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The protection and development of public space in China historic town: taking Anju Historic Town as an example

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Abstract. This article analyzes the protection and development strategy of Chinese historic towns and their public spaces. Within this context, the paper then focuses on the importance of protecting the public spaces of historic towns. Taking the Anju Historic Town as an example, we analyze its historic and cultural heritage and characteristics and collected the opinions of local residents and tourists on the town's public space through field research. In this paper, we explore the methods of protection and development of Anju's public space, and conclude that it is best to enhance the quality of public space through landscape creation and by working on developing unique tourism features. Through combining this with Anju's cultural heritage, tourists will be able to better experience the cultural charm of the historic town in-depth.

Keywords: historic town conservation, public space, cultural tourism development

1. Introduction

1.1. Background information

Historic towns generally refer to settlements with a history of more than one hundred years. In China, many such towns with profound historical and cultural heritage can be found across the country. These towns are physical manifestations of the urban identity, and their historical and social values manifest themselves as a form of unique spatial texture and architectural environment. These material elements constitute of traditional historic and cultural features and they breed unique identity characteristics and societal cultures. In these towns, people can touch history that have already passed away.

Protecting and preserving historic towns has far-reaching significance. in terms of cultural protection, a historic town is a living embodiment that showcases the development of civilization. To protect a historic town means to protect the creativity and talents from the last thousands of years – it means to protect the culture of these historic towns. Secondly, protection is a requirement for heritage conservation. As Shan Jixiang, Director of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage of China said, "For cultural heritage, protection is not an end, utilization is not an end. The real purpose is heritage." From the perspective of the local economy, protecting historic towns can optimize and adjust the structure of historic towns, broaden their functions, extend the industrial chain, and ultimately, improve the quality of life for remaining residents.

In China, the following principles are followed for the protection and renewal of historic towns: First, is authenticity. Liao [8] pointed out that in order to ensure the authenticity of culture and to protect the local spatial pattern, built environment, etc., one cannot subjectively create material spaces that do not belong to the place. Second, integrity. Gao and Ren [3] explained that integrity refers to the protection of traditional culture and the protection of spatial elements, which include natural features, patterns, streets and lanes of a historic town, as well as individual buildings. Third, continuity, Gao and Ren [3] emphasized that sustainability requires that protection and renewal measures conform to the expansion pattern of a historic town. New changes must focus on protecting its residents and maintain the original natural living state through protection and renewal. It is contingent on this, that a historic town can then meet the new needs of residents for their future life.

Although the protection of historic towns in China got a late start, many gains have been made thanks to continuous advancements with construction technology. As both central and local governments pouring financial support, many towns' infrastructure have improved, as have the residential living environments. In this process, changes have been made to protect historic wooden buildings, improve street environments, the quality of town life, as well as promoting tourism, reports the Oriental Morning Post. At the same time however, there are also many disadvantages. At present, many historic towns are facing the risk of damage caused by over-development. Yang [17] noted that the rapid development of tourism in historic towns have

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brought unprecedented pressure on historic towns, largely manifesting in the oversaturation of tourism, over-visualization, and over-commercialization. In short, many cities regard the development of tourism services as an opportunity for economic growth. As a result, the number of commercial outlets has increased significantly, causing traditional styles to fade as new developments destroy existing spaces. One classic example is of the famous Lijiang historic town. Thanks to commercial over-development, the original historic town's atmosphere has been destroyed. As Zhang [21] said, using a blind approach when looking at the quantity, historical value, and revolutionary significance of protecting cultural relics, will end in the ignorance of the other values of the historic city. This mindset will lead to the obliteration of many unique features

This article chose to focus on the historical town of Anju as an example in the discussion of the protection and development of the public spaces in this heritage. As a historic town located in southwestern China, Anju has a long history, but it is still inhabited. Many residents still live here, and the site buildings are well-preserved. After a series of protective developments, Anju remains open to the public, attracting many tourists. The article will first discuss and summarize the development process, the significance and direction of China's public space as well as existing problems to be solved. Then, the article will analyze the status quo and existing protection methods implemented in the Anju Historical Town. We address these combined with on-site questionnaire surveys, and finally, explore ways to reasonably protect and develop the current public space of the historic town.

1.2. Research aim

The aim of this research is to discuss how to protect and develop the public spaces of historic town in the context of current historic towns protection in China.

1.3. Research questions

This research will focus on two main questions among public spaces in historic towns in china:

- 1. In China, what is the significance of the development of public spaces to the residents and tourists?
- 2. What are the missing parts in the public space development of Anju Historic Town? How can it be designed and developed?

2. Literature review

Introduction

This chapter will introduce existing strategies of protection and development for historic towns in China and discuss the contradictions and conflicts that occur when balancing these strategies and the maintenance of the historic towns' original features. Then, we focus on the strategy employed for public space protection in the WuLongPu Historic Town in Yunnan Province as an example to discuss existing models for public space protection and development of historic towns.

2.1. The protection of historic towns in China

2.1.1. The strategies for protection and development of historic towns in China

The Regulations on the Protection of Famous Historical and Cultural Cities and Famous Villages as promulgated by the State Council posits that the protection of historic towns should follow the principles of scientific planning and strict protection, maintain and continue their traditional patterns and historical features, and maintain the authenticity and integrity of historical and cultural heritage [3].

