

# Integration of Regional Culture into the Landscape Design of Rural Public Spaces: A Case Study of Xiaomaopoying Village in Enshi

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**Abstract** In the context of rural revitalization, the landscape design of public spaces in Enshi Xiaomaopoying Village presents both new opportunities and challenges. This study explores the significance of integrating regional culture into rural public spaces. Field research has been conducted to assess the current utilization of regional culture in the public spaces of Xiaomaopoying Village. Subsequently, design optimization strategies are analyzed and proposed. Additionally, the practical application of regional cultural elements is examined, in order to offer guidance for the application of cultural creation of traditional characteristic villages in rural public spaces.

**Keywords** Xiaomaopoying Village, Miao, Rural public space, Regional culture, Landscape design

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Rural public spaces serve as vital carriers for the preservation and transmission of regional culture in rural areas. Xiaomaopoying Village, a Miao village located in Hubei Province, continues to maintain the Miao language. This study adopts the perspective of landscape design in rural public spaces to investigate the pathways for the application of regional culture in rural areas, thereby contributing to the strategy for rural revitalization.

## 1 Significance of integrating regional culture into the public space of rural landscape

### 1.1 Improvement of rural environments

To effectively emphasize the distinctive characteristics of rural areas, it is essential to examine the unique cultural attributes of the village in the rural environment and integrate this culture into the rural public space. A well-designed rural environment has the potential to attract a greater number of nonlocal tourists. Analyzing the current rural environment of Xiaomaopoying Village reveals significant opportunities for enhancement. By renovating and improving the rural environment, the overall standard of living for the villagers can be elevated.

### 1.2 Cultural heritage and revitalization

The integration of regional culture into rural landscape serves as both an inheritance and a revitalization of culture. Rural areas function as significant carriers of regional culture, with the regional culture of these regions reflecting the history, humanity, architecture, production methods and other factors inherent to the rural environment. By extracting the elemental symbols of traditional architecture, handicrafts,

and traditional skills, and applying them to the landscape, it is possible to mitigate the erosion of cultural heritage. The utilization of modern advanced technology facilitates the reconstruction of traditional symbols, thereby ensuring the continuity of cultural heritage and enhancing the engagement of younger generations in understanding this culture.

### 1.3 Creation of differentiated rural area

In contemporary times, the implementation of rural revitalization strategies has led to an increasing number of designers engaging in rural design. However, amid the rapid economic development, the modern rural landscape often reflects a homogenous design aesthetic, resulting in a scenario where numerous villages exhibit similar characteristics. To mitigate this phenomenon, the incorporation of regional cultural elements into rural design can enhance the uniqueness of rural areas and improve their recognition. The transformation of cultural symbols into derivatives of agricultural products, the creation of distinctive village logos, and their application to product packaging and surrounding materials can facilitate the integration of rural industry with design<sup>[1]</sup>.

## 2 Current status of regional cultural utilization in rural public spaces

Xiaomaopoying Miao Village is situated in the northwest region of Gaoluo Town, Xuan'en County, within the Enshi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture of Hubei Pro-vince. It is recognized as the only area in Hubei that preserves complete Miao language, which has led to its designation as the "First Miao Language Village of Hubei". Currently, over one hundred

Miao families continue to utilize the Miao language in their daily communications.

### 2.1 Rare application of regional cultural elements

The application of regional culture in rural areas has the potential to enhance cultural infiltration within these regions. The village committee square serves as a crucial contact and service center for Xiaomaopoying Miao Village, playing a significant role in the overall functioning of both the village and Gaoluo Town. The village square serves as a pivotal location for leisure, social gatherings, entertainment, and transportation, constituting a significant node within the town and forming an integral aspect of its characteristics and spatial organization. This square bears the essential responsibility of preserving Miao culture while showcasing the unique characteristics and historical heritage of the town. Currently, the entire interior of the square, encompassing the small landscape, pathways, vegetation, and functional layout, has not been integrated with Miao cultural elements. Consequently, it bears no distinction from contemporary square design styles prevalent in China. The landscape of the square not only lacks uniqueness but also fails to adequately display its rich cultural heritage.

