

# Preliminary Study on Urban Street Landscape Design under Regional Cultural Background

Based on Yuanlin Road, Jingzhou City

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**Abstract**—Modern urban construction is in a rapid speed, traditional regional culture fades away gradually, cities have lost features and charms that they should have. Based on the long historic culture of Jingzhou, sources and development of its regional culture as well as observation and analysis of street landscapes in the city, this article collects some problems that have been found, through combining street landscapes with regional culture, the article tries to find a way for the street landscape design in the city.

**Keywords**—regional culture; street landscape; landscape design; Jingzhou

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Death and Life of Great American Cities<sup>1</sup>, issued in 1961 and written by J. Jacobs pointed out that urban roads take important missions, however, macroscopic roads are lines and microcosmic roads are wide surfaces, streets are the most important public spaces and organs full of energy in cities.” He conducted careful observations on urban streets, parks and ancient architectures, thinking that it needs to restore the diversity of urban streets and blocks, and the diversity is embodied in cultural heritage and presentation.

Nowadays, urbanization has been developing at a higher speed, and street landscape design has become a key part in the urban construction. Urban streets get involved every action in a city like a huge net, and the unique cultural features that they carry symbolize images and connotation of a city. However, due to shocks of multiple cultures and globalization, a great number of regional cultural features look like being rejected aside, and the urban construction has entered a stage of modularization, the concrete walls which look almost the same increasingly and with clear edges and corners have effaced the vitality and energy that urban streets should own. Taking Yuanlin Road in Jingzhou as an example, this article tries to explore the urban street landscape design on the background of regional culture.

## II. REGIONAL CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS IN JINGZHOU

### A. Sources and Development of Regional Culture in Jingzhou

Ancient China was divided into nine states by King Yu, where Jingzhou got its name. Jingzhou, called Jiangling in ancient times, was capital of Chu State during the Spring and Autumn Period; Located in the middle south of Hubei Province, a heartland of Jiangnan Plain, the city neighbors Changjiang River in the south and Changhu Lake in the north, it is a historic famous city, state garden city, excellent tourist city, regional central city in mid-south Hubei province, enjoying the good reputation of “town of fishes and rice”.

Chu State witnessed about four-hundred years development with its capital at Jingzhou, where 20 kings inherited successively and rich and profound Chu culture was developed. Generations of ancient people here endured great hardship to survive and develop, creating brilliant Chu civilization on the huge lands full of thistles, thorns and marshes.

### B. Status Quo of Street Landscape Design in Jingzhou

1) *Imperfect functional facilities along streets*: Within the overall urban street design, in addition to road traffic, other functional facilities related to roads shall be completely provided such as street dustbins, street lamps and landscape lights, bus station boards and systematic road signs, traffic signs and so on. All needs of residents shall be considered and enable humanization and regional cultural features to co-exist as in "Fig. 1".

2) *Urban street landscapes have few inheritance of historic culture*: Viewed generally, the urban street landscapes in Jingzhou are in the lack of inheriting traditional culture and innovating modern elements, most landscape designs are applied mechanically, and the modularized landscape copy causes that street landscapes have no features of their own. Apparently such street landscape designs carry no regional cultural features, only meeting basic needs of residents for roads and unable to

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<sup>1</sup> J. Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities [M]. Version 2. Yilin Press, 2006,P109.

attract tourists or advertise regional culture. Generally buildings along streets look outdated and disordered, which, without uniform design and repair, are short or high with different colors, and the street beautification is seriously weakened as in "Fig. 2".



Fig. 1. Street facilities in Jingzhou.



Fig. 2. Buildings along streets have no regional characteristics.