Strategies for the protection of historic towns in China are largely centered on the protecting historic town dwellings and the physical context. These historic buildings can reflect not only the way people used to live and the artistic preferences of that time but also signify an important marker of a certain era's civilization and culture. Today, many of China's remaining historic residential buildings are privately still in use. The majority are changed or renovated at will due to the lack of systematic guidance. As a result, many 'protected' historic houses are just superficial imitations, losing their original historical features [1]. Therefore the protection of historic Chinese dwellings should focus on retention of authenticity and restoration of details and scales. Generally, the restorations should focus on the following rules: (1) Protecting "Inheritance": A building's traditional culture should be retained and protected, studied and evaluated. (2) Restoring details to the greatest extent and preserve the building's authentic historical atmosphere. (3) Using targeted plans for protection and restoration of each historic house, and formulate restoration methods based on the degree of preservation of each building. (4) Improving relevant policies and regulations on the protection of historic homes. (5) Enhancing citizen awareness on the importance of protecting historic residential buildings and inheriting/passing on traditional culture [11].

At this time, the government is also employing different strategies for the protection of the physical context. These include context integration, context juxtaposition, and context continuity [14]. The "context" here referred to is of urban forms such as streets, alleys, archways, religious holy sites, and other spaces that were formed in history as a complete expression of architecture and urban imagery [16]. Future such strategies should strengthen the excavation and research aspect of historic towns and their strongly embedded value systems in traditional culture. Ultimately, these strategies should focus on combining the protection of physical contexts for display purposes and to pass on down to future generations.

Existing strategies for development of historic towns are mainly focused on the development of tourism and the protection of historic towns' residential and cultural heritage. These have laid a good foundation for the development of tourism. In this sense, the overarching strategies are as follows: (1) To cultivate the natural environment such that it integrates into the historic town's scenery and citizen life. (2) To optimize the design of existing land-use layouts and rationally work towards clear spatial viewing corridors. (3) To retain the residents' living and working patterns. (4) To fully explore the connotation of historical context and create a strong scenic atmosphere [10].

2.1.2. Existing problems in the protection of historic towns in China

At present, there are still many problems with the way historic towns are protected. (1) There is too much of a focus on protecting as many heritage as possible, removing limitations on the scope of what buildings are protected. Many restrictions focus on limiting building height, size, and architectural style. (2) Developers hold contempt for protecting cultural heritage, especially when considering its customs and surrounding environmental protection methods. (3) The growth of historic town tourism has also brought about many adverse effects, such as destructive development and construction. Heritage differs from tourism in that it is non-renewable. In only considering economic interests as an end goal, the priorities are instead pinned on tourism as opposed to heritage protection. Commercialization caused by the excessive pursuit of developing tourist attractions has led to the loss of traditional lifestyles and customs native to historic towns. (4) Historic towns do not exhibit any form of local characteristics nor a unique "business card", likely due to a lack of overall reasonable assessment of the towns themselves. (5) There is no implementation of tourism management. Some historic towns place no restrictions on tourism and fail to control tourist behavior, leading to severe damage to cultural heritage.

2.2. The protection and development of public space in Chinese historic towns

2.2.1. The protection status of public space in historic towns in China

No unified standards or norms exist for the protection and development of public spaces in historic towns in China. Take WuLongPu Historic Town for example. This traditional Chinese town in Yunnan Province in Southwest China, focused the development of its public space around the locals' daily life needs. The town focused repairs on addressing the issues of overfragmented areas and improperly-used public spaces. As a result, renovations were centered on digging out and rebuilding the entire street layout that was established on the daily routine of local residents. Demands in tourism naturally assisted in the continued development as needs evolved, making it such that public areas, green spaces, bodies of water and leisure spaces also meet the needs for tourist sightseeing and resting purposes. This has also encouraged residents to participate more in activities in the public space, increased their use of space, and helped foster a culturally-rich public space [7].

2.2.2. Existing strategic problems

Existing protection strategies for the public space of historic towns are focused largely on balancing the protection and development of towns whilst meeting the needs of residents and tourists. However, this form of protection is relatively one-sided, often lacking deeper integration into the local fabric. As a space with a relatively high utilization rate, public space can handle a greater variety of functions for residents and tourists alike. For example, using its public platform, the space can be amply used to spread cultural awareness of the town's customs, lifestyle and cultural heritage of local residents to curious tourists. At the same time, this space can also act as a communication platform between residents and tourists. Visitors can feel and experience life in the historic town from the perspective of its residents.

3. Public space in China

Introduction

This chapter will introduce the history of the evolution of public space in China. Through this section, we highlight the importance of public space for residents and tourists as well as the functions and responsibilities that public spaces in historic

towns can undertake in the protection and development of their spaces.

3.1. The evolution of public space in China

The spatial formation of any human settlement will inevitably be affected by the time's political, economic, and cultural aspects. Before the Song Dynasty, both the government and the masses lacked an overarching management of public space. The populace typically lived in large family settings with part of that space being divided into public spaces for familial purposes. These spaces were formed to satisfy various family activities such as gatherings and sacrificial rites. Meanwhile, the rest of this public space often formed in a spontaneous fashion: a meeting place established spontaneously by residents through conventions, or a space where people could exchange information and materials. Wu [15] showed that the Song Dynasty was the period when urban public space reached a finalized form in China. As the economy developed, people's material needs increased, and they were no longer satisfied with simply family-based internal activities. At that time, the government allowed residents to set up shops and businesses. As a result, private spaces along the street were opened to the masses, resulting in the formation of shops. The rate of utilization and multiple street functions allowed these spaces to rapidly become the main location for public space. At the same time, open areas such as riverside spaces and temple squares became open areas aimed at meeting resident needs for transactions, communication, leisure, and entertainment.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the government began to conduct a more standardized management of all regions. Zhang [20] concluded that as the economy developed and Western design concepts took root, the government increased investment in the construction of public green spaces and squares to improve the living conditions of its residents. During this period, the mobility of the population had also vastly increased. People no longer lived in groups fully dictated by family. As family-based activities lessened, the demands for family-centered public space weakened. In time, the government improved in its awareness of standardized control of space and began to create public spaces with communities as base units. Thus, public space and their functions have increasingly become more diverse.