### 2.2 Insufficient innovation in form

In the design process of rural public spaces, it is essential to emphasize the regional cultural characteristics while also considering the innovative aspects of the design. The village committee square serves as the cultural exchange center for the rural area, making its cultural infiltration particularly important. However, the existing infrastructure, including lighting fixtures, seating, flower beds, and paving materials, lacks elements

representative of Miao culture and does not adequately reflect the distinctive local cultural characteristics. The construction process exhibited inadequate attention to the integration of culture and art, which ultimately led to a deficient sense of design within the facility. For instance, the signboard located at the periphery of the square is characterized by a simplistic design that lacks cultural integration. This oversight diminishes its significance as a cultural display area and contributes to the overall reduced functionality of the square. The existing facilities are inadequate and do not effectively address the leisure requirements for parent-child activities. Furthermore, the leisure and entertainment amenities are outdated, poorly designed, and in a state of disrepair. These infrastructures fail to represent the cultural significance of Miao culture and Gaoluo white pomelo culture, lacking distinctive design elements. Consequently, this results in a waste of resources and an inability to fulfill the fundamental functions of the public square<sup>[2]</sup>.

### 2.3 Lack of focus on themes

Xiaomaoping Village, the only Miao village within the Enshi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture, not only preserves a rich cultural heritage but also possesses distinctive forest tourism resources and Gaoluo white pomelo culture. The local pomelo industry plays a significant role in the economic development of the region, while stilted buildings represent the predominant architectural style in the area characterized by steep mountainous terrain. Research indicates a notable deficiency in design applications that effectively represent both Miao culture and Gaoluo white pomelo culture in Xiaomaoping Village.

## 3 Design principles

### 3.1 Humanization

The essence of design is fundamentally rooted in human being, and effective design must address the functional needs of individuals while also considering aesthetic values. During the design process, it is imperative to prioritize the humanization of the design. In rural areas, many individuals may lack a strong awareness of design principles, often focusing solely on meeting basic functional requirements. Consequently, there remains significant potential for advancement in the evaluation of human-centered design in these contexts. Human-centered design should encompass all age groups, addressing the needs of not only rural tourists but also the elderly and children. A village that lacks human-centered design represents an incomplete approach to

rural public space. Such a design fails to adequately comprehend the needs and preferences of the villagers, leading to a disconnect in the design process. Consequently, this oversight results in a deficiency of vitality in the design of rural landscape spaces<sup>[3]</sup>.

### 3.2 Regionality

In the context of rural revitalization, it is imperative to comprehensively consider the natural environment, humanistic history, social life, and other pertinent factors specific to a given region. Projects should be harmoniously integrated with local characteristics, environmental conditions, and humanistic backgrounds. For instance, the traditional architectural language and cultural symbols of Xiaomaoping Village can be incorporated into the design of rural landscapes. Furthermore, it is essential to respect the local natural environment, adapt to regional conditions during the development of rural areas, and utilize indigenous materials to foster sustainable development while simultaneously safeguarding the rural environment.

### 3.3 Sustainability

The process of rural construction encompasses not only considerations related to the rural environment but also economic, cultural, and ecological dimensions, thereby facilitating the long-term development and balance of rural areas. From an economic perspective, the development of specialty industries, sustainable agriculture, the deep processing of agricultural products, and rural tourism are all indicative of sustainability. From a cultural perspective, the integration of local cultural characteristics into design practices plays a crucial role in protecting and inheriting regional culture and historical heritage. This approach enhances the connection between cultural elements and spatial design and fosters a stronger sense of cultural identity among villagers. From an ecological perspective, it is essential to restore the natural ecological landscape of rural areas. This can be achieved by employing innovative materials in rural construction, designing strategies for the sustainable use of natural resources to minimize waste, implementing effective waste treatment and classification systems, and utilizing organic waste for composting. Such measures not only reduce waste emissions but also promote the principles of a circular economy.

