

# Application of Jingchu Cultural Elements in Theme Park Landscape Design

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**Abstract** As an important part of Chinese excellent traditional culture, Jingchu culture has profound historical and cultural value. The exploration and application of Jingchu culture elements is conducive to carrying forward and inheriting history and culture and enriching urban cultural deposits. Theme park is an important place to spread and promote Jingchu culture. It is of far-reaching significance to study and explore the integration of Jingchu culture elements into the construction of theme park. This paper analyzes the concept and connotation of Jingchu culture, combs and analyzes the extraction content of Jingchu culture elements, and summarizes the expression pathways of Jingchu culture elements in theme park and the practical application in Jingzhou Fantawild, in order to provide certain inspiration and reference for contemporary landscape designers to better inherit and develop Jingchu culture elements.

**Keywords** Jingchu culture, Cultural elements, Theme park, Landscape design

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## 1 Concept and connotation of Jingchu culture

Jingchu culture is an important part of Chinese culture, and its long history is closely related to the development of Chinese civilization. Jingchu culture plays a pivotal role in the long course of Chinese culture. There are two connotations of Jingchu culture: ancient Chu culture represented by Chu Ci, and regional culture formed on the basis of Hubei local culture<sup>[1]</sup>. The connotation of Jingchu culture has varying expression forms in different historical periods.

In the Neolithic period, the Shennong clan of Emperor Yan initiated the primitive culture of the Yangtze River basin in China. Suizhou, Gucheng and Shennongjia in Hubei were the main activity areas of Emperor Yan, with many folk legends and cultural sites<sup>[2]</sup>.

In the Xia and Shang Dynasties, the south migration of Huaxia nationality brought advanced elements of Chinese civilization to Chu State, which then slowly developed into Chu culture based on the Jizhou civilization. During the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, the State of Chu was strong and prosperous, and Chu culture was in full flourish. The unique bronze casting technology, the extraordinary silk weaving and embroidery technology, the ingenious lacquerware manufacturing technology and the wonderful prose and Cifu jointly constituted the splendid history and culture of Chu State.

In Qin and Han dynasties, Hubei region played an important role as a cultural hub, and was also the strategic center of contention for the Three Kingdoms (Wei, Shu and Wu). In a sense, it was both the stage of the total war

of Three Kingdoms and the cradle of the culture of the Three Kingdoms. The important historical and cultural carriers of the Qin and Han Dynasties and the Three Kingdoms include ancient Longzhong, Chibi, Jingzhou, Xiangyang City, Yiling and other famous cultural scenic spots<sup>[3]</sup>.

The Qingjiang River originates from Qiyue Mountain in Enshi Prefecture, Hubei Province. The Qingjiang River basin is the birthplace of Batu culture. Qingjiang Batu culture is an important source of the formation of Tujia culture in China, and also represents the unique cultural aesthetics in the integration period of Jingchu culture<sup>[4]</sup>.

Many famous mountains and ancient temples in Hubei have formed a unique culture of famous mountains and ancient temples. World-renowned cultural heritage and places of interest, such as Wudang Mountain, Jingshan Mountain, Dabie Mountain, Wuchang Baotong Temple, Jingzhou Tianxingguan and Zhongxiang Xianling Tomb of the Ming Dynasty, all have unique cultural deposits<sup>[5]</sup>.

The culture of the Three Gorges of the Yangtze River is unique in its combination of unparalleled hydropower energy, magnificent natural scenery and unique local customs on both sides of the river, creating immeasurable economic and social benefits and forming a cultural school full of gorge-river color<sup>[6]</sup>.

In the Shang and Zhou Dynasties, Hankou had become a strategic point from the south to the Central Plains. With Panlong City in the Shang Dynasty as the symbol, Wuhan has accumulated rich cultural history over 3,500 years<sup>[6]</sup>, forming a unique river city Wuhan culture.

Members of revolutionary party and people of lofty ideals from all over Hubei set off the Revolution of 1911 in Wuchang, which overthrew the last feudal dynasty in China's history, and then carried out a series of revolutionary activities and made great achievements in Wuhan. The remaining revolutionary sites and revolutionary deeds constitute the main body of modern revolutionary culture in Hubei and become cultural resources that can not be ignored in the development of red tourism<sup>[7]</sup>.

