Research on Art and Design for Rural Revitalization in the Context of Ecological Civilization Construction

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Abstract: Ecological environment is related to human survival, ecological civilization is related to people’s well-being, rural ecological revitalization is a necessary step on the road to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and building ecological civilization is an important goal in the modernization process of socialism with Chinese characteristics. The new agricultural production model, the new rural construction scene and the new farmers’ way of life have drawn a new development blueprint, which is the best answer to the implementation of the national rural revitalization strategy. Based on the general environment of ecological civilization construction in the world, this paper discusses the relationship between ecological civilization construction and rural revitalization in China; then, it points out the existing problems of China’s rural ecological environment and explores the feasibility of ecological civilization construction in rural ecological environment; finally, it intervenes in the development of rural revitalization by means of artistic design, so as to jointly build modern rural ecological industries, construct a rural ecological and livable environment and build a beautiful China Contribution.

Keywords: Construction of ecological civilization; Rural revitalization; Three rural areas; Ecological revitalization; Art design; Sustainable development.

1. Introduction

The 18th National Congress of the Party has put the construction of ecological civilization in an important position in the overall layout of “five-in-one”, highlighting the special position of ecological civilization construction in national development, in the construction of the Party and in people’s peace and happiness. The revitalisation of the countryside is a major strategy to be implemented by China in the coming decades since the 19th Party Congress, and as an important foundation for the revitalisation of the countryside, ecological revitalisation is inextricably linked to the revitalisation of rural industries, talents, culture and organisation. He pointed out that the solution to the “three rural issues” (agriculture, rural areas and farmers) must always be the top priority of the whole Party[1]. In the context of the new era, it is worth paying attention to and thinking about how to intervene in the construction of the countryside by means of artistic design, with ecological revitalization as the guide.

2. Why to Build Ecological Civilization and Why to Revitalize the Countryside

Human development is inseparable from getting along with nature, and the harmonious coexistence between human beings and nature is an important way to promote the construction of ecological civilization. In the face of global warming, declining biodiversity, atmospheric pollution, declining forest resources, land desertification, water pollution and other environmental problems, every citizen of the world needs to work together to restore a good ecological environment. The rapid development of science and technology in the information age will inevitably lead to many uncontrollable factors, but none of them can be left alone in building a globally friendly ecological environment.

2.1 The Construction of an Ecological Civilisation is the Inevitable Result of Human Development

The construction of ecological civilization is a historical development trend, a major achievement of human social progress, and an inevitable requirement for realizing the harmonious coexistence of man and nature[2]. The history of human social development has evolved from the “agricultural civilization” of the initial agrarian society, to the “industrial civilization” after the industrial revolution, and then to the “ecological civilization” that mankind has subconsciously begun to build in the modern information age when faced with the problem of survival. In the modern information age, mankind is faced with the problem of survival and has subconsciously begun to build an “ecological civilization”. The industrial civilisation era has freed people from the manual labour of traditional agricultural civilisation and created a constant stream of so-called anthropocentric social values, disconnecting nature from human development and laying down hidden dangers for global ecological problems; while the ecological civilisation, as a rethinking of industrial civilisation, has abandoned the anthropocentric values of industrial civilisation and moved towards an anthropocentric ecological outlook, in line with The direction of the development path of the socialist ecological civilisation concept.

As early as the early 1960s, Western scholars began to study the environmental problems caused by the development of industrial society, and it is noteworthy that people also began to awaken to the deteriorating living environment. In the field of landscape ecological design, we must mention Ian McHargue, the father of ecological design, whose book Designing with Nature studied the relationship between man and nature from the perspective of ecology, clarifying the catastrophic and existential crisis caused by man’s predatory exploitation of nature, and emphasising that the right way to get along is for man and nature to live together in harmony. Building an ecological civilisation is a matter of human survival, the well-being of the people and the future of the nation, and is an important strategic task for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Only when human beings
respect nature, conform to nature, protect nature, maintain a
cordial relationship with nature, and purify the human
civilization system, will nature return to human beings and
continue to reproduce generation after generation, and human
history and civilization will continue to be written.