### III. DESCRIPTION AND PROBLEMS OF YUANLIN ROAD

#### A. Introduction to Yuanlin Road

Yuanlin Road (from Beijing Mid Road to Jiangjin Mid Road) runs over Jingjiang Blvd till Cuihuan Road, going through five blocks, 965m, covering an area of 29,861 square meters. Enjoying advantageous geographical environment, it works as not only parting line of downtown areas but also optimal line for tourism and sightseeing, in addition, the section of the road is adjacent to Zhongshan Park, where there are huge streams of people and traffic, nearing the downtown center and amusement culture area. However, the landscape design of this section is not as good as expected, and the senses of whole size and location are not prominent.

Four structures are analyzed along the road, including a public toilet, south of east entrance of Zhongshan Park, a corridor at the central location of this area, a public toilet, 50m south of the corridor and a corridor along the lake adjacent to Bibo Road. There are rich plant species, in addition to few Camphor trees and privets, weeping willows are mainly seen along the slope of Bianhe River, along

Yuanlin Road, there stand some old sequoia, few Chinese scholar trees, Camphor trees and trident maples, all plants grow well, however, there are almost no mid and lower-level plants, in addition, there are too many and disordered round plants. Currently most water close to Bianhe River is of slope protection, locals are rubbles and soil walls revetments, looking extremely inconsistent.

#### B. Status Quo and Problems of Street Landscapes at Yuanlin Road

The street landscape design elements applied are too old, which carry no regional culture or modern elements, without complete and uniform artistic image, and the landscapes are poorly connected. The street landscapes attract no people, having no feasibility and regional culture characteristics that they should have.

Green plants in a large area contain no elements of landscapes, causing single landscape and producing no value for practical use as in "Fig. 3". Due to the unique geographic location, the crossing of functional areas has caused diverse spaces and three-dimensional needs of residents, yet currently Yuanlin Road cannot meet the demand.

The improper landscape designs make vehicles compete for parking, which seriously hurt the senses of beautification of traffic and street landscapes as in "Fig 4". In addition, there is no full consideration in plant arrangement. No consideration is given to seasonal changes and shifts between day and night, the plant species are few, having no proper changes.



Fig. 3. Simple planting landscape.



Fig. 4. Roads occupied by vehicles, downgrading the landscape beautification.

#### IV. FEATURED DESIGN OF LANDSCAPES ALONG YUANLIN ROAD

##### A. Color Expression

Since Chu state (ancient name of Jingzhou) in ancient, the people have been advocating red and black, so main colors of buildings in Jingzhou are red and black, and the higher interval between red and black is a main hue, supported by five colors, deep, remote, black, gorgeous, colorful, pleasing and heavy philosophy feeling and cheerful sensory stimuli; spiritual shocks are mixed with sensory pleasures to form fantastic color effect, which source from remote totems concept of Chu people and ancestor worship.

The connotation of humanistic spirit that structures hold in Jingzhou is “grand, compatible, high-profile and smart”, seen from aesthetics, it refers to “grave and romantic, grand and beautiful, gorgeous and calm, natural and elegant”, six style characteristics refer to “high base, deep eaves, fine gable wall, skillful structure, finely decorated, and red-yellow-black”.

Main color in Jingzhou is the combination of chocolate system and gray system as in "Fig. 5". Dimmed ancient city walls and chocolate wooden poles are direct presentation of colors in Jingzhou. Through combining street landscape design and urban colors, connecting traditional and modern in series to endow new energy to the city, Jingzhou has its unique charms much shown. For example, bus stations in the city are designed into pavilions with ancient styles, of which, chocolate poles and dimmed tiles form unique cultural features on the common stations, re-presenting traditional historic culture and ancient beauty as in "Fig. 6".



Fig. 5. East entrance of ancient Jingzhou city.



Fig. 6. A bus station in Jingzhou.

##### B. Road Pavement

Generally road pavement may play an important role through making the finishing point, the pavement design, just like drawing on the ground, can create rich visual effect by breaking simple pavement mode[2]. According to the selection and match of paving materials, elements and colors, it can bring diverse experiment effect in feeling and looking.