Generally speaking, China's public space grew from essentially not existing, to gradually transforming from spontaneous composition into orderly, rational planning. People are slowly beginning to pay attention to the quality and function of public space. This same shift and change can be seen in the public spaces of historic towns. Wei et al. [13] stated that the shift from a focus on private space to the increased demand for public space is a sign that the modern small family model has replaced the traditional family model. The public space not only carries the original functions, but also inherits the functions transferred from the private space.

3.2. The importance of public space

As the German social theorist Hamabeth once mentioned: "The purpose of public space is to establish an order." The existence of the public space in a historic town offers the systemic functions of exchange, guidance, power, and passage. Li [6] explained that The market mainly represents a public space used for exchange. It is an important space for this function – changing the original chaotic channels into an orderly and fair space, that can facilitate the exchanging of information and goods. Public spaces that play a guiding function, as represented by gathering places, allow individual behaviors in large activities to become more organized, restrictive, and guided. The public space, as a symbol of power, is more representative. It allows the class in power the authority to restrict other classes and is an important space to maintain social order. The function of the transit space is most closely related to people's lives and establishes the order of the public need to travel. In conclusion, once a public space is established, order will enforce its regulation and maintenance.

3.3. Significance of the development of public space in historic towns

Having inherited the traditional family gathering system, the original function and scale of public space cannot fully adapt to the requirements of modern societal life. As a result, it is particularly crucial to look closely when planning the development of public spaces in historic towns. Li [6] concluded that the formation of historic town functions is a dynamic process that continuously adapts to people's changing needs for public space and social order construction. As such, it follows that the development of public space in historic towns should also follow this rule - seeking a balance between the humanization of space and orderliness. At present, the historic town not only serves the function of being a residence for its locals, but also has another vital role as a tourism resource. Therefore, a reasonable development of public space must look both at avoiding affecting the residents' activity space but also work the public space such that it might guide tourists. Ideally, renovations should allow tourists to become more integrated into the historic town, experience its vibrant town life, and enhance the sense of interaction between residents and tourists. One way to assist in this process is to actively implement modern technology.

This will not only facilitate the daily life of the residents and the travel experience of tourists but also set a precedent for the long-term maintenance of the historic town. Developing and protecting historic towns and their public spaces can help the entire

town adjust and optimize its layout/structure, broaden town functions, extend the industrial chain of the local economy, and increase the income of local residents. It can also promote the collaboration of, and increase interaction between urban and rural areas. Tourists from the city espouse political, economic, cultural, and consciousness information of the modern city to the historic town. In this exchange, local residents can choose to accept concepts of modern consciousness and customs without having to leave their towns and improve the quality of their town. Such developments can also lead to the excavation, protection and inheritance of town culture. This would allow for the uplifting, development and conscious action to promote the historic town and contribute to local cultural camaraderie.

4. Anju Town – case study

Introduction

In the following section, the content elaborate on this through an overview of the town by covering its historical background, distinctive culture, and current status of its public space. Using a questionnaire survey run on residents and tourists about their views on the town itself and its use of public space, gaining a clearer understanding of Anju's planned direction of development for public space.

4.1. Brief overview

Anju historic town is a famous historic and cultural town in China, rated a national AAAA-level scenic spot which is the second most important level in a five-level grading scale of tourist attractions in China. Anju has a permanent population of 12,000, with an area of about 1.5 square kilometers in size. The town is situated sixty kilometers away from Chongqing City, and located on the southern banks of where both the Qiongjiang River and Fujiang River meet. Thanks to convenient land and water transportation, there are many tourists on holiday that swarm the area (see Figure 1 for the location map). The historic streets and lanes in the Old Town district – some of which are more than 1,000 meters long – are mainly divided into three sections, with two or three-storied high traditional wooden structures on both sides (built of wooden structures and blue tiled roofs). At present, the ground floors are



Figure 1. Baidu Map javascript API, location map, 2020 [22]

Figure 2. Taken by the author, Map of Anju Hitoric Town, 2020 [23]



Figure 3. Baidu Map javascript API, Anju Historic Town and surrounding areas, 2020 [24]

largely used for shops, while the second and third floors are living spaces. One particular section of the street faces the river with an open view. The relatively well-preserved old streets are located in Huilong Street, Huoshen Temple, and Danan Street (see Figure 2 for the plan of Anju). The houses, temples, and ancestral halls on both sides were built in accordance to the mountainous terrain. Besides these, there are two residents' activity squares in town, where a series of activities are often held during traditional festivals.

4.2. Historical background

The first human settlements at the site of Anju were developed as early as 4,000 years ago. Anju Town, as it is known today, was founded in 504 AD. In the magazine Hongyan Spring and Autumn, He [5] introduced the town as the material distribution center for the Tongliang, Dazu, Tongnan, and Hechuan districts in the early Ming Dynasty, as shown in Figure 3. Silk, rice, linen, and sugar produced by Anju were transported by waterways and sold in eastern Sichuan Province and in other coastal areas. In the Qing Dynasty, merchants from historic towns gathered in Anju, making the city an important commercial hub with a prosperous economy. Merchants and immigrants from all over the country built halls in the city. At the time, these guild halls were used as public buildings and for the gathering of migrant residents. One such case, was the Huguang Guild Hall. This theater building hosted a stage inside and was fitted with grandstand seating on three sides. The whole hall was spacious enough to accommodate more than a thousand people in a meeting setting. Thanks to a bustling and varied religious scene in Anju, large numbers of palaces and temples were also constructed. In the past, it was not easy for the historic town to have 9 palaces and 8 temples. But Anju has 9 palaces and 18 temples, making it an architectural miracle in a historic town.