2.2 The Ecological Reality of Revitalising the Countryside

The change in lifestyle and the development of economic
industries have made environmental pollution in the
countryside the most serious problem threatening the
sustainable development of the countryside. The economic
benefits brought by reform and opening up have made people
faint-heartedly develop industry at the expense of the
environment, resulting in the derailment of ecological
civilization and development construction. Many capitalists
have gone out of their way to destroy nature, and thus a series
of social and ecologial problems have aroused the alarm of
ecological and environmental scholars and other relevant
researchers. Although, more and more people are becoming
more aware of the environment, the actions taken are
obviously very insufficient and the speed of governance is far
from catching up with the extent of damage and pollution.
Perhaps the ecological problems we see now, such as
warming, water pollution and reduced biodiversity, are just
the tip of the iceberg, and there are more hidden hazards
waiting to erupt. But the Party’s elevation of ecological
civilisation to an important part of its national strategy is
already an important step forward for ecological protection.

The disappearance of the famous ancient civilisation of
Loulan is closely linked to mankind’s uncontrolled use of
nature and the destruction of the ecological balance. The
impact of human activities on Lop nor led to the final
drying up of the lake, and the originally fertile land, abundant water
and lush oases disappeared in the process of building the
ancient city of Loulan of hundreds of thousands of square
metres. We can clearly see that in using nature irrationally and
handling the relationship with nature, it will be self-inflicted
and form a catastrophic event that is irreversibly installed.
In many backward rural areas of China there are still some
ecologically destructive production methods. It is necessary
for the state to enact laws to regulate them, and it is necessary
for human beings to take the initiative to realize the serious
consequences of environmental pollution.

2.3 The Relationship between the Revitalization of
the Countryside and the Construction of Ecological
Civilization

Promoting the revitalization of the countryside in an
integrated manner has a positive influence on the construction
of ecological civilization in the Party and the country, and is
of great significance to building a beautiful China and
accelerating the development of rural agriculture. This
initiative can show the Party’s determination to provide an
effective way to achieve the next historical goal of socialism
with Chinese characteristics, in which all people live to
achieve common prosperity. Accelerating the modernisation
of the rural governance system and the ability to govern,
accelerating the modernisation of agriculture and rural areas,
and taking the road of socialist rural revitalisation with
Chinese characteristics will make agriculture a promising
industry, farmers an attractive occupation, and the countryside
a beautiful home where people can live and work in peace and
happiness. Building an ecological civilization is an inevitable
requirement and a major task for the in-depth implementation
of the scientific concept of development and the
comprehensive construction of a moderately prosperous
society, and it points the way to protecting the ecological
environment and achieving sustainable development. [3]

Building a new countryside with a beautiful environment lies
in putting the rural revitalization strategy into place
effectively. Only by putting the work into place will our
ecological civilization take a step forward, and “moving
towards a new era of ecological civilization and building a
beautiful China” is an important part of realizing the Chinese
dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

The construction of ecological civilization provides new ideas
and ways to achieve the sustainable development of resources
and the environment, and the ecological civilization system is
a system of rules of conduct for dealing with the relationship
between man and nature. The revitalization of the countryside
and the construction of ecological civilization are both
directions to strive for a better life.

2.4 Based on the Countryside is the Soul of Revitalizing
the Countryside

The countryside is the essence of the Chinese countryside, the
treasure of Chinese culture and the soul of rural construction.
As Mr Fei Xiaotong said in his book Rustic China, it is
mentioned at the beginning of the book that, from the
grassroots level, Chinese society is rustic. In the vast river of
culture, Chinese rural culture is about inheritance, and it is the
passing on of the cultural lineage from one generation to the
next that has preserved the rich and colourful cultural forms
that exist today. The roots of China lie in the countryside
rather than in the cities, and the roots of the countryside lie in
the peasants who live there, while the roots of the peasants lie
in the land that nourishes human beings. Although such a
thing is considered unhygienic or a bad habit nowadays, we
have to admit that the Chinese people’s affection for the land
is in their blood and bones, and it is difficult to replace it with
other things.

Revitalizing rural culture is the key and difficult part of rural
revitalization, because it is the pillar of thought and spiritual
support, and the soul of national culture. The revitalization of
rural culture is an important element for the prosperity of
industry, ecological livability and effective governance of the
countryside, as well as an important way to achieve the goal of
rural revitalization. Farming culture has a direct relationship
with agricultural production, and the working experience and
agricultural techniques of our ancestors have laid a solid
foundation for modern agriculture. The revitalization of
the countryside must be inseparable from how to inherit
traditional culture. Any culture needs a specific carrier, and an
important carrier of traditional culture is the countryside
culture. Therefore, the construction of rural culture needs to
be based on the traditional culture of the countryside, follow
the laws of rural development, protect the form of village
construction and keep up with the times. To visualize
traditional culture in a modern way, art design is a proven way
to help revitalize the countryside.