As far as the street pavement on Yuanlin Road, Jingzhou, the characters of Chu culture can be freely applied in the road decoration through collage, which not only decorate the road but also show people the extensive and profound Chu culture, greatly pushing the formation of cultural atmosphere as in "Fig. 7".



Fig. 7. Combination between characters of Chu culture and pavements.

##### C. Street Greening

“Gorgeous City and Blossoming in Four Seasons”[3] is a goal and slogan to build a forest city in Jingzhou, city trees in the city are ginkgo and Judas tree; city flowers here are lotus and wintersweet. All of the trees and flowers are local species which have unique local features, meeting the geographical conditions and climates here, carrying deep connotation in history and culture and able to meet the pursuit of residents for luck and happiness. Therefore, the selection of plants for Yuanlin Road shall also highlight such character, showing apparent features of the local.

In the meantime, with regard to the plant match, the plants shall be kept in a logical distance, namely wide distances shall be kept for active areas where residents may feel free and comfortable, able to access to adequate sunshine, then plant more evergreen trees at dead corners of some places to get the best effect.

##### D. Rest Sketches and Sculptures

Rest landscape sketches in the street landscape design are the most visual part to touch, which are features of the landscape. During the design, more of characters symbolizing regional culture shall be adopted as design



elements to represent the city's cultural deposition and show its personalized colors. [2]

When conducting a design, we can use chime and tiger-base phoenix drum that show features of Jingzhou as in "Fig. 8" as elements into the sketch and sculpture design, from which, residents may feel thick Chu culture charms when resting and enjoying landscapes, with the history of streets shown, it can become a sign of urban image. Besides, through combining labels with historic culture and modern landscape sketch, cultural relic is no longer taken as a collection, instead it is fully integrated to the people's life for more charms in the time, promoting the cultural propaganda as in "Fig. 9".



Fig. 8. Chime playing sculpture.



Fig. 9. Tiger-base phoenix drum.

### E. Details of Street Design

Among the street landscape design, human landscapes are the most visual part which show characteristics of the landscape directly. And more characters symbolizing regional culture shall be adopted as design elements. For example, the city's cultural deposits can be exposed through animal patterns, dragon and phoenix patterns, or natural cloud patterns, oblique triangular cloud patterns or living patterns, battles, fish banquet patterns and so on, highlighting

<sup>2</sup> Tan Xiaohong, Study on Regionalism of Urban Street Spaces [D]. Zhengzhou University, 2004, P19.

the city's personalized features. [3] Human landscapes in streets can be presented through street curbs, weep holes, greening protective fences, sketch sculptures, street lights, dustbins and rest chairs, etc. For example, with basic functions guaranteed, a lot of street lights in the city are designed with symbols of Chu culture such as classic chime combined with street lights, and the bronze quality shows cultural deposits in Jingzhou as in "Fig. 10"; another example, the combination of traditional element Chinese knots and street lights make streets much humanized, adding warm air and happiness to the city and showing the unique cultural charm the city holds as in "Fig. 11".



Fig. 10. Combination of chime and street lights.



Fig. 11. Combination of Chinese knots and street lights.

### V. CONCLUSION

Street landscapes are a symbol of the city and a necessity of residents. In order to well present urban culture, we should value the street landscape design, and more attentions shall be paid to the lack of regional culture in the street landscape. In a specific design, an attempt can be done to combine traditional regional cultural symbols with landscape,

<sup>3</sup> Tan Xiaohong, Study on Regionalism of Urban Street Spaces [D]. Zhengzhou University, 2004, P19.

integrating traditional cultural symbols to modern elements and keeping it developing with the time with its nature remained and inheriting excellent traditional culture. We should keep rational to deal with the co-existence of individuality and generality, relying on artistic means and design skills, the urban landscapes will become better and make historic deposits visible and touchable, endowing them more deep connotations and presenting the city's quality and charms.

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