4.3. Features of Anju Historic Town

4.3.1. Folk customs/cultural characteristics

Historically, Anju was a center of merchant activity, and had a prospering economy. In the thick of it, many local customs and cultural heritages were formed. In Yang's [18] telling of local history, Anju saw a wave of major in-migration when Huguang residents moved to Chongqing in Sichuan Province during the Qing Dynasty. Migrant culture and local culture collided and merged, forming unique festivals, local dances, unique farming techniques, a culture of water transportation, and various religious cultures. This rich and diverse cultural heritage was passed onto future generations. Today, Anju Historic Town still hosts various activities for a great variety of traditional festivals and holidays including but not limited to the Dragon Boat Festival, Temple Fair, Guanyin Fair, City God Fair and more, as shown in Figure 4. The locals celebrate festivals and pray for a happy life.

4.3.2. Intangible cultural heritage

In addition to its local folk customs, Anju Historic Town is also home to various intangible cultural customs including colorful festivals, folk music, folk dances, and folk handicrafts. Fu [2] explained that from the perspective of tourism development, Anju Historic Town can organize its intangible cultural resources into categories as shown in Table 1. Some of these are performing arts-based, such as: dragon boat, dragon dance, Sichuan opera, Fujiang horns, and other similar performances. Others are folk handicraft activities that tourists can participate in, such as bamboo weaving, embroidery, and carving.

4.3.3. Architectural characteristics

The western Sichuan-style of architecture dominates residential design in this historic town. This can be best summarized as a style composed of wooden buildings with sloped roofing and a unique "bucket-style" structural characteristic. Wang and Xu [12] showed that this combination of architecture and Sichuan's unique topography is emphasized in the site selection layout compared to other traditional "broad, large, straight" types of structures elsewhere in the country. This unique "bucket-style" building characteristic refers to a row of columns erected along the length of the house, where each column is equipped with a purlin and rafter. The weight load from the roof is thus distributed from the purlin onto the column. Finally, a frame is formed through an addition of horizontal rows. Doufang and xianzi are then used to connect to the frame to establish the home's spatial structure. This can be seen in Figure 5. The roof is composed of a blue-tiled sloping structure, which is adapted to the local humid and rainy climate. Here, the "historic" aspect of the town's cultural heritage can be profoundly observed through its unique architectural structures.

When walking down the streets of Anju Historic Town, it is clear that many homes share very similar architectural structures. However, their door panels are frequently different, as shown in Figure 6. This is because in Anju, the door is a symbol of family wealth. Many families pay special attention to the carving of their home's door panels and taken pains to carefully preserve them. Some of these door panels are reflective of religious beliefs, family symbols and stories. Historically, the local demand for highly diverse iterations of door panels was the impetus for the birth of local woodcarving techniques. Today, we can see its effects through the different patterns on each door.

The inflow of new culture brought by an immigrants historically is not only reflected in Anju's customs but also in its rich architecture. This is most prominent when observing the "Nine Palaces and Eighteen Temples". These palaces and temples are not only a form of architecture but also the embodiment of folk culture. One example is the Huguang Guild Hall, located along Huoshen Temple Road (see Figure 7 for Huguang Guild Hall). Built in the middle of the Ming Dynasty, this hall underwent reconstruction and repairs after destruction from wars and fires. It is a well-preserved



Figure 4. Wang Xiaoguang, traditional festival activities, 2018 [25]

form of historical heritage. In the hall today, there is a renovated stage where the stage once stood that is used for performances by local actors. There is also a replica of a teahouse that is used as a venue for tourists to consume. Through this, we can observe that Anju's rich and distinctive historical heritage can be both preserved and partially used as an attraction for tourism after being protected or repaired.

Table 1. Information about the sample questionnaire [2]

Category	Content	
Performing Arts	Dragon dance, Sichuan opera, Pingshu	
Arts and Crafts	colourful craft, Wood carving, stone carving, bamboo weaving	
Folklore	County magistrate tour, rowing dragon boats, Chinesetraditional festival activities, make rice dumplings	

Note. Fu Kunlun. An Analysis of the Development Strategy of Cultural Tourism in historic towns--Taking Tongliang as an Example [J. Journal of Chongqing University of Science and Technology (Social Science Edition), 2015, 000(010):P.100-103

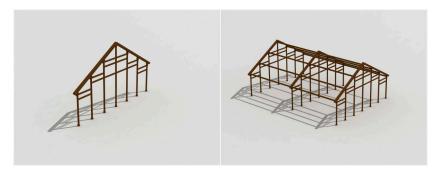


Figure 5. Chinese style construction, structure drawing, 2018 [26]



Figure 6. Taken by the author, door panels, 2020 [27]



Figure 7. Taken by the author, Huguang Guild Hall, 2020 [28]

4.4. The status quo of public spaces and their protection strategies

Originally, the public spaces of Anju Historic Town were vibrant. In addition to the streets and squares, there were also various halls for residents' activities. However, as tourism overtook the historic town of Anju, these guild halls were gradually transformed into places for tourist consumption. Many spaces were transformed into teahouses and restaurants, causing residents to shift their gathering spaces to the outdoor squares. At present, the town's public space mainly undertakes the two functions of passage and gathering. Passage-functioning spaces are closely related to local residents' daily activities as well as tourist routes. The roads of the historic town of Anju are largely in good condition, being mostly made up of stone pavement. Anju has three main streets in its historic district, which link up with the historically rich buildings of the area. This too, helps in the proliferation of tourism. Gathering spaces here are mainly composed of two squares in the historic town, which undertake the crucial functions of acting as a space for resident community activities and tourists immersing themselves in the historic district's traditional projects.