Volume 4 Issue 7, 2022
www.bryanhousepub.org
3. Art and Design Can Help Revitalise the Countryside

In order to revive the nation, the countryside must be revitalized. From the perspective of culture, rural revitalization is the soul; from the perspective of ecology, rural revitalization is the key; from the perspective of industry, rural revitalization is the driving force; from the perspective of talents, rural revitalization is the guiding standard; from the perspective of organization, rural revitalization is the cohesive force. The General Secretary emphasizes that after the comprehensive removal of poverty in 2020, the rural revitalization strategy as the focus shifts, and the removal of poverty is not the end, but the new life and new struggle of the people. The starting point of the struggle. On the occasion of the 110th anniversary of Tsinghua University in 2021, General Secretary Xi Jinping visited Tsinghua Academy of Fine Arts and pointed out that fine arts, art, science and technology complement each other, promote each other, and are mutually beneficial. We should play an important role in serving economic and social development, apply more art elements and artistic elements to urban and rural planning and construction, enhance the aesthetic flavour and cultural taste of cities and towns, and better serve the people’s needs for a high quality of life with the results of art. We should enhance cultural confidence, use beauty as a medium and strengthen international cultural exchanges. It can be seen that art and design play an irreplaceable role in building the countryside to enhance national cultural self-confidence.

3.1 The Ecological Concept of Sustainable Development

The relationship between man and nature, man and space, and man and man has existed since the beginning of human history, and the exploration and recording of nature in China has always reflected the wisdom of our ancestors. It is not only a concentrated expression of the traditional Chinese view of creation, but also of the inseparability of materials and craftsmanship. The discipline of art and design adheres to the concept of sustainable development, which is a scientific concept that ensures the development of human beings in the present while leaving the survival and development of future generations, and is the result of human beings’ reflection on the global environmental pollution and extensive ecological damage caused by the process of industrial civilisation. The integration of the concept of green sustainability into environmental design is a trend and a social and ethical norm that cannot be violated.

The vast rural areas are the basis of China’s economic and social development, and the implementation of the concept of green development and the construction of ecological civilisation cannot be achieved without the construction of a beautiful environment with green hills and blue skies and white clouds in the countryside. However, since the reform and opening up, China’s rural economy and society have undergone tremendous development, while the problem of environmental pollution has become increasingly prominent. The problem of rural environmental pollution and its management has gradually attracted the widespread attention of scholars.

3.2 The Shaping of Art and Design for Rural Revitalisation

The revitalization of the countryside is an all-round development of the countryside, which includes the “five revitalizations” (revitalization of rural industries, revitalization of rural talents, revitalization of rural culture, revitalization of rural ecology, revitalization of rural organizations). The direct means of art design is mainly reflected in the following three aspects: ecological strategy to promote the ecological revitalization of the countryside; artistic charm to promote the cultural revitalization of the countryside; and design landing to drive the revitalization of the countryside industry.

3.2.1 Ecological strategies to promote rural ecological revitalization

Rural ecology is the focus of rural governance, a key link in rural revitalization and an important aspect of socialist ecological civilization construction. Adhering to the Party’s ecological concept of “green water and green hills are golden mountains” and taking the path of green development is a shortcut to the orderly and effective implementation of rural ecological revitalization. In recent years, many villages in China have adopted ecological strategies to restore their environment, achieving remarkable results and being quite effective. The construction of rural ecological civilisation is related to urban and rural development, and is the key to the long-term development of the rural economy. Focusing on the ecological problems and ecological pressure faced during the development of modernised agriculture is the starting point for ecological revitalisation. Looking at the rural areas that have made effective achievements in poverty eradication, a very important point is that they have transformed their local ecological advantages into advantages for economic development, and some of them have used modern scientific and ecological technological means to improve their traditional production methods and achieve green transformation.