## 4 Design optimization strategies

### 4.1 Protection and renewal of the rural environment

The rural environment encompasses the natural ecological systems, traditional architecture,

infrastructure, and public spaces of rural areas. The natural ecological environment in these regions is marked by a decline in arable land and the degradation of indigenous plant species. To address these challenges, contemporary technology and design method are employed to rehabilitate the original ecological landscape and safeguard biodiversity. With regard to traditional architecture, it is feasible to restore certain buildings that possess historical research significance and repurpose abandoned structures into public activity spaces for rural areas, thereby offering villagers venues for their various activities. The integration of regional cultural elements during the restoration and repurposing processes can infuse new vitality into rural buildings. Furthermore, when renewing infrastructure and public spaces in rural areas, regional cultural elements can be deconstructed, reorganized, and integrated into these developments, thereby facilitating both the preservation of cultural heritage and the innovation of cultural practices<sup>[4]</sup>.

### 4.2 Industry activation and talent introduction

Xiaomaoping Village possesses a wealth of historical and cultural resources. By excavating local culture and traditional skills, it is possible to develop cultural and creative industries. The process of leveraging regional culture facilitates the integration of primary, secondary, and tertiary industries, embedding cultural elements within each sector. This approach not only promotes the sustainable development of the rural area but also fosters employment opportunities and attracts talent to take roots in the rural area<sup>[5]</sup>. Furthermore, the industrial landscape of Xiaomaoping Village can be revitalized, enabling the vigorous development of ecological agricultural practices, tourism, agricultural product processing, and rural farming. These initiatives collectively contribute to the sustainable development of Xiaomaoping Village.

### 4.3 Rural tourism and branding

Rural tourism is a viable avenue for fostering rural development. Xiaomaoping Village, situated in the Wuling Mountain region, is endowed with abundant tourism resources. The local humanistic landscapes can be effectively developed, and rural cultural activities can be organized based on these native landscapes. Furthermore, the rural environment can be optimized and enhanced to attract a greater number of nonlocal tourists. Leveraging the rich natural resources, history, and culture of the rural area, tourism products that embody local

characteristics can be developed. In conjunction with the promotion of rural tourism, it is essential to establish highly distinctive regional brands for rural tourism products, including the branding of agricultural products and rural tourist attractions<sup>[6]</sup>.

## 5 Optimization practice of integrating regional cultural elements into rural public space design

### 5.1 Application of regional cultural elements in park pavement

The Xiaomaopoying Miao Village Committee Square, characterized by its expansive and level terrain, contains significant cultural heritage, rendering it an optimal venue for the exhibition of local traditional culture. The design of the square adeptly incorporates and abstracts the distinctive cultural symbols of the Miao people, drawing inspiration from their traditional costume. The patterns are characterized by vibrant yellow, clear blue, and warm red, which not only emphasize the colorful and mysterious Miao culture but also enhance the visual appeal of the square. The staggered arrangement and integration of these distinctive symbols appear to create a vivid picture within the square, narrating the cultural heritage of Xiaomaopoying Miao Village that has been transmitted through generations (Fig.1).

In the design of the square, white pomelo cultural elements associated with Gaoluo white pomelo are meticulously selected. Quotations and aphorisms are integrated into the design and presented as stone carvings, which carry significant cultural connotations. This design approach not only preserves the rich wisdom inherent in white pomelo culture but also endows the square's decoration with a profound historical heritage (Fig.2).

