Shan-Shui City: Exploring Sustainable City Development in China

Jie Hu

City is the symbol of human civilization, the impetus of modern development. Urbanization is not just a modern phenomenon, but was evolved into a world-wide upsurge in modern times. Along with rapid urbanization in China, problems like water crisis, environmental pollutions, heat island and traffic congestion have been the serious threats to sustainable urban development, while lack of regional characteristics making modern cities in 'monotonic feature'. In order to solve these issues in China's urbanization, Shan-Shui City idea is proposed to be expected to reform the nature to serve human needs. Instead, the new idea considers human beings and nature as equals, respecting and understanding nature, while attempting to realize human demands for social development, based on protecting the nature and environment so as to achieve a co-prosperity.

The source of Chinese culture had close relationship with mountains and rivers. Considering the source of Chinese Shan-Shui culture, after reverence toward Shan-Shui turned into worship, this worship transforms into an inclination to compare human virtues to mountains and rivers. The paper discussed the relationships between the poetry, painting, traditional garden designing, geomancy and Chinese Shan-Shui culture, which can be concluded to the appreciation of nature in Chinese culture. Several examples of ancient city and traditional gardens are illustrated explain the idea.

Following the introduction of Chinese Shan-shui tradition and classical Chinese garden practices, 5 case studies will be presented including Beijing Olympic Forest Park, Tangshan Nanhu Eco-city and two innovative projects regarding arid and semi-arid regions.

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