In the case of aquaculture in the Lake District, for example, the shrimp + rice symbiotic cycle system and the fish + vegetable symbiotic cycle system are two production models that combine ecology and industry: the water is purified by rice and vegetables to provide a good ecological environment for lobsters and fish, the faecal remains of lobsters and fish provide food for microorganisms, and the microorganisms in turn provide nutrients for rice and vegetables by decomposing the remains, and the two green cycle production models form a virtuous circle. There are many other such ecological strategies, such as mulberry-based fish ponds, photovoltaic greenhouses, tourism agriculture and other eco-agricultural methods that follow the laws of nature and adopt ecological strategies to promote rural development. So eco-agriculture and design-agriculture all show the determination and significant strength of our Party and country in ecological construction, adding to the realization of rural revitalization.

3.2.2 Artistic charm promotes the revitalization of rural culture

The position of art as a carrier of culture in passing on existing culture and realising the revitalisation of rural culture should
not be underestimated. Although many places in China have started to use artistic techniques to promote local culture, the methods used are incorrect and the forms used are too vulgar, failing to give good play to the value that art should have in promoting culture. Chinese landscape painting is about the perfect fusion of form and air, about spatial texture, and about the variety of techniques and effects that can be presented. In the process of artistic intervention in the countryside, one should fully investigate the local history and culture, refine the elements of expression and highlight local characteristics for innovation, rather than blindly following the trend and copying them. Looking around the world, China is not the only country that puts effort into its rural culture, other countries also pay attention to the development of rural characteristics, the most representative of the British countryside, pay attention to their nostalgic style, pay attention to the preservation of the natural landscape, rural scenery, traditional culture, built the most beautiful countryside in the world. These experiences of their countryside development have implications for the creation of our countryside.

The revitalisation of rural culture with artistic empowerment requires cultural refinement, finding artistic elements that reflect rural characteristics and cultural creativity, creating rural cultural brands, and showing the charm of artistic revitalisation of rural culture. The construction of rural culture not only contributes to rural economic development, but is also effective in enhancing rural cultural confidence. Thus, to enhance rural cultural development, artistic empowerment is urgently needed.

3.2.3 Designing the ground to drive the revitalisation of rural industries

The most direct and effective way to revitalise rural industries is to put design results on the ground, which can directly promote the economy of rural enterprises and become an important channel for farmers to export their products. Rural industries need to be planned as a whole, to establish a long-term plan of green development and sustainable development concepts, to respect the facts of rural ecology, to respect the laws of social development, to change the mode of economic development, and to take the path of green and sustainable economic development.

Promoting the revitalization of rural industries by design requires cultivating new cultural industries. The increase in consumption level has made more people learn to select their own way of travelling selectively and their requirements for quality of life have increased. Therefore, in the process of rural tourism development, we need to promote the integration of cultural tourism with other industries in order to diversify the cultural tourism industry and develop the whole area, and to provide high-quality cultural tourism products to meet different consumer needs. Innovate ways to integrate cultural tourism, cultivate and develop new artistic and cultural industries, promote the classicisation and ritualisation of folk culture experiences, artistic festivals and exhibitions and other forms of activities, and integrate them into the construction of rural tourism areas, special residential houses and field complexes. Use new media communication platforms to expand marketing channels for art and cultural tourism, turn the countryside into a punching bag destination and tourist attraction, and promote the development of the rural cultural tourism industry. Traditional handicrafts and agricultural products are processed and packaged through design and art to form cultural derivatives, and bringing out local characteristics through tourists and the internet has become a popular way to develop the modern rural tourism industry.

4. Conclusion

The successful implementation of the rural revitalisation strategy requires all-round and multi-faceted efforts, and the results achieved by art design in helping rural revitalisation, as one of the many ways, are encouraging at this stage. This process is also a manifestation of our organizational revitalization. When the countryside is livable, the infrastructure is up to date and the educational resources are abundant, more talents will enter the countryside, thus achieving the goal of revitalizing rural talents. Therefore, the five elements of ecological revitalization, cultural revitalization, industrial revitalization, organizational revitalization and talent revitalization interact with each other and are interdependent. It is worthwhile for us to pay attention to the construction of ecological civilization and intervene in the construction of villages with the method of ecological design.

Acknowledgement

The paper is supported by “Construction and Implementation of the Practice Platform for School-Enterprise Cooperation Education of Professionals” in North China University of Technology Academy of Art Design, and the project No.: 108051360022XN605.

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