The protection strategy for Anju Historic Town is the same as that for Chinese historic town, focuses largely on building protection and tourism development. However, the protection strategy regarding public space is far from perfect. The strategy focuses on dividing the passage-functioning space and regulating the size and function for businesses. The stores typically sell local snacks, specialty products and cultural, creative products. Restaurants and hotels are re-centralized with larger shops on Anju's West Street. Resident and tourist activities spontaneously form the function allocation of the town's square. In Anju, it is not uncommon for tourists experiencing the town ending up as an interference to residents' daily activities. As a result, there is a lack of orderly management of the public space.

4.5. Data collection

To better understand the different opinions of tourists, residents, and employed staff on the life and use of public space in Anju Historic Town, adopting a questionnaire survey. The questionnaire was randomly distributed to tourists, residents, and staff throughout August of 2020. For information about the sample questionnaire, please refer to Table 2, Part of the scanned copy of the questionnaire is translated in the appendix.

The general idea of the questionnaire survey was to divide the respondents into two categories: tourists and residents or employed staff. Using multiple-choice questions as the main form of questioning, collectiong their overall impression and dissatisfaction with the state of historic towns in China, and their impression of Anju as a historic town. Other questions aimed to capture experiences, opinions, as well as the activities participants typically conducted in the public space and finally, their opinions on how to improve the status quo use of the public space. Using findings from the questionnaire survey, summarizing the thoughts of tourists, residents, and employed staff about historic towns in China and specifically regarding Anju as well as their public spaces. Finally, providing ideas for the potential ways to improve protection and the development of the public space of Anju Historic Town.

1. The over-commercialization of historic Chinese towns has led to the loss of their characteristics, leading to tourists developing a relatively singular overall impression of historic towns as a whole. Nearly 85% of the interviewees agreed with this statement, as shown in Table 3. It is worth noting that nearly 70% of them, however, also chose the option of having a strong commercial atmosphere and destroying the original atmosphere of the historic town. In response to the question of what is unsatisfactory about the development of historic towns (Table 4), 75% of respondents chose "over-commercialization, opening a large number of shops, restaurants, hotels, and bars". At the same time, nearly 60% of people find that there is no way to

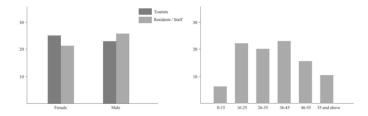


Figure 8. Information about the sample questionnaire

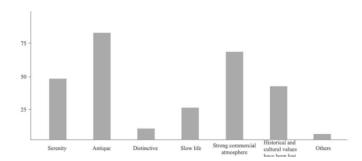


Figure 9. Interviewees 'general impression of historic town

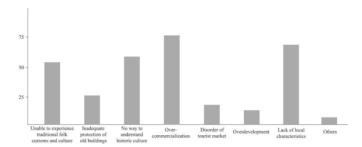


Figure 10. What is unsatisfactory about the development of historic towns

understand the history of tourism's historic town. Nearly 55% of survey-takers also believe that there is a lack of experience in traditional folk customs, culture and other characteristics. In recent years, tourism in historic towns have boomed as they

became popular spots for short-distance travel. The development of historic towns across the country tend toward the development of commerce, focusing on attracting tourists to consume and drive the local economy. However, they have neglected to protect the towns' local characteristics and lack thought on the development and dissemination of distinctive local culture. This gradually ends with the overall impression that "historic towns are all the same" to the public – something very detrimental to the long-term development for tourism of historic town.

- 2. The development of tourism resources in Anju Historic Town is promising. Tourists in Anju are largely composed of shortterm tourists (Table 5). 60% of tourists plan to travel less than one day, and 28% of tourists plan to travel for 1-2 days. When surveyed, tourists find the scenery, culture, and folklore beautiful. When asked about what is the most attractive aspect of historic towns (Table 6), nearly 90% of tourist respondents chose the option of "Historic Town Scenery", while 60% also chose "historical culture" and 31% chose "local folklore characteristics". Anju Historic Town retains many of its traditional buildings. Combined with its mountainous terrain, natural waterways, and sleek street design, the overall landscape is beautiful. The local Bashu culture is also attractive to tourists. However, when asked about what was an essential aspect of the town that could use improvement, interviewee A said that it was difficult to find an introduction to the historic town's traditions during the tour, and there was a lack of detailed introduction to several unique historical attractions. In short, there is a pervading feeling of "pointlessness" throughout their travel.
- 3. The life of the residents in Anju Historic Town is comfortable, and neighbors live together harmoniously. However, the residents' activities in the public space of Anju Historic Town are relatively simple. 84% of residents said that the activities in the public space in the historic town were centered on neighborhood exchanges, while 92% of residents said that walking was their main activity in public spaces (Table 7). In contrast, the residents who chose entertainment, family and community activities numbered less than 20%. Regarding their expectations for public space use in the historic town, many residents interviewed said that they needed more space for community activities, such as chess and card games. Still other residents with children also expressed their hope that there would be spaces for children to play safely. One of the staff B interviewed said that the characteristics of Anju Historic Town are challenging to display. There is a risk of losing history through the generations among residents, and tourists lack ways to gain access to understanding local history.
- 4. The activities of tourists in public space are singular. More than 90% of tourists said that the activities in Anju Historic Town's public space were focused only on landscape tours and photography (Table 8). When asked their opinions about public space in Anju, many tourists said that there was no space to sit and rest, or for laidback communication/interaction. interviewee C said that they wanted to find a place to experience the history, culture, and tradition of the historic town in-depth while traveling. Others felt that historic towns did not meet their expectations and expressed an interest in experiencing more. Some respondents wished to learn more about the platform of the historic town. And interviewee D expressed the hope that the tourist experience activities in the historic town can be more authentic, rich, informal, and full of fun, that could truly show the unique charm of the town itself.