### 5.2 Application of regional cultural elements in landscape sketch

As the birthplace of Gaoluo white pomelo, Gaoluo Town, which encompasses Xiaomaopoying Miao Village, embodies the local residents' deep affection for this fruit. Given the unique significance of Xiaomaopoying Miao Village, a site that preserves the bloodline of Miao culture and promotes the community's enduring appreciation for white pomelo, it is essential for the public square to emphasize the integration of white pomelo culture while incorporating elements of Miao culture. Inspired by white pomelo culture, the designer transformed this fruit into an art installation. This installation not only enhances the aesthetic

appeal of the square, but also enriches its cultural attributes and interestingness. Furthermore, it underscores the notion that Gaoluo white pomelo transcends its role as a mere cash crop, emerging as a spiritual symbol that fosters a sense of cultural identity within the entire town (Fig.3).

### 5.3 Application of regional cultural elements in rural cultural activity centers

Rural cultural activity centers are established to address the diverse needs of individuals across all age groups within rural areas. The primary focus of these centers encompasses various activities, including book reading, cultural and artistic rehearsals, non-heritage workshops, digital cultural stations, exhibitions and sales of agricultural products, and rural tourism. The functional settings encompass a library, a cultural classroom, a non-heritage handicraft workshop, a non-heritage digital exhibition hall, an exhibition and sales area for agricultural products, and an activity room designated for the elderly. In the design process, elements of Miao culture and Gaoluo white pomelo culture have been extracted, refined, and reconstructed to inform the interior space design. The doors and windows incorporate the traditional carving techniques of Miao architecture, while the walls utilize visual representations to narrate the historical and cultural stories of Xiaomaopoying Village, etc.<sup>[7]</sup>.

### 5.4 Application of regional culture in rural museums

Xiaomaopoying Village possesses a rich historical and cultural heritage, characterized by distinct local flavors and ethnic attributes. The regional culture is effectively incorporated into the village museum, which serves as a multifaceted cultural space that combines cultural exhibitions, folklore experiences, and ecological interactions, thus showcasing the unique rural culture of Xiaomaopoying Village. The architectural design of the museum reflects the style of traditional Miao stilted buildings, incorporating conventional wooden structures, green tile roofs, and bamboo fences, while also integrating modern glass and steel elements to optimize permeability and lighting. By utilizing locally sourced stone, bamboo, and wood materials, the design harmonizes with the surrounding environment and minimizes artificial intervention. The adoption of a semi-open structure, along with the inclusion of courtyards, corridors, and terraces, facilitates a seamless connection between the pavilion and the natural environment, thereby enhancing the overall experience for visitors<sup>[8]</sup>.

The content planning and functional distribution of the rural museum primarily encompasses the Miao Farming Culture Exhibition Area, Rural Life Memory Museum, and sections focused on eco-village and modern development.

Miao Farming Culture Exhibition Area features a comprehensive display of Miao terraced fields and their associated water conservancy systems. This exhibition utilizes three-dimensional models to illustrate the distinctive farming techniques employed by the Miao people, including cattle farming, water storage, and fertilizer application. Additionally, traditional farming implements such as plows, hoes, windmills, and rice milling stones are showcased. An interactive experience area is also established, allowing visitors to engage in activities such as rice milling and threshing.

Rural Life Memory Museum encompasses the restoration of Miao houses, thereby creating an exhibition space dedicated to rural architecture. This space features traditional furnishings, including heatable brick beds, looms, fire pits, and other artifacts that reconstruct the living conditions of local villagers. Additionally, the museum curates a collection of rural childhood memories, which includes old textbooks, stationery, and handmade toys such as gyroscopes, bamboo guns, and rolling iron rings, allowing visitors to engage with the playful experiences of rural children. Furthermore, the museum showcases non-heritage crafts by establishing exhibition areas for Miao embroidery, bamboo weaving, wood carving, and other traditional crafts, while also offering manual experience courses.

