

Reflection on Culture Brand Construction in Taizhou City

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Abstract—Designers in China have been imitating western designs all the time with the strong influence of western culture since the Industrial Revolution. In this process, the appearances of China's cities tend to be kind of assimilation. Therefore, people start to wonder how to form differences between cities in combination with the city's own native culture. The culture brand construction of Taizhou city is taken as the theme of this paper, to summarize the abundant cultural resources in the region, think further about how to formulate the city's cultural brand strategy and the measures to be taken for the establishment of culture brand of Taizhou city. At present, a new integrative force which can link several objects is in urgent need for China's urban cultural creativity. Only in this way can the urban cultural brand be built well.

Keywords—culture brand; Taizhou City; sustainable development

I. INTRODUCTION

Taizhou is called "Tai" for short. It was the district government in the Southern Tang Dynasty (937 A.D.), taking the meaning of "Guo Tai Min An (peace and prosperity)", hence it is named Taizhou. It is a famous historic and cultural city in China, having not only the advantageous geographical location but also rich cultural resources. Taizhou has abundant natural resources, numerous celebrities, many places of interest and intangible cultural heritage, and a great deal of different living culture and art resources. In the 21st century, culture has been regarded as the important resource for national and regional development, and there's no reason not to take advantage of the cultural resources of Taizhou, to make great efforts to keep pace with the times and develop the regional culture with modern characteristics, so as to form Taizhou city's unique cultural taste and cultural impression. This is beneficial to both the development of regional economy and the enhancement of happiness index of local people.

II. CULTURE AND ART RESOURCES OF TAIZHOU

Taizhou is located in central Jiangsu, on the north bank of the lower reaches of Yangtze River, north wing of Yangtze River Delta, faces Zhenjiang, Changzhou, Wuxi and Suzhou through the Yangtze River on the southwest and south, Nantong on the east, Yangzhou on the west and adjoins Yancheng and Huaian to the north, being the intersection of 5 channels for central Jiangsu to get the

Yangtze River and the sea, the junction of coastal region and T-shaped industrial belt of Yangtze River. Hence, Taizhou is the key post of land and water transportation connecting the south and the north, the important node city of Shanghai metropolitan area, Nanjing metropolitan area, Suzhou-Wuxi-Changzhou metropolitan area, and one of the central cities of Shanghai metropolitan area.

Viewing from the perspective of culture and art, the concept of culture and art can be traced back at least to the Middle Age and the Renaissance Era. Today, it is widely considered that it should include performance art: music, theater and drama, opera, dance, pantomime, puppet show; literature art: poetry, literature, creation; visual art: painting, sculpture; environmental art: architecture, urban planning, urban design, landscape and material art, or handwork art: designing, potting, glazing, and lettering etc.¹ As for the local culture and art of Taizhou, it has Taixing Flower-Drum Dance, Gunlianxiang Dance, Chang Feng Huang (a traditional way of singing auspicious words), and Taixing puppet show in terms of performance art; with respect to literature art, it has Literary Remains of Wang Xinzhai of Wang Gen, a common scholar of the famous "Taizhou School", General Survey of Arts by Liu Xizai, The Water Margin by Shi Nai'an; there are more colorful physical culture relating to visual art, as it has not only the art of painting, such as Ink Bamboo of Zheng Banqiao and other kinds of paintings, but also carvings of various materials, such as wood carving, leaf carving, and brick carving, and the traditional folk houses and places of interest with local characteristics, such as Fengcheng River scenic area, Mei Yuan, Qiao Yuan, Anding Academy, Taizhou Old Street, Rice River Ancient Block; moreover, it also has all kinds of traditional folk handicrafts, rich flavor diet and local specialties corresponding to different intangible cultural heritage. ("Table I") These culture and art containing local cultural genes are the abundant treasure to be used for the construction of Taizhou city brand image.