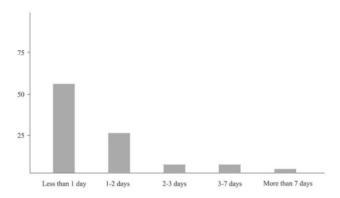


Figure 11. Interviewees planned travel time

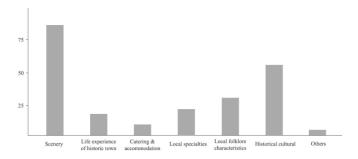


Figure 12. What is the most attractive aspect of historic towns

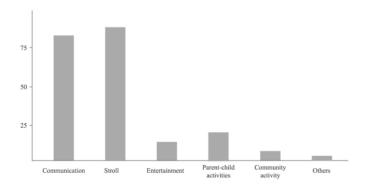


Figure 13. The activities of the interviewed residents or staffin the public space of Anju Historic Town

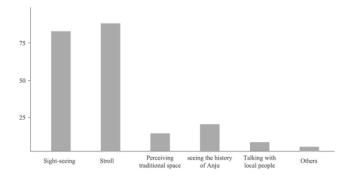


Figure 14. The activities of the interviewed tourists in the public space of Anju Historic Town

5. Discussion

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the results of above research, combine this research with existing literature, and discuss the three directions in which protection and development of the public space in Anju Historic Town can move towards to fully realize its maximum value.

5.1. Overall evaluation of the protection and development of public space in Anju Historic Town

The Anju Town Government's protection strategy is complete and orderly, but is far from perfect. The existing protection strategies are mainly aimed at the protection of historic town buildings, the creation of a historic town atmosphere, and the development of tourism resources. However, based on existing protection strategies, it is clear that a number of issues remain with the protection and development of public spaces. The protection of public spaces in historic towns should not simply take on the form of renovated streets but also have in the re-development of spaces for public activity. The case of Anju shows a lack

of focus on the creation of cultural heritage, shaping of distinctive local features, and the improvement of the quality of the local residents' living environment.

5.2. Combine the improvement of landscape quality with the protection and development of public spaces

The improvement of the human-made landscape in Anju Historic Town is dominated by historical buildings, giving full play to the historical architectural resources. In addition to this, though the streets and lanes were renovated, the road was intentionally renovated to appear as old as possible in order to maintain the "historic" atmosphere. In the protection and development of public space, landscape enhancement is also an important step. These all must properly integrate user experience in order to truly meet the different needs of both residents and tourists. In reviewing the data collected by our survey, it is clear that residents need a comprehensive living and interactive space, while tourists need comfortable rest sapec. It is particularly important to create a space for interaction that is inclusive of nature in the promotion of human-made landscapes. In order to allow residents to harbor a sense of security and comfort in an activity-centered space, it is imperative to activate the popularity and atmosphere of the region. In response to tourists' needs, the public space also should be equipped with both comfortable resting spaces and communication-oriented spaces.

Therefore, enhancing the landscape of public space can be done in such a way that it meets the needs of residents and tourists, and can also incorporate the unique architectural features of local homes as mentioned above. For example, one could consider building a pavilion with local architectural characteristics in a public space where residents can communicate or engage in various entertainment activities. Such public facilities could both shelter individuals from wind and rain and also provide residents with a more comfortable space for activity. Additionally, tourists can also rest here and use it as a platform for communication with residents to better authentically experience life in the historic town. Finally, the design of this rest space can also utilize the unique carving craftsmanship local to Anju. Current dull-looking seats can be turned into landscape sketches rich with depictions of the town, adding more visually interesting details to the space and increasing tourist interest in remaining outdoors.

5.3. Combine the cultural heritage with the protection and development of public spaces

Anju is rich with local flair, home to a variety of cultural activities, and intangible cultural heritages. Future development can focus on giving these aspects suitable space to flourish by combining them with public spaces so that tourists can truly experience Anju Historic Town's local charm. Different thematic cultural activities can be held, such as dragon boat competitions, dragon dances, or providing options to experience the production process of intangible cultural heritages such as wood carving, embroidery, and local cuisine. Visitors can watch and join in. Staff can offer simple courses to visitors, giving them a chance to complete these traditional activities with locals. By giving tourists a greater chance to participate and experience the charm of cultural heritage firsthand, they too can better understand and appreciate the locals' love for their town.

According to the questionnaire survey, many tourists found that they lacked an opportunity to learn more about historic towns. Although they know that Anju was a historic town with a rich history and culture, the lack of culturally-relevant displays and features prevented them from gaining a more in-depth understanding of the town.

Cultural offerings can utilize public spaces to further improve their range by setting up outdoor exhibitions that can reflect upon local history, culture, humanities and arts, folk customs, and local customs. Various characteristics of the historic town can be promoted according to different themes. Adding more informational stopovers can both attract and better inform tourists, giving them the opportunity to understand local history and context in greater depth. Alternatively, launch photography activities so that both residents and tourists can actively participate. The residents' understanding of the historic town can provide more tourists with tourist information points. The freshness of tourists to the historic town can also help residents discover local beauty.

5.4. Combine the development of historical and cultural tourism resources with the protection of public spaces

Anju has a wealth of tourism resources. However, without scientific and reasonable planning, the potential of the historic town remains untapped. Just as many historic towns give tourists the same impression, Anju, too, lacks distinctive local features. The cultural atmosphere remains weak, and the lack of a local spin on its tourism marketing and presentation make its development of future historical and cultural tourism resources unfavorable. In the Journal of Chongqing University of Science and Technology, Fu [2] posits that, in order to shape cultural themes and form a cultural industry chain, distinctive cultural themes are, without question, the face and "business card" of historic town tourism. Anju's Tourism Bureau should comprehensively evaluate its cultural characteristics, combine it with characteristic handicrafts, form a cultural brand, and use TV and online advertising to promote these effectively. Next, they must then re-structure the business model and revitalize the service industry, allowing for the old street to transform into a commercial pedestrian street. The shops, service facilities, family hotels, and

specialty restaurants will naturally pan out to enhance the economic vitality of the old street and increase the tourists' expected duration of stay.