The above eight cultures are typical representatives of Jingchu culture, and Jingchu culture elements derived from these cultures can be applied to modern cultural innovation.

## 2 Refinement of Jingchu cultural elements

As a regional culture, Jingchu culture can be combined with regional characteristics to refine and apply cultural elements, which consists of three types.

### 2.1 Material type

Material type mainly refers to the tangible products that exist in reality, which can be manifested as famous mountains and historic sites, historical architectural complex, ancient cultural relics, unearthed cultural relics, etc. As one of the important birthplaces of the splendid culture of the Chinese nation, Hubei has created splendid and colorful achievements of civilization in the long course of history. From the existing remains, the Wudang Mountain complex, the Zhongxiang Xianling Tomb of the Ming Dynasty and the Three Kingdoms ancient architectural complex are all precious material cultural heritages of Hubei Province<sup>[7]</sup>. Among the unearthed lacquerware relics in

Hubei Province, the lacquerwares of Chu State have the largest number, the most complete types, the most exquisite craftsmanship, and rich and colorful decorative patterns. Chu people regarded phoenix bird as the embodiment of ancestor Zhu Rong, so the Chu people advocated phoenix bird and preferred red, and often used black and red collocation and phoenix bird pattern on their lacquerwares.

## 2.2 Spiritual type

Spiritual type mainly refers to spiritual culture, including philosophy, science, religion, art and various thoughts and ideas, which can be specifically expressed as poems and songs, philosophical connotation, Taoist culture, red culture and so on. Jingchu literature represented by *Chu Ci (The Songs of Chu)* is not only the beginning of Chinese literati poetry, but also the source of romantic literature. *Chu Ci* laid the tone of romantic poetry characterized by lyricism and imagination in southern poetry, and had a long profound impact on the mentality, poetic system, poetic theme style and artistic expression of literati<sup>[8]</sup>. The Taoist school among historians had an important influence on the development of Chu culture. The Chu people mainly offered sacrifices to totem and ancestor by worshipping the sun and the fire, and respecting the wind, and believed in witchcraft and ghosts. Witchcraft is one of the ideological sources of Taoism and witchcraft culture is the medium of Taoist culture, so Jingchu culture becomes the mother body of Taoist culture. The two influence mutually and have a profound relationship.

## 2.3 Symbol type

Symbol type mainly refers to the embodiment of cultural elements through language, posture, sound, graphics, signs, etc., which can be specifically manifested as secondary animation culture, legend stories, film and television works. Because the Chu people lived in a country full of myths and witchcraft, and believed in witchcraft and ghosts, the atmosphere of offering sacrifices to gods and monsters was very popular in Chu State. The image of phoenix bird was produced in this strange atmosphere, and thereafter the image of phoenix bird often appeared in the artwork of Chu State. In addition, the Chu people were good at learning from the nature of all kinds of physical images and depicting them on the objects, to create exquisite crafts. On the symbols of animals and plants, there are often images of dragons flying and phoenix dancing, deer running and tigers running, vines winding and green leaves curling, and the shapes mostly show fictional and grotesque characteristics. The

images of natural scenes are mostly rolling cloud pattern, connected cloud pattern, square pattern, etc. These images mainly play a role in setting off the main body, making the overall image smart and elegant in layout and rich in connotation<sup>[9]</sup>. The image symbols extracted from Jingchu culture can be widely used in landscape design, such as buildings, sculptures, flower borders, etc., which can fully enrich the landscape connotation and carry forward Jingchu culture.

## 3 Concept and characteristics of theme park

### 3.1 Concept of theme park

Theme park refers to the park built for profit with floor area and investment scale reaching a certain standard. It has one or more specific game themes that can provide visitors with leisure experiences, cultural entertainment and people-oriented services.