The eco-village and modern development area encompasses an introduction to the local natural resources, thereby highlighting the biodiversity of Xiaomaopoying Village through various illustrations and specimens, including local medicinal herbs and forest ecosystems. Additionally, the area features a showcase of modern rural revitalization, which presents the village's accomplishments in contemporary agricultural development, tourism transformation, and the bed-and-breakfast economy, while also offering relevant educational courses.

Xiaomaopoying Village Rural Museum serves not only as a venue for the exhibition of local culture but also as a bridge linking the past with the future, tradition with modernity, and villagers with tourists<sup>[9]</sup>. The museum incorporates the agricultural heritage, historical narratives, and rural life experiences of the Miao people throughout its various exhibits. This design allows visitors to engage in an immersive



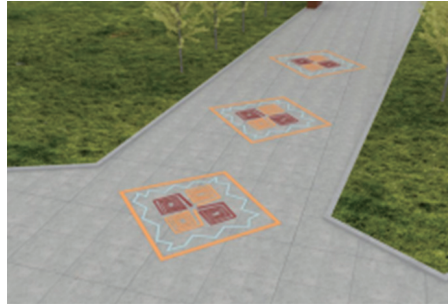
experience that highlights the charm of the region, thereby fostering the living transmission and innovative advancement of rural culture.

### 5.5 Rural DIY handicraft workshop

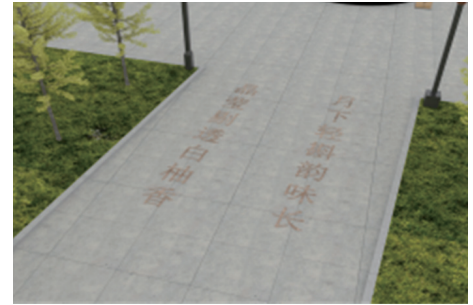
The design theme of the rural DIY handicraft workshop is centered on Miao culture, aiming to create an immersive DIY experience space. The overall spatial layout is divided into several areas, including a reception area that features a front desk, a rest area, and a product display area, all of which contribute to a warm and comfortable reception environment. The designated area is organized into various sections based on distinct DIY projects. The embroidery section offers Miao embroidery patterns, along with needles, threads, and fabrics for the creation of scented sachets, cell phone bags, and similar items. The bamboo weaving section provides bamboo splints and tools to instruct participants in basic bamboo weaving techniques, enabling the production of bamboo baskets and pen holders. The ceramics section supplies clay and tools, allowing individuals to engage in the enjoyable process of ceramic creation. The silver jewelry section offers tools and materials for the craft of silver jewelry making, facilitating hands-on experience in this craftsmanship skill. The display area showcases traditional Miao crafts and DIY creations, contributing to a culturally enriching atmosphere. Lastly, the storage area is designated for the organization of materials and tools. The design's overall aesthetic is rooted in the traditional architectural style of the Miao ethnic group, while also integrating contemporary design elements to establish a space that is both simple and elegant, as well as comfortable and natural. The color palette is derived from natural hues, including shades of wood, earthy yellows, and reds, which collectively foster a warm and inviting atmosphere. Additionally, decorative elements such as traditional patterns, totems, and handicrafts representative of Miao culture are employed to emphasize the cultural characteristics inherent to this design.

## 6 Conclusions

The incorporation of regional cultural elements into the rural public space of Xiaomaopoying Village serves as a valuable reference for the application of regional culture in rural contexts. In summary, the distinctive culture of Xiaomaopoying Miao Village is primarily



**Fig.1 Miao traditional symbol pattern ground**



**Fig.2 Stone carvings of white pomelo culture verses on the ground**



**Fig.3 White pomelo themed landscape sketch**

characterized by Miao culture and white pomelo culture. Based on the issues identified through field research, it is essential to implement targeted art design methods and theories to explore the preservation and revitalization of the unique cultural elements of Xiaomaopoying Miao Village. This approach aims to enhance the cultural atmosphere of Xiaomaopoying Miao Village and to promote the creative transformation and innovative development of its traditional culture.

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