If this is done in combination with well-designed public space, one can obtain double the result with half the effort. Efforts should be made to improve the "guidance" function of public spaces. This can take the form of setting up simulation experience spots in public spaces with high traffic such as roads and squares. Make it an important node of characteristic tourist routes, and create characteristic tourist routes belonging to Anju Historic Town. Multiple spots and tourist routes can be designed with different characteristics. For example, one such idea could be to create an experience-based route for migrant culture, giving full play to the actual use value of "Nine Palaces and Eighteen Temples". One stop can include the stage of the Huguang Guild Hall, where a performance might be organized to explain the historical and cultural background of the palace temples, and show reenactments of what life might have been like in the past. This would allow for a much more enriched tourist experience. It can also be combined with folklore activities in public spaces to create a tourist route for folklore experience, allowing tourists to experience the rich folklore culture of Anju Historic Town.

6. Conclusion

This paper looks to Anju Historic Town as an example, analyzes its characteristic cultural traditions and the shortcomings of its existing protection strategies. By collecting the views of local residents and tourists on the town's use of public space, our paper then discusses how to develop and protect Anju's public space. In the context of the booming "rejuvenation" economy focused on the protection and tourism development of historic spaces, it is important to re-center on meeting the needs of residents and tourists. To do so, future efforts should focus on combing the protection and development of public spaces with the development of tourism resources and the improvement of landscape quality. This would not only improve the overall quality of Anju Historic Town but also create a more distinctive tourist "business card". Looking forward, exploring more comprehensive protection and development strategies would be imperative to finding applicable, appropriate ways to address the existing development model of public spaces in historic Chinese towns and helping them form unique characteristics.

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Appendix

There were a total of 120 questionnaires were distributed in this survey, and 103 questionnaires were received. The following is the questionnaire and its translation, and the author selected some scanned copies of the questionnai

关于安居古镇的问卷调查(游客卷) A questionnaire survey on tourists in Anju Historical Town	
1. 您的性别 □ 男 □女 □其他	6. 本次古镇旅行,您的计划时间是? □不到1天 □1-2天 □2-3天 □3-7天 □7天及以上
2. 您的年龄	7. 本次古镇旅行中唿收获了哪些体验? (多选) □ 休闲放松 □ 深度漫游 □ 原拍摄影 □ 文化体验 □ 探索历史 □ 纪念品购买 □ 其它 □ 4. 你认为安居古镇目前 最需要改进 的部分是什么? 原因是?
4. 您认为古镇发展有哪些让人不满意的地方? (多选) □ 缺少传统特色体验 □ 古镇建筑保护不够完善 □ 对古镇传统文化了解匮乏、缺少途径 □ 过度商业化,大量开设商铺、饭店、旅馆、酒吧 □ 旅游秩序存在问题 □ 过度开发造成环境破坏 □ 缺乏古镇各自的特色,大多干篇一律 □ 其它 5. 您认为安居古镇什么最吸引您? (多选) □ 古镇是色 □ 古镇生活体验 □ 餐饮住宿 □ 本地转产 □ 本地转产	9. 你在安居古铜 公共空间 内的主要活动有?(多选) □景观游览、拍摄 □散步 □感知古镇传统空间 □了解古镇历史 □与当地居民交流 □其它 10. 您认为目前安居古镇公共空间目前最为缺失的部分有哪些?
□历史文化 □其它	感謝您的参与! Thank you for participating in this survey!

□其它

6. 您在此地生活 / 工作的时长有?

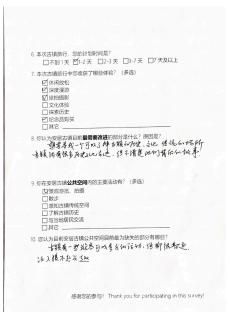
□不到1年 □1-5年 □6-15年 □16-25年 □26-45年 □46年及以上

A questionnaire survey on tourists in Anju Historical Town 1. What is your gender? 6. How long is your planned travel time? Male Female Other Less than 1 day 1-2 days 2-3 days 3-7 days More than 7 days 7. What experiences have you gained from trip? (multiple-choice question) 2. How old are you? Leisure 0-15 16-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56 and above Wander 3. What is your general impression of historic town? (multiple-choice question) Photography Experiencing culture Exploring the history Serenity Antique Distinctive Buying Souvenirs Slow life 8. What do you think is the most needed improvement in Anju Historic Town? The reason is? Strong commercial atmosphere Historical and cultural values have been lost Others 4. what is unsatisfactory about the development of historic towns? (multiple-choice question) Unable to experience traditional folk customs and culture Inadequate protection of old buildings 9.What is the activities of the interviewed tourists in the public space of Anju Historic Town? (multiple-choice question) No way to understand historic culture Sight-seeing and photography Over-commercialization Stroll Disorder of tourist market Overdevelopment Perceiving traditional space Lack of local characteristics Seeing the history of Anju ☐ Talking with local people Others_ Others 5.what is the most attractive aspect of historic town? (multiple-choice question) 10. What do you think are the most missing parts of the public space in Anju Historic Scenery Life experience of historic town Catering & accommodation Local specialties ☐ Local folklore characteristics Historical cultural Thank you for participating in this survey! 关于安居古镇居民/工作人员的问卷调查 7. 您选择在安居古镇生活或工作的原因? (多选) 1. 您的性别 □ 安逸舒适的生活或工作环境 □男 □其他 □ 民风淳朴、邻里关系和睦 □ 慢节奏的生活 2. 您的年龄 □丰富的社区活动 □0-15 □16-25 □26-35 □36-45 □46-55 □56及以上 □ 习惯了在此地生活 / 工作 3. 您对中国古镇的普遍印象是? (多选) □宁静质朴 □古色古香 8. 你认为安居古镇目前最需要改进的部分是什么?原因是? □富有地方特色 □ 体验慢生活 □ 商业气息浓厚,古镇原有氛围遭到破坏 □历史文化价值丢失 4. 您认为古镇发展有哪些让人不满意的地方? (多选) □ 缺少对传统民俗、文化等特色的体验 □ 古镇建筑保护不够完善 □ 对古镇历史展示较少,游客了解途径匮乏 9. 你在安居古镇公共空间内的主要活动有? (多选) □ 邻里间的交流 □ 散步 □ 过度商业化,大量开设商铺、饭店、旅馆、酒吧 □ 旅游秩序存在问题 □娱乐 □亲子活动 □ 社区活动 □ 其它 ___ □ 缺乏古镇各自的特色,大多干篇一律 □其它 5. 您在此地? 10. 您认为目前安居古镇公共空间最为缺失的部分有哪些? □在此地生活、工作 ___ __ 在此地生活 □ 在此地工作