### 3.2 Characteristics of theme park

**3.2.1 Topicality.** Topicality is the core and essence of a theme park, and is the most important feature that distinguishes it from other parks. The explicit and clear theme of a theme park usually comes from a movie, a book, a historical culture, etc., by which a comprehensive amusement place is built and created. The overall layout of theme park is designed around a specific theme, and the architectural sketches, landscape construction and rock layout in the park are arranged according to a specific theme. Every successful theme park has strong theme cultural characteristics that will establish a distinct public image for itself<sup>[10]</sup>.

**3.2.2 Edutainment.** The cultural connotation contained in the theme park can give tourists a sense of educational and entertaining experience, so that tourists can learn more cultural stories in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere. A theme park can display related history, culture, science and other knowledge in various ways to stimulate tourists' interest in learning and desire to explore. For example, some theme parks have built historical and cultural scenes and buildings to let visitors feel the charm and richness of history and culture through the display of historical relics, stage performances, ancient costume actors, simulated wars, etc.

**3.2.3 Interactivity.** All kinds of entertainment projects and play scenes set in the theme park are interactive, and pay attention to integrating theme elements into large-scale performances and instrumental performances. Visitors can feel and explore the charm of the theme park in the process of interaction, and learn more about the theme culture.

## 4 Analysis on the application of Jingchu cultural elements in theme park landscape design

### 4.1 Design principles

**4.1.1 Adjusting measures to local conditions.** Adapting measures to local conditions is the most basic design principle in landscape design, and requires designers to create according to local natural environment and human factors. Different regions have various characteristics in terms of landform, cultural deposits and humanistic spirit. In areas containing Jingchu culture elements, local history, culture and folk customs should be fully explored in combination with local regional characteristics, and local architectural characteristics and cultural elements should be used to create a theme park with historical and cultural atmosphere and local cultural deposits.

**4.1.2 Cultural inheritance and expression.** When designing Jingchu culture theme park, it is necessary to establish cultural database and strengthen cultural inheritance education. The layout of the park should be based on the historical and cultural stories of Jingchu, make full use of traditional architectural complex, and add folk culture performances. And modern science and technology is used to innovate tourist experience and display the diversity of cultural elements, so as to better inherit and express Jingchu culture.

**4.1.3 Sustainable development.** It is necessary to fully consider sustainable development when building and operating theme parks. In the construction phase, environmental protection facilities should be used to reduce the waste of energy and resources, and the ecological environment must be respected. In the management, it is necessary to maintain the theme characteristics, create some Jingchu culture theme surroundings and characteristic activities, and formulate long-term business strategy to improve competitiveness, in order to obtain the maximum social benefits.

### 4.2 Expression pathway

**4.2.1 Architectural design.** Ancient Jingchu architectural planning and design attached importance to the integration with the natural environment, not only to maintain the integrity of the natural environment, but also to respect the environmental conditions in the construction and design process. Because Jingchu area was mountainous and woody and lacked stone, the traditional Jingchu culture mainly adopted wood structure in architectural design, and mainly used wood and bamboo as building materials. According to historical records, most of the

palaces, temples and dance houses in ancient Jingchu region were mainly wooden frames, and the Chu people admired phoenix birds and loved red, so they used red and black color collocation and phoenix bird patterns for decoration in their buildings. In addition, overhanging eaves were also one of the characteristics of ancient Jingchu architecture, with obvious regional characteristics. Therefore, when designing large buildings or small structures in theme parks, more attention should be paid to the combination with the surrounding environment to construct in accordance with the terrain and landform. Landscape diversity can be created using natural resources of the site, and wooden structures should be mostly adopted, paying attention to the choice of color collocation and patterns. In the construction of antique buildings, overhanging eaves should be adopted to highlight the architectural characteristics of traditional Jingchu culture, and the cultural symbols of Jingchu culture can be integrated with sculptures, pavilions and plank paths to depict cultural symbols, create landmark buildings representing Jingchu culture, enhance the cultural connotation of theme park, and guide tourists to understand and recognize Jingchu culture.

