

CULTURE LANDSCAPE WITHIN RECREATIONAL LANDSCAPE PARK IN CHINA

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The article introduces culture landscape conception in China. It points out that the culture landscape is a semi-natural landscape which was resulted by the mutual reaction of human livelihood and natural environment. Author summarizes the development of cultural landscape in three periods. They are rural cultural diversity, agricultural related biodiversity, green and efficiency energy, eco-culture, rural eco-settlement is the new ideas of culture landscape conception.

Keywords: culture landscape; eco-agriculture; rural culture diversity, recreational area, agricultural-basic landscape

Introduction

Cultural landscapes are produced by and reflect the long-term interactions between humans and nature in indigenous societies (Yuan, 2011). A cultural landscape is an area where the landforms have been created by human culture as well as by nature; human culture has been created by the landscape as well as the people; and each now depends upon and continues to exist because of the other (Buckley et al., 2008). In a paper of "The Cultural Landscape of China – specific Feature and their Causes", authors pointed that Chinese cultural landscapes are featured by intensity population and small tiny plots and compacted agricultural landscapes, nucleated settlements with little variation type in most part of country, which featured by specific building materials (Muller, 2006). When cultural landscape integrated with agricultural practice and biodiversity, this biodiversity help people inhabitants adapt to environment uncertainty and constraints to sustain their livelihood over generations (Luohui, 2010).

In recreational landscape park of china, the culture landscape concept includes the all kinds of peasantry livelihood (living, production and custom). With massive population, it is a high density settlement region

in the world, so the agriculture-basic landscape are mainly composed into cultural landscape. Agriculture-basic landscape is belong to high management landscape category that is the balance of interaction between human agriculture activities and natural environments. It embraces rural settlement, surrounding farmer lands and forests. The harmonious exquisite agriculture views are the result of nature and human co-operation. Human act a crucial role among these semi-natural ecosystems, they are the essential manager of these cultural natural landscapes which would be lost without their management. But as the growth of visitation population

on resource-based recreational area, more and more dollars were launched on the tourism investment, the exotic economy and culture bring more and more impassive affections to the native inhabitants that include customs, folklores, settlements, livelihood, and native agricultural species. Therefore, how to inherit these agricultural traditional culture, how to conserve these traditional agricultural landscape, how to maintain the balance of these exquisite semi-natural ecological landscape are the significant commission of contemporary landscape planner and manager (fig. 1 and 2).



Figure 1 Carefully management cultural landscap in Yiwulv National Park
Source: Shoufang Liu

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Figure 2 Cultural landscape of pear garden within Yiwulv National Park
Source: Shoufang Liu



Figure 3 Overcrowding of Jiuzai National Park
Source: Shoufang Liu



Figure 4 The Elevator in Zhangjiajie Nation Park compromised the natural beauty, and be criticized by experts
Source: <http://image.baidu>

Material and methods

In China, from the reforms and open polices since the early 1980s, the cultural landscape concept are changing continually. Following the rapid growth of economy and the raising demand of natural-based tourism recreation, after reviewing the materials of related document, polices and literatures, using historical research methods, the three stages of cultural landscape changing in recreational are summarized. Those are the blind development period at the beginning of tourism economic developing, consideration and exploration period after the failure of over urbanization in the natural-based recreational area, green eco-cultural landscape period.

The blind development period

Since early 1980s, thanks to the reforms and open policies, China has experienced about 8–9% economic growth per year (Zhang et al., 2004). As the result the rapid economic development gave a further boost to the tourism. Tremendous amounts of tourists rush into variety of natural-based recreational areas. Some favored natural resorts were overcrowded. There are some figures can prove it, that is “average per capita income in China has increased rapidly, from about US\$450–500 in 1990 to US\$1000 in 2001, with peaks in cities and towns where many families now earn US\$10,000 and more. People can therefore afford to travel within China and even abroad, especially during the three long holiday periods, also called the “three golden weeks”. Since 2000, holiday tourism has increased at a tremendous pace, leading to overcrowding. For example, Tibet recorded 686,000 tourists in 2001, 28.6 times more than in 1990. The Wulingyuan (Zhangjiajie) World Natural Heritage Site in northwestern Hunan Province – a typical tourist attraction – recorded 1.3 million tourists in 2002, compared with only 0.23 million in 1998. Generally,

the number of domestic tourists in mountain resorts has more than quadrupled in the last 5 years in China” (Zhang et al., 2004) (fig. 3 and 4).

The large number of tourism triggered a large demands of every kind of tourism service facilities, specially the demand of accommodation facility that caused the over urbanization of the rural region within natural-based resort. The powerful impetus of tourism economy strongly changed the rural settlement pattern and agricultural construction convert local cultural landscape internationally. Simultaneously, the exotic cultural took erosion to the native cultural landscape tradition which was lost their authenticity gradually; the local rural cultural landscape settlement pattern was replaced by international settlement pattern. In this period, some highlight cases were criticized by the international criticism frequently. Such as the 326 meter high elevator within Wulingyuan National Park impacted the natural beauty seriously, and the problem related over urbanization of Wulingyuan was criticized twice by the officer of UNESCO (Yan, 2002). Under the purpose of profit-orientation development, the overcrowded hotels and other tourism facilities sprawled in the core areas and surrounding areas of Chinese National parks (such as Taishan, Huangshan, Wulingyuan, Jiuzhaigou etc.). These unsustainable developments have not only defaced native cultural landscape but also the main landscape features of the area were beyond recognition.