感谢您的参与! Thank you for participating in this survey!

A questionnaire survey on residents/staff in Anju Historical Town	7. Why do you choose to live or work in Anju Town? (multiple-choice question)
1. What is your gender?	Comfortable living or working environment Neighbority relations
2. How old are you? O-15 Offic-25 O26-35 O36-45 O46-55 O56 and above 3. What is your general impression of historic town? (multiple-choice question)	Slow life Rich community activities Used to living/working here Others
Serenity Antique Distinctive Slow life Strong commercial atmosphere Historical and cultural values have been lost Others	8. What do you think is the most needed improvement in Anju Historic Town? The reason is?
4. what is unsatisfactory about the development of historic towns? (multiple-choice question) Unable to experience traditional folk customs and culture Inadequate protection of old buildings No way to understand historic culture Over-commercialization Discrete of tourist market Overdevelopment Lack of local characteristics Others Others Living and working here Living here Others	9.What is the activities of the interviewed tourists in the public space of Anju Historic Town? (multiple-choice question) Communication
6. How long have you lived/worked here? Less than 1 year 1-5 years 6-15 years 16-25 years 26-45 years More than 46 years	Thank you for participating in this surve
	6. 本次古镇旅行,您的计划时间是? □不到1天 □1-2天 □2-3 天 □3-7 天 □7 天及以上 7. 本次古镇旅行中您收获了哪些体验? (多选) 「 グ 付镇旅松





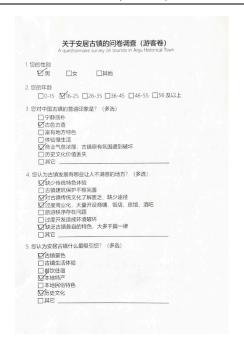
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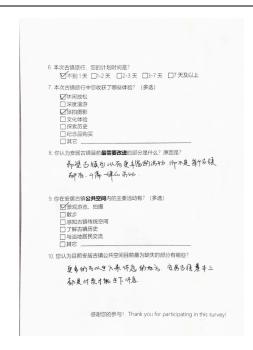
Q8. What do you think is the most needed improvement in Anju Historic Town? The reason is?

Interviewee: I want to find a place where I can learn about the historic town's history, culture, and traditions. Although the ancient town has many historical and cultural relics, I don't know its story.

Q10. What do you think are the most missing parts of the public space in Anju Historic Town?

Interviewee: There are some projects that tourists can participate in, but they are all common and uninteresting.



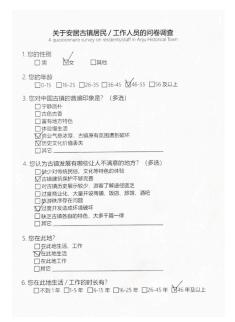


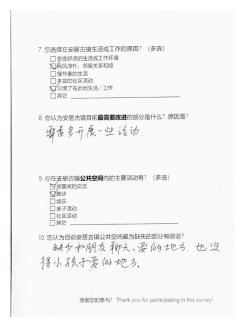
Translation:

Q8. What do you think is the most needed improvement in Anju Historic Town? The reason is? Interviewee: I hope that the historic town has more activities than the same kind of activities that every historic town has.

Q10. What do you think are the most missing parts of the public space in Anju Historic Town?

Interviewee: I hope there are more places where tourists can sit and rest. Now, most of this town are those that require payment.

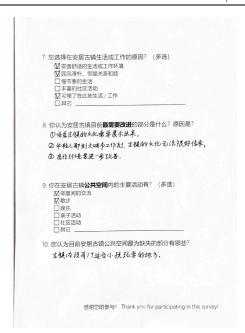




Translation:

Q8. What do you think is the most needed improvement in Anju Historic Town? The reason is? Interviewee: We need more activities.

Q10. What do you think are the most missing parts of the public space in Anju Historic Town? Interviewee: Lack of places to chat and play with friends, and no place for children to play.



Translation:

Q8. What do you think is the most needed improvement in Anju Historic Town? The reason is? Interviewee:

- 1. The culture of Anju Ancient Town needs to be displayed.
- 2. Most young people have gone to work in big cities, and the historic town's culture cannot be inherited well.
- 3. The living environment needs to be improved.
- Q10. What do you think are the most missing parts of the public space in Anju Historic Town? Interviewee: There is no place suitable for children to play.