**4.2.2 Landscape vegetation.** Jingchu area has beautiful mountains and rivers, undulating terrain, rivers and lakes, and extraordinary canyons. Therefore, when designing the topography and geomorphology of theme park, it is necessary to follow the trend according to the overall characteristics of the region and combine the theme and style of the park to create a natural landscape. Landscape construction is an indispensable part of large-scale theme parks. In the case of flat terrain in the park, it is necessary to fill soil and dig pits to create hills, valleys, lakes, waters and other undulating terrain. In the waterscape design, the interaction between tourists and water bodies should be emphasized, and waterfalls, fountains, water and other landscapes must be arranged in many places. Rock combinations of varying shapes can be used to decorate the terrain, enrich the landscape content, design different viewing angles, and create landscapes with regional characteristics, thereby enhancing the ornamental features of landscape and landform. In addition, there are abundant vegetation in Jingchu region, so native vegetation should be adopted in planting design to create a rich four-season landscape combined with the regional climate environment, and the images of Jingchu culture can be displayed through the color changes, arrangement ways and distinct layers of plants, so as to enhance

the charm of Jingchu culture. In short, when designing the landscape vegetation of a theme park, it should be combined with the overall layout of the park, respect the nature, and pay attention to garden charm, so as to display the rich landscape pattern of Jingchu culture.

**4.2.3 Theme activity.** Theme activity is the core of showcasing the cultural elements of theme park, and combining Jingchu culture with theme activities can attract tourists' interest, enhance the vitality of the park, and promote the interactive nature of the park. The historical and cultural stories of Jingchu can be displayed through vivid visualization methods. For example, cultural exhibitions are held in the theme park from time to time to display related historical and cultural ancient books, ancient poems, handicrafts, etc. Scholars or experts in related fields are invited to explain the knowledge and cultural connotation involved, so that visitors can have an insight into the theme and cultural background of the park. Besides, it can also be combined with festival celebrations to carry out themed cultural carnivals, cultural arts festivals, and invite art performance teams with the same theme or similar cultural background to give a live performance, such as folk music, dance, opera, acrobatics, etc. Experience projects related to the theme culture can be set up, such as handcraft, traditional skill experience, cultural appreciation, cultural exploration, etc., and virtual reality technology and projection technology can be combined with interactive experience activities to create a variety of theme games and multimedia interactive display, allowing visitors perceive Jingchu culture through modern technology immersion. The above forms of activities can fully display the unique charm of Jingchu in the park to tourists, and make tourists better understand and feel the cultural value of the park during the visit experience.

**4.2.4 Food promotion.** The food culture in the theme park is also an important part of regional culture. The famous characteristic food of Jingchu area can be collected for promotion and sale, such as Jingzhou rice noodles, Gong'an guokui, Wuhan hot dry noodles, Ezhou lotus root, etc. These foods can help tourists better understand the local food and taste the delicious food of Jingchu area. Additionally, the traditional food handicraft workshop can be set up to allow tourists to make hand-made food and understand the production process and methods of Jingchu food. Moreover, the characters or iconic buildings of Jingchu in the theme park can be used to innovate the appearance of food, and inherit and promote Jingchu cultural

characteristics.

## 5 Application of Jingchu cultural elements in theme park landscape design

Jingzhou Fantawild Oriental Myth Theme Park is located in Jingzhou Jinan Cultural Tourism Zone, covering an area of 67 hm<sup>2</sup>. It is the largest theme park in Hubei Province, with the theme of inheriting Chinese history and culture, integrates the characteristics of Jingchu culture, and combines laser multimedia, three-dimensional special effects, miniatures, reality shows and other expression techniques with traditional Chinese cultural stories. Through participation, experience and interaction, the charm of 5,000 years of Chinese civilization and Jingchu culture can be demonstrated<sup>[11]</sup>.