At present, "culture" is regarded as the strategic resource to measure regional competitiveness. Taizhou possesses such abundant cultural and artistic resources, and there is no reason not to use these cultural and artistic resources for the development of regional culture with modern characteristics and the formation of Taizhou city's unique culture brand

¹ [Ca] D. Paul Schafer. Culture: Beacon of the Future, Translated by Zhu Bangjun. Social Sciences Academic Press, 2008, P19-20.

image. Specific brand image of Taizhou city should be left to strangers, and the residents of this city should be made to identify the brand image of their city. To achieve this goal, regional culture and art should be explored and creativity be produced, which is the foundation of specific city culture brand.

TABLE I. PHYSICAL FOLK CULTURE RESOURCES OF TAIZHOU

Taizhou Folk Arts and Crafts			Flavor Diet, Local Specialty
Leaf Carving	Puppet (Taixing Zhangtoun wooden rod puppetry)		"Da Fo Zhi" Gingko
Wood Carving	Gushan Clay Sculpture (Jingjiang)		Yangtze River Three Delicacies
Brick Carving	Bamboo Weaving		Refined Sesame Oil
Plastic Cloth	Wickerwork		Zhongzhuang Drunk Crab
Shi Po Hua (incomplete parts of ancient scripts)	Palace Lantern		Wufu Pickles
Wheat Straw Crafts (Xinghua)	Puppet (Taixing Zhangtoun wooden rod puppetry)		Xinghua Shrimp Egg
Dough Modeling	Gushan Clay Sculpture (Jingjiang)		Songhua Duck Egg
Violin	Shipbuilding (Xinghua)		Huangqiao Clay Oven Roll
Tinware			Meilanchun Liquor

^a. Source: Summary of the data collected by the author

When people start to be aware of the need to take culture as a means to develop their city to form the city brand impression of Taizhou naturally, first of all, they should convey the existing cultural resources to the object of target subject. It is necessary to resort to certain means and methods to achieve effective communication, which is inseparable from design. What is to design "culture"? Just as what Mr. Zhuge Kai says, culture is "humanized" nature, the "humanized" process of natural resources². The "humanized" casting needs relevant strategies to implement specific work, so as to form the city brand image.

III. FORMULATION OF CULTURE BRAND STRATEGY

It is necessary to enhance the construction of city brand image to the height of business strategy to make it successful. First, the concept and positioning of city brand should be made clear to establish appropriate city brand identification system, and the goal, orientation, principle and guidance for subsequent implementation of the brand should be set. The brand strategy can be summarized as: establishing orientation, three outlooks, and character setting.

A. Orientation Positioning in Combination with the Needs of Tourists and Citizens

Viewing from the representation of the action of setting up orientation, it is to design the city brand positioning based on the city culture, so that all the subsequent tactical actions can be targeted. Then, how to determine the direction of city brand development? After the analysis from multiple perspectives of culture and history of the city at the early stage of brand strategy formulation, it is found that Taizhou is known as the "home of fish and rice", "home of ginkgo" and "home of aquatic products", and national ecological demonstration areas and national top 100 counties have been built in all the countries and cities (districts) under its jurisdiction. In addition, Taizhou has also been rated as national civilized city, national model city for environmental protection, national garden city, top tourist city of China and national advanced city in scientific and technological progress, making it a good place for leisure. The traffic of national railway and highway is quite developed with the gradual development of industrial economy in modern society. The concept of "global village" changes people's ideas and lifestyles. As a result, more and more people began to like to go on holiday to enjoy the leisure time. In addition, the factors including governmental promotion and media publicity facilitate tourism to be a popular leisure activity. A great number of visitors can be seen visiting Taizhou on various holidays, and these people are the witness and transmitter of the construction of culture brand of Taizhou city. Of course, they are also one of the subjects of Taizhou city culture brand. Nevertheless, the surrounding cities are building their own tourism city brand with the development of tourism. A lot of data research is needed with regard to how to position its own characteristics, including psychological research on visitors to Taizhou from similar cities. For instance, people living in Taizhou area, as the main body of the city, are the beneficiaries of culture brand. Both the native citizens of Taizhou and all kinds of foreign personnel are the people with vested interests of urban physical environment, including cultural facilities, public art and other city brand culture, so they should be taken into consideration at the beginning of culture brand construction.