Consideration and rehabilitation period

The unsustainable construction sprawled within Chinese Nation Parks particularly within the World Heritage Site, caused highly attention by scholars and manager both of international and domestic.

Many experts began to involve in the research works of over



Figure 5 Cultural landscape of grape garden converted for tourist in Xinjiang
 Source: Shoufang Liu

urbanization and strive to figure out the reason that caused over urbanization in the ecologic sensitive areas. Among the many causes of uncontrolled urbanization with the natural-based recreation resorts, five deserved mention:

- Unsuitable local management systems for scenic spots, and profit-oriented development.

- Lack of environmental awareness among tourists, authorities and scholars; lack of understanding of the purpose of protected areas.
- The tendency of local governments to seek short-term economic benefits and official achievements.
- Lack of scientific criteria and regulations



Figure 6 Tourist service facility was a farmer house before the ecological restoration
 Source: Shoufang Liu



Figure 7 Cultural landscape settlement converted into tourism facility in Daqinggou National Park
Source: Shoufang Liu

In order to revise the effect of over urbanization of the ecologic sensitive areas, the Chinese central government has launched a series restoration programs since 1998. There were Natural forest protection (with a strict logging ban), development of protective forest systems, restoration of farmland to forest and grassland, desertification control, wild animal and plant protection and nature reserves, and

planting of rapid-growth forests (fig. 5 and 6).

As the result the project the hotels within the National Park were moved out, as well as the inside inhabitants that transformed from peasant to tourism industry staff. The lands that was deteriorated at over urbanization process in the pass, now have been taken rehabilitation throng forestation project. Although the ecological environment was

restored the eco-function recovered, but the native cultural landscape feature and the related settlement culture were lost in perpetuity. It is an irreversible process. Both of natural and human management can't be lost simultaneously for cultural landscape, each of them lost, all of them lost.

Green eco-cultural landscape period

After the over urbanization and the following de-urbanization people began to realize the significant consequence of protected biological diversity and cultural diversity to the human life. Many biological species depend on the semi-nature cultural landscape – the management landscape to live without human intervention that would not be survival. Simultaneously, most of the folklore both of the movable and unmovable cultural heritage is found in the rural area and a plenty of them nearly extinct or already disappeared. So to protect the rural cultural landscape environments are not only the preservation of biodiversity but also conservation the cultural diversity (fig. 7 and 8).

Since the later 1990s, the scholars from different disciplines have begun to study the images of rural cultural landscape including rural cultural diversity, rural beauty and rural semi-nature biodiversity. An article named "A Preliminary Study on Rural Image and Development of Rural Tourism", written by Xiong (1999) pointed out "the rural image is an integrated figure impressed in people minds by the rural cultural landscape views; it is composed of rural landscape natural image and rural cultural image". Wang (2003) in his book "The Landscape Design of Modern Rural Area" gave the definition of rural image that is "the rural image is a distinctive mental map formed from human belief, feeling and thought under the rural view perceived process." After doing some research and investigation, Ni



Figure 8 Cultural landscape of agricultural farm land and settlement in Zhangjiajie National Park
Source: Shoufang Liu

(2007) figured out that the rural image of people mind mainly came from four aspects-literatures, movies, drawings, and the childhood memories; it could be divided into six characters-farmland landscape, natural environments, structures, human, animal, and road; and five principle could be put forward-scenario, process, identification, convenience, and economy.

Results and discussion

From the research of three stages of cultural landscape development studying in China, the result can be conducted. The cultural landscape is acting the critical fundamental element of recreational park. As a living cultural soul, it is the essential feature to identify the fundamental cultural characteristics of the recreational natural park. Cultural landscape is a semi-natural environment that managed by human settlement livelihood, but simultaneously it is an irreversible process that both natural and management can't be lose. Green eco-cultural landscape development methods is a sustainable methodology to develop to recreational park.

Although there are many ideas about the cultural landscape, the key point is that the cultural landscape originally derives from rural agricultural landscape conception embracing the features related agricultural production and life; agricultural settlement culture, agricultural production culture, agricultural landscape, natural and semi-natural environment, people and people's livelihood are the essentials of contemporary cultural landscape concept. Rural cultural diversity, agricultural related biodiversity, green and efficiency energy, eco-agriculture, rural eco-settlement is the new ideas of cultural landscape conception. The experiences and lessons of cultural landscape within Chinese recreational landscape park development is a good example for development of landscape park that

powered by busting tourism economy. The green eco-cultural landscape development style is a sustainable way for future national park or landscape park development. Especially for the areas that described by Muller (2006) in his paper mentioned where are featured by intensity population and small tiny plots. But the settlements between different green eco-cultural landscape areas show great variation featured by native architecture, folk and ethnic cultural heritage as well as semi-natural and natural biodiversity.

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