### 5.1 Architectural design

The architectural design of Jingzhou Fantawild is grand in scale, scattered in height, and the venues have their own characteristics. The main style is modeled after the architectural appearance of ancient Jingchu, and the architectural form incorporates elements of ancient legends and myths. For example, the building of Marvels of Chinese Culture mainly adopts red color, with overhung eaves on the roof. The "Chu Music" building adopts the red and black color most commonly used by Chu people, and the whole building is full of totem symbols of Chu State, such as phoenix bird pattern, flame pattern, etc. There is a replica of unearthed cultural relic from Chu State, tiger-base and bird-frame drum model, placed on the gate, and the two sides simulate the shape of unearthed cultural relics of tiger base and flying bird. The tiger base is displayed in the form of a model, while flying birds are painted on the wall in the form of mural, which is magnificent. The "Qu Yuan" building is mainly in red and gold colors, and above the entrance is a phoenix sculpture with wings hovering up in the ninth heaven. A huge phoenix sculpture facing the statue of Qu Yuan attracts tourists to enter the venue to learn about the historical story that happened to Qu Yuan. The "Burning Red Cliff" building mimics the Red Cliff battlefield of the Three Kingdoms period. The main building is an antique tower with a height of 52 m. The exterior façade has undergone antique treatment, and the wall is full of cracks and ashes, creating a sense of atmosphere with a long history.

### 5.2 Theme activity

As the first large-scale high-tech cultural theme park in Hubei Province, Jingzhou Fantawild has been deeply exploring Jingchu

culture, and launched two explosive stage performances “Chu Music” and “Qu Yuan”. Through the exquisite integration of high-tech means and traditional Chinese cultural stories, it highlights the distinctive characteristics of Chu culture and shows the unique charm of Chu culture, and tells the audience the style of Chu State and the charm of Chu people continuously and pleasantly. The large-scale live performance of “Qu Yuan” is based on *Li Sao*, *Nine Songs*, *Tian Wen* and other masterpieces created by Qu Yuan as a representative figure. Qu Yuan’s tortuous life experience depicted in the work is selected as the main material for the performance. On this basis, the show also perfectly combines the international top entertainment technology with real performances to create a dreamlike and “poetic” world full of Li Sao fantasy. At the same time, ink painting style and dynamic special effects animation are innovatively used to interpret the great patriotic poet Qu Yuan’s life wonderfully. As another unique experience project of Jingzhou Fantawild, Chu Music is a highly integrated creation of culture and technology, combining Chu Ci, Chu Dance, Chu Music and Chime Bells unearthed in Chu, and performing Chu music and dance, Chu architecture and Chu customs through “real people + high – tech” to write a rich Chu cultural legendary movement. Moreover, the theme features of float parade, Jingchu culture exhibition, etc., will be held regularly, making tourists have an in-depth understanding of Jingchu culture, and meeting the needs and expectations of tourists for the theme park.

### 5.3 Landscape sketch

The landscape sketches in the park are also full of Jingchu cultural elements. For example, chime bells, war drums, figures of the Three Kingdoms period can be seen everywhere in the park, and pavilions, terraces and towers are also modeled after Chu architecture. Special flower bed shape is designed with flowers and

shrubs according to the design of Chu culture totem, and Chu cultural symbols are carved on seats, decorative lighting, trash cans and other infrastructure. The historical and cultural changes of Chu State are written through the landscape wall and stone relief carving, showing the ups and downs of the history of Chu State. In addition, the whole Fantawild Park adopts Jingchu special food, such as Wuhan hot dry noodles, Gong’an guokui, Jingzhou rice noodles, etc. Meantime, there are special meals launched according to the development of Jingzhou City.

## 6 Conclusions

Jingchu culture is an important part of Chinese traditional culture, and contains rich and colorful cultural elements, such as historical stories, poems, folk customs, totem symbols, etc. It is crucial to carry forward and inherit the history and culture by studying the application and development of Jingchu culture. As a carrier for the dissemination of history and culture, the theme park can display Jingchu cultural elements in multiple dimensions and angles, innovate various ways of cultural inheritance and carry out diversified applications, so as to display Jingchu cultural elements more vividly and provide tourists with an immersive experience. It not only embodies the cultural tradition of Jingchu, but also meets the pursuit of modern tourists, so that tourists can better understand and feel the profound and long historical and cultural connotation of Jingchu region while enjoying leisure and entertainment. Nowadays, with the development of science and technology, there are more and more ways to apply the elements of Jingchu culture to different fields. Research on the application of Jingchu cultural elements in theme park is of great significance to the future, which will not only promote the development of theme park industry, but also provide a reference for other types of parks.

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