B. Establishing the Values in Line with the Times

Setting up the "three outlooks" is the reflection of values, which determine the strategy design. After some years of development, many people will think of the theme of "slow life in water town" when it comes to "Taizhou", and this is the significant achievement of establishing the city's "three outlooks" mentioned above. Such theme conveys a kind of value idea of longing to return to nature, mental relaxation and enjoying the moment, so to speak. This is not only a guidance of healthy living attitude, but also the creation of positive attitude towards life. In this respect, this is an important step forward for the city brand image.

C. Seeking the Appropriate Brand Spokesperson

Brand strategy is the guidance of implementation of communication behavior. The content, form and location of the specific transmission are important, but characteristics of

² Zhuge Kai, Ten Lectures on Design Art. Shandong Pictorial Publishing House, 2006, P219

city brand are also a key factor influencing the brand. It has been mentioned above that Taizhou has gradually created the brand image of "slow life in water town". To make this impression be rooted in people's mind, further brand promotion is needed. There is a problem that who is the person to speak for city brand of "slow life in water town". Taizhou is nourished by Yangtze River, Huai River and the sea with a lot of rivers and developed water system, and the pace of life here is quite slow. In such a situation, it is necessary to find an exact starting point to create the city brand image and a spokesperson of city brand image. Telling about the leisure and comfort of this place through the spokesperson may be more convincing.

IV. MEASURES TO BE TAKEN FOR CONSTRUCTION OF TAIZOU CITY CULTURE BRAND

Some economically developed cities and regions of China start the cultural development strategy practice since 1990s, and the recent 20 years is the important transition period for China's cultural policy development. The reform of cultural system has facilitated the building of public service system of culture and the development of cultural industry. In the international competition of the future, China faces both opportunities and challenges. Therefore, planning the countermeasures and strengthening soft power is the key to development. How to strengthen the soft power of city culture construction? Culture becomes the keyword of development in the related conferences and discussions at the United Nations. A lot of experts and ministers and vice ministers in charge of foreign affairs and education suggest giving priority to culture in global development agenda after 2015. Irina Bokova, general director of UNESCO, emphasizes that, the power of culture should be full acknowledged at the time of formulating new global agenda; no society can prosper nor realize sustainable development without culture. On this basis, cultural planning and concept of cultural integrity is helpful in the formation of unique cultural, economic and social development path and model relying on local resources. The creative economy developed on the basis of culture is conducive to the city's sustainable development.

A. Visual Improvement Based on Cultural Facilities Construction with "Local Characteristics" and Cultural Tourism Development

With such dominant idea, a series of methods are needed to realize city brand construction led by culture as the strategy. The most common measures include: to improve urban culture hardware environment through the cultural facilities building, for instance, to have a re-understanding and re-investigation of various functions of the city by cultural thinking, to make efforts to explore the innovative space or transformational direction for city development; put various cultural resources mentioned above at the center of innovation implementation, to integrate the resources of Taizhou city, so that the city development with cultural and local characteristics can be maintained; to promote regional economic diversification by developing cultural industry to attract cultural resources gathering, so as to promote and

stimulate cultural consumption. First of all, the most remarkable result of this development strategy is the improvement of urban physical environment and visual environment, changing the overall appearance of the city by the construction of culture facilities, public art and urban cultural cluster.

Second, the development of city tourism economy can drive the sustainable development of urban culture and economy. As for visual impression, starting from tourism is the most effective way. This also includes the design of sign of the whole scenic area, tourism crafts with cultural and creative features, the packaging of specialties, bringing the tourists a preliminary cultural impression. In addition, from a deeper level, various updated policies against development and relating to urban cultural orientation can be motivated by culture while being sensitive to culture. As a result, multiple integration of resources should be established and application form of cultural policies be updated continuously when dealing with cultural policy, to leave a distinct impression of Taizhou city brand to the main body of tourism, so as to finally realize the enhancement of city brand image.

