Conservation of Famous Historic and Cultural Towns in the Process of Rapid Urbanization in China: A Case Study of Shanghai

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Shanghai
Yangtze river delta city agglomoration
The Predicament of Conservation of Famous Historical and Cultural Towns

- In the developed coastal areas, famous historical and cultural towns have been gradually surrounded by cities. They are affected by factors such as tourism development and migration of indigenous people, these towns are facing the dangers of the gradual disappearance of traditional culture.

- At present, researches on famous historical and cultural towns in China are still partial to the material aspects, focus more on the spatial texture of the towns and architectures.
The Predicament of Conservation of Famous Historical and Cultural Towns

- The conservation method system of famous historical and cultural towns, which emphasis on the planning of spatial texture and architectures restoration, does not has systematic method for culture conservation and core values presentation.
Study on Cultural Ecology of Famous Historical and Cultural Towns in Shanghai

1. Jinze Town  
2. Fengjing Town  
3. Liantang Town  
4. Zhujiajiao Town  
5. Zhangyan Town  
6. Jiading Town  
7. Nanxiang Town  
8. Xinchang Town  
9. Chuansha Town  
10. Gaoqiao Town
Fengjing Town
Liantang Town
Zhangyan Town
Jiading Town
Nanxiang
Town
Xinchang Town
Chuansha Town
Gaoqiao Town
Reasons to Choose the Concept of Cultural Ecology

- Cultural ecology is the sum of all cultural achievements of a long process of civilization, that a nation has formed in different living environments and under a certain space condition, including natural cultural landscape, historical relics, cultural classics, religious culture, folk culture, folk art, celebrity culture and other cultural and ecological elements.
Cultural ecology advocates studying the law of cultural production and development from the interactions among various variables of human, nature, society and culture, in order to seek the special appearance and patterns of cultural development in different regions -- cultural diversity.

In June 2007, the Ministry of Culture established the first National Cultural and Ecological Conservation Zone – the Min’nan Cultural and Ecological Conservation Experimental Zone. By 2014, 18 National Cultural and Ecological Conservation Experimental Zones have been established.
The Cultural Ecology of Loushang Village in Guizhou Province
Water Circulation Model of Loushang Village
Human Transformation Process of Natural Geographical Space

Nature → Village → Market Town → City

Farming → Farming → Trading → Trading

Township?
Cultural Ecology System

Limit

Environment

Natural Geographical Space

Production and Living Space

Cultural Activities

Human

Dynamic Changes

Timeline

Cultural Ecology
Cultural Ecology of Xinchang Town
The Historical Evolution and Industrial Change of Xinchang Town

- In the Tang Dynasty, when Xinchang was a seaside resort, it was popularly called “Shisuntan” and later called “Shisunli”. At the end of the Tang Dynasty, Xinchang began to produced salt and became a “town”, so it started to collect taxes.

- After the Five Dynasties, salt production was the individual behavior of salt producer, the formal saltern has not been formed yet.
During the Ganyou Period of the late Han Dynasty, official saltern began to appear in Xinchang.

During the Jianyan Period of Song Dynasty, the official saltern called “Xiasha Saltern” was set 10 kilometers north of the Xinchang. As the south field of the saltern, Xinchang became a salt distribution center. Merchants settled in, and the market flourished. The “Salt System of China” recorded the related situation of salt production in Xinchang.
In the early Yuan Dynasty, because of the migration of Headquarters of Xiasha Saltern, Shisunli became the new saltern, named “Xinchang” (which means “new saltern” in Chinese). At that time, blooming economy and increasing revenue made Xinchang officially become an administrative town.

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In the Jiajing Period of Ming Dynasty, because of the harassing of Japanese pirates, originally bustling Xinchang town was significantly affected.

In the late Ming Dynasty, as the estuary of Yangtze River narrowed, silt deposited in the estuary, and the land expanded, salt water gradually decreased.
In the Daoguang Period of Qing Dynasty, the mainland gradually extended to the sea. The distance from Xinchang Town to the sea has reached 30 Li. As the salt output dropped significantly, it was no longer suitable as a saltern.

Residents in Xinchang Town grew cotton and rice in the original reed fields. Men grew cotton while women wove cloth, and the industry has gradually shifted its focus to grain, cotton, mulberry and the handicraft industry. Traditional craftsmanship such as weaving and embroidering have been preserved to this day. With the rise of agriculture and textile industry, Xinchang Town, which no longer produced salt, kept developing in both aspects of economy and culture.
Qianqiu Bridge: before 2013 (left) in 2017 (right)

Ma’an Bridge and Shibo Bank: before 2013 (left) In 2017 (right)
Residents enjoyed the cool beside the Qinglong Bridge
Table: Intangible Cultural Heritage Rank and Directory in Xinchang Town

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Intangible Cultural Heritage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National-level</td>
<td>Luogushu, Jiangnan Sizhu-music, Lute (Pudong style)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal-level</td>
<td>Salt selling (dance), Range of flowers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District-level</td>
<td>Homemade cloth craft, the technique of warping trangle-dzongzi (Pudong), cultivation of Fenglu prunus persica, Wood carving (Pudong)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lute training course of Pudong style

Performance of Luogushu
Daily Rehearsal Activities of Traditional Sizu Opera in Xinchang Town
Religious Belief of Residents

Nanshan Temple

Nanshan Temple under construction (2017)

Dongyue Temple

Jesus Chapel
Survey on Interpersonal Relationship

- To sum up, Xinchang Town has good interpersonal relationship.
- ① Local residents have a close relationship with each other, and a stable network of relationships has formed by long-term mutual helpfulness;
- ② Incomers universally accept the concept of “slow life”, thus quickly adapt to the lives in Xinchang Town and build a deep relationship with their neighbors.
Artist Studios and Practitioners in Xinchang Town

A stone carving shop

A clay shop

A jewelry shop and the booth
Tourist Survey

Background of Interviewees

- **Percentage Distribution of Interviewees by Age Group:**
  - 10-19: 3%
  - 20-29: 10%
  - 30-39: 19%
  - 40-49: 10%
  - 50-59: 10%
  - 60-69: 48%

- **Percentage Distribution of Interviewees by Current Residence:**
  - Nearby: 52%
  - Shanghai City: 39%
  - Other Cities: 6%
  - Unanswered: 3%

- **Recognition of Xinchang Feature**

  - **Have you visited other famous towns?**
    - Yes: 26%
    - No: 58%
    - Unanswered: 16%

  - **Do you think the new place has its own特色?**
    - Yes: 45%
    - No: 39%
    - Unanswered: 16%
- Recognition of Xinchang Culture

- Willingness to Visit Again
Problems Solved by the Study on Cultural Ecology of Historic Towns

- Homogenization of City-Town-Village
**Value Revaluation:** Revaluate the Core Value of Famous Historic and Cultural Towns

- Xinchang Spirit—Pudong Spirit—Shanghai Spirt

**Value Interpretation:** Core Value Interpretation System of Famous Historic and Cultural Towns

**Value Transfer:** the Influence of Famous Historic and Cultural Towns on Future Life Pattern