwife with one shoulder pole and one dog is set in the image with mist added for the right atmosphere. Such neo-Chinese style makes the image more rural, just like a fairyland on earth, which could remind people of rural life, and being more artistic. Many classic images of Lishui are the

same, whose poetic conception is more rural and intriguing by re-design, such as Ancient Weir and Painting Town, Shadow of Sailboats on Ou River, Culture of She People.

2.3 Settlements space with a new life by function update

Settlements and buildings are important parts of rural landscape and could be designed to new Chinese-style buildings, mix of old and new, not only in form but also on function with a new life. The 17 Fang of Zheng Family in Ningbo of Zhejiang is a famous village for its history and culture. However, it is poorly developed by sightseeing in well-preserved ancient buildings. Therefore, the government introduced social capital to cooperate in the following development of protection. After unified planning and design, it was renovated into Kaiyuan Resort, with hotels, homestays, restaurants, tourist areas and other business, so that it gained a new life. Similarly, there are other traditional villages done like this, such as Xijiang Ancient Village of Xiaying, Hanling Village of Dongqian Lake in Ningbo. They contribute to the inheritance and continuation of the traditional culture in a new way, and set heritage conservation, culture transmission, entertainment and tourism economy in one, by function update, mix of old and new.

2.4 Rural landscape with a new experience by right tour As we all know, it is more important to provide more ways to feel better for tourists rather than just sightseeing in rural landscape, which could bring a better experience. It is necessary for designers to set various right tours based on rural characters, which could make tourists feel both material and immaterial landscape of the village. For example, rafting, hiking and cross-country make the memory deeper for a richer experience. Cherry blossom festival, peach festival and rape flower festival make it more known for rural industry. Traveling, tasting, residing, purchasing and entertaining make the service better for excellent facilities.

3 Design features of neo-Chinese style in rural landscape

3.1 Overall planning for industry and landscape The village is unappealing for common scenery, and it lacks vitality for depressed industry as well. The development of rural landscape is unsustainable without the industry's support. It is considered an organic whole of natural landscape, cultural landscape, industry planning and the development in neo-Chinese style, and the village is developed with its industries, blended with its scenery.

It is necessary to make overall planning for industry structure based on rural resources, creating agricultural landscape with large-scale and characteristic produce, or developing leisure tourism with scenery and settlement. It is an organic combination of production, living and ecological space, whose production and operation is like a scene, and the construction is local.

3.2 Inheritance and innovation of Chinese artistic conception Chinese Classic landscape focuses on imitating nature and combining emotion with landscape, which essence is the poetic image. Therefore, we should pay more attention to the protection

and promotion of original landscape in designing and transforming rural landscape, the same as the reproduction and innovation of old scene. Retaining and strengthening the geography features with farming culture, integrating and utilizing the scenery under effective protection, in which way can we build continuous and integrated ecosystem, good regional landscape pattern, and reproduce the beauty of nature and poetry of countryside. It is possible to supply specific space by design and rebuilding the village based on the original elements of natural and human landscape, in which can we recreate its immaterial landscape, and express the feeling of idyllic life. With the transmission of Chinese artistic conception, it makes tourists a more specific and emotional understanding of rural environment and settlement culture, that inspire the feelings of passion to think of rural customs and idyllic life.

3.3 Continuation and development of design methods In terms of design methods, neo-Chinese style should constantly explore the old elements of rural landscape, then extract and innovate to reproduce the beauty of old Chinese style from the perspective of modern aesthetics, combining with excellent methods. For example, we can make the space more diversified and interesting by traditional techniques of borrowing, facing, framing, leaking and blocking. We can also make rural landscape more rustic by its old and new, West and Chinese, more ecological and beautiful by the innovation of color, material and technology, as well as more satisfied by adjustment and update of function and business.

3.4 Rich experience in projects The traditional experience of rural landscape mainly lies in sightseeing and lacks of deep tour and rich experience. With the increasing demand for rural tourism, neo-Chinese style should keep up with the Times, vitalize rural landscape by enriching tourist experience, and really satisfy our hunger for getting close and back to nature. Therefore, it is necessary to improve function and service by perfect supporting facilities in tour, develop proper projects of participation and culture

based on natural and human environment of the countryside. If possible, we could combine region culture with the world brand, technology with capital for a deep experience and vital countryside, which is achieved by situation experience, cartoon images, creative ideas, games play, film scenes, characteristic products and wonderful shows.

4 Conclusions

In conclusion, there are many ways to design rural landscape with neo-Chinese style. The design should keep trying, exploring and summarizing, so that we could do it better and make them go hand-in-hand. Only through relying on the facts and in many ways could they achieve the coexistence of culture, art and economy, and promote revitalization of the country and nation.

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