

Research on Landscape Design from the Perspective of Regional Culture

Huijing Wang¹, Hongxia Wang¹

¹College of Art and Design, Xingtai University, Xingtai, 054001, China

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Abstract. Regional culture is creation source of landscape design. We should have a correct understanding of connotation of regional culture and landscape design, specify relations between regional culture and landscape design, combine development characteristics of landscape design in China, adhere to the principle of landscape design from the perspective of regional culture, widely apply regional culture into landscape design, and make people to appreciate cultural connotation and humanistic atmosphere while appreciating landscapes.

Introduction

With rapid development of the landscape architecture industry, China has obtained plenteous achievements in landscape design and construction, remarkably improving people's living environment. In the process of landscape design, to rely on certain cultural background and apply landscapes to express special cultures of different regions has already become an important orientation under continuous exploration and research by landscape designers at present. Landscape design based on regional culture is beneficial for improving the current situation of assimilation and simplification of landscape design at the present stage, promoting landscape designers to make innovations to their design philosophies, passing on excellent traditional cultures of Chinese nation and protecting intangible cultural heritages. The research on landscape design from the perspective of regional culture will become a significant research orientation of landscape design and planning in the future.

A Primary Exploration for Regional Culture and Landscape Design

Regional Culture

Regional culture refers to distinctively characteristic ideologies, values and behavioral patterns created by people in specific historical stage and within certain regional range as well as a kind of culture pattern inherited and accumulated in the development course of history. In a broad sense, regional culture includes mainstream culture, folk culture, architectural culture, cooking culture, national culture and others in this region. At the same time, some scholars also think that regional culture indicates the unique cultural system formed in a specific region through historical development, inherited to the present and still playing a great role.

Landscape Design

Landscape design is an integrated discipline with science and art combined with each other. In a broad sense, this discipline includes planning layout, analysis, protection, management, recovery, design and transformation of landscape. Generally, planning and design of landscape is defined as follows: use functions properly allocated in a specific region; or design and use of appropriate lands in a specific region is called landscape design. Main characteristics of landscape design are described as follows: i) natural attributes; and ii) social attributes. Landscapes must be designed based on certain natural environment and certain regional culture, provided with appreciation and use functions, and giving audiences a sense of transference, interest, charm and belonging as well as other landscape effects through cultural connotation in such landscapes.

Relations between Regional Culture and Landscape Design

Regional culture is one of important creation sources of landscape design.

Regional culture and landscape design influence and interact with each other. Designed

landscapes will be provided with an extremely strong sense of cultural identity by manually integrating cultural traits covered in regional culture into landscape design and taking regional culture as the basis for landscape design. Therefore, regional culture provides important creation sources to landscape designers. At the same time, extensive local culture, folk culture, local conditions and customs and historic culture contained in regional culture provide rich materials and inspirations to landscape designers.

At present, landscape design no longer simply takes beautifying human environment as the purpose. Instead, complex including science, technology, art and multiple elements is fully integrated. In landscape design, landscape is the carrier of design and culture is the connotation of landscape. Landscape design can reflect ideologies and living habits of a specific region. Designers should have a deep understanding of regional culture, experience rich connotation of regional culture and fully use modern science and technology and artistic expression methods to give full play to landscapes. For an environmental designer, a complete understanding of regional cultural background and relations between local culture and nature will provide his landscape design with many inspirations.

Landscape design with regional characteristics inherits and carries forward regional culture.

Integration of regional culture into landscape design inherits regional culture, reflects culture atmosphere at present, gives regional culture epochal characters and inherits and carries forward regional culture as well. Regional culture embodied in landscapes is not only the issue itself, but also significance represented by objects in the landscape and information passed in such landscape. Landscape is formed with certain culture as background. Unique cultural landscapes are gradually formed through a series of developments. However, cultural landscape is served as regional expression of human culture as well as reaction of culture in a specific historical period. Through different cultural landscapes, we can see different regional cultures. Therefore, cultural landscape embodies regional differences of regional culture.

Buildings in some famous cities in China have quite distinctive local features, for instance, German buildings in Shandong Qingdao and various classical and modern architectural styles in Shanghai. Ancient capital Xi'an went through all the vicissitudes of life and maintained many historic buildings in various styles. All cultures left their traces through certain landscapes. At the same time, these landscapes also inherit and carry forward extremely characteristic regional cultures in these regions.

Current Development Situation of Landscape Design Calls for the Application of Regional Culture

In some regional landscape designs, importance is mostly attached to beauty in form. However, regional culture characteristics are neglected. Natural ecological environment is replaced by manual landscaping. Meanwhile, many a landscape designers blindly worship European and American landscapes, imitate landscapes in other countries and neglect to combine natural environment and regional culture to make innovations. There are few new works. Most designs are copied from others. In these landscape designs, cultural features disappear. Designers fail to give play to the role of natural environment in landscape design and to represent unique charms of the city. They deviate from the original intention of landscape design.

China is a multinational country, with distinct regional features and great temperature differences from north to south. At present, people have already realized the significance of relations between landscape design and regional culture. The principal goal of modern designers is to create modern landscape culture with regional features. Modern designers should combine regional culture for landscape design, realize mutual integration and complementation of manual environment and natural environment and meet various demands and aesthetic standards of different people. Under the current situation, landscape design based on regional culture develops landscape with regional culture into a kind of urban culture and a kind of motivation driving development of the city. Therefore, we must correctly handle relations between inheritance and innovation of regional culture, utilize regional culture feature for landscape design and realize continuous development of

landscape design in inheritance and innovation of culture.