Of course, the cultural facilities construction and cultural tourism development mentioned here need to depend on the formulation and support of government policies to a large extent, the involvement of cultural diversity principle and cultural multiple values into public policy, system and practice, and the balance of all factors in cultural life, and so on. Obviously, the concept of cultural policy is extended, having broken through the limitations of traditional art and heritage fields and stepped into a broader practical level of cultural activities. A vast number of cultural events can also promote the growth of urban vitality. The events, such as the famous Qintong Boat Festival and Xinghua Cauliflower Festival, have formed the characteristic cultural activities of Taizhou area gradually, which is of great benefit to local brand building.

B. Realizing "Sustainable Development" by Inspiring the Power of Individuals and Non-profit Organizations

The creation of city brand image is not merely the problem at visual and impression level, but it should also be a dynamic problem which comes from the development of "human" in city life and goes deep into city culture. The voice of democracy driven by the rise of social movements began to grow louder in the period from the late 1960s to 1970s. The civic participation began to be stressed in cultural policies. Of course, such participation is not merely limited to the participation in music, painting and other refined and elegant art, but the participation and organization containing practical participation of lower people in cultural activities of daily life and emphasizing community cultural activities. Such practical participation in daily culture should echo the city theme and be associated with various local material and non-material cultural resources. In the process of people's active participation, they can realize their own redevelopment and recognize the value of social progress.

In that sense, the participation of ordinary people makes the government not the single behavior subject any longer, amplifying the interactive relation between government and society. The cultural voluntary action of individual citizens, non-profit cultural activities of cultural community organization and corporate sponsorship of cultural events should be regarded as the important components of cultural development. At present, the construction of public service system of culture in most parts of China is led by government, and some even totally rely on the government, showing a lack of social participation. Starting from this point, it should be encouraged to implement regional or community cultural governance in public action area, to activate the tradition of Taizhou area and highlight the regional characteristics by promoting more people to participate in the vibrant local cultural life; in addition, more social culture and opportunities of access to culture are provided to the local people, to encourage communication and understanding between different groups, reduce the sense of alienation between people and enhance social cohesion. Moreover, the creativity of people can also be stimulated to form the characteristics of people's life and culture in Taizhou area, leading to the separation from the mode of creating brand for brand's sake. Hence, the foundation and source of city brand is formed.

In this respect, the project of "integrated communicated construction" in Taiwan can be used for reference. Taiwan started to turn cultural construction to open cultural participation since the 1980s, with the themes presenting the trend of diversification, paying attention to the development of new economic pattern from traditional, rural primary industries, such as agricultural products processing, traditional handicraft and local specialties. In other words, it is to rediscover, confirm and make flexible use of the resources based on the community original literature, history, technology and natural resources, to provide the industries for community life and culture sharing, experience and participation learning. It has been an important development strategy of Taiwan in the governance of local culture to start from "integrated community development" and promote industrial guidance and development of local culture. The experience of Taiwan is to take "local" as the theme of thinking and to develop by taking local characteristics and various conditions into consideration; just as what mentioned above, Taizhou preserves abundant cultural resources and only the material folk culture resources have been quite rich. Therefore, the local people can be mobilized to design and integrate their community resources, and pay attention to the maintenance and improvement of their own living environment while pursuing development. To develop the local city brand features, people can think from a macro perspective, and then get deep into the details of their life gradually. The development of local features in this way is truly based on the lives of people not just visual changes, and the city brand will really be accepted by both the local people and visitors.

V. CONCLUSION

In a word, the local features should be highlighted to establish city brand image. It can be considered to combine the tangible and intangible culture with local characteristics with people's values of life. The integrity of urban cultural and artistic expression needs the governance mode of overall and integral concept as well as the practical operation mode, to step over fragmented administrative setting and to achieve horizontal and cross-department cooperation. Otherwise, the construction of city brand cannot be fully implemented. At present, an integrative force which can link the integrity of several things together is in urgent need for urban cultural creativity. The construction of local city culture brand can be accelerated with the promotion of such force.

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