Principles of Landscape Design from the Perspective of Regional Culture

Landscape design from the perspective of regional culture should mainly follow three principles: i) adapt to natural environment; ii) respect local folk culture; and iii) comply with historical context.

Adapt to Natural Environment

Due to different regions, forms of landscape, geographical conditions and construction materials will also differ a lot. However, these landscapes have a similarity from a deep perspective, namely emphasis laid on integration with natural environment as well as harmony, continuity and development with environmental effects. For landscape design, therefore, to adapt to natural environment is a principle that must be followed. To be specific:

Firstly, respect original landform; all landscapes must be designed with respect to regional features and constructed along the original landform. On the premise of guaranteeing harmonious coexistence with surrounding natural environment, regional culture should be integrated into natural environment in a better way to form perfect landscapes.

Secondly, respect regional climate differences; different climate conditions result in different hydrologic conditions, biotic conditions and landforms in different regions, making different regions to form regional culture with respective characteristics and in different styles. Climate differences have deep effects on landscape design and development of landscape culture.

Thirdly, respect varieties and colonies of regional plants; plant is one of important landscaping elements in landscape design. Varieties and colonies of plants differ a lot under different climate conditions in different regions. Abundant native plants should be completely used in landscape design to form subject landscapes in a garden, which is helpful to highlight landscape characteristics of typical regional plants.

Respect Local Folk Culture

Landscape exists as an objective carrier of traditional culture and modern culture. Therefore, to respect folk culture is reaffirmation of certain collective spirit significance to some extent. In landscape design, to respect folk culture is mainly represented in three forms: i) “activate” regional traditional culture; ii) use regional traditional form for reference; and iii) regenerate traditional lifestyle and social relations. Folk culture is an integral part of regional culture. Landscape design with respect to folk culture will tremendously enrich the connotation of folk culture.

Comply with Historical Context

Landscape design should follow another important principle, i.e. comply with and continue cultural characteristics of historical context. In other words, during landscape designing, designers should inherit traditional spatial characteristics as much as possible, combine and integrate manual environment and natural environment and form urban spaces with modern landscape environment. Moreover, landscape designers should regard this as important concept and principle of urban landscape design and lay emphasis on ecological effects and cultural inheritance.

Application Strategies of Regional Culture in Landscape Design

Completely collect relevant materials and explore for historical characteristics

Prior to landscape design, designers should first have a deep understanding of local regional culture, make a field survey at local places by widely collecting related references, historical materials and local conditions and customs of this region, understand living habits, folk culture and ideologies of local people, and explore for local customs, practices and religious beliefs of local people. Through deep researches and analyses, designers should obtain essence in regional culture. Materials about regional culture are numerous and complicated, widely including folk traditions, folk proverbs, major historical events and eminent persons in history. Related materials collected will provide rich information to landscape designers. In a word, designers must go to this region to collect adequate materials and explore for historical characteristics prior to landscape design.

Summarize and arrange materials collected, extract design elements and translate into design

symbols

Design elements should be extracted by summarizing and arranging data and materials collected during the field survey on this region. Then, such design elements should be translated into design symbols to express regional culture elements and to be applied into landscape design.

Firstly, relevant materials and data should be summarized and arranged to extract design elements based on a good understanding of regional historical culture, converting abstract written materials into visual picture and video documents, extracting representative figure or landscape from such materials and documents and thinking how to completely use colors, materials, literary quotations and implied meanings in landscape designs to reflect such regional cultures.

Secondly, design elements should be converted into design symbols. Design elements are converted into design symbols to express regional culture elements. Designers should fully combine regional traditional elements, realize the combination of historical culture elements and modern elements and present regional culture from a more overall perspective based on the expression of cultural features of landscapes.

Thirdly, symbols should be used in landscape design. Points, lines and planes should be rationally used in combination to integrate regional and cultural elements into landscape design, in a form of sculpture, pavement or wall. For instance, an extremely complete ancient well is still maintained at present in Wangfujing Street in Beijing. To some extent, this well reflects ancient culture of Beijing. Figure sculptures in various characteristics in streets in Shenzhen are perfect combinations between modern civilization elements and historical culture characteristics, manifesting regional cultures.

Reflect inheritance and innovation of regional culture in landscape design

Existence and development of regional culture comply with development demands of modern society. In terms of integration of regional culture into landscape design, regional culture in landscape design should be viewed in the light of its development instead of simply reflecting some traditional cultural elements. Some era elements and emerging elements should be integrated while inheriting excellent regional cultures of Chinese nation, making such elements to gradually develop into important parts of regional culture. Designers should realize innovation to regional culture while inheriting regional culture. In successful landscape design works, long local garden traditions are perfectly integrated into modern living needs and aesthetic values, so as to realize sublimation of landscape works.

Therefore, it is of great significance to correctly handle relations between inheritance and innovation in landscape design. At present, we should break up traditional and conservative cultural concepts, view regional culture in the light of development and innovation, explore for possible cultural essence contained in regional culture from an international perspective, positively combine natural environment with regional characteristics, lifestyles, modern sciences and technologies and artistic expression methods, design regional culture landscapes with era features, and realize continuous innovations based on the inheritance of regional culture.

Conclusions

To make landscapes reflect regional culture in a better way and serve and carry forward regional culture, we should have a good understanding of close relations between regional culture and landscape design and specify development characteristics of landscape design. Only in this way, designers can integrate regional culture into landscapes in a better way while designing landscapes, so as to realize harmonious unity of regional culture and landscapes. While providing appreciation, designers should also let audiences to appreciate rich cultural connotation and humanistic atmosphere contained in landscapes. We believe that landscape designs integrated with regional culture will be highly praised and given full play to their glories.

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