

The Hybrid Culture in Chinese-Thai Shophouses Based Cultural Landscape interpreting for Tourism

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Abstract

This article investigates and records the hybrid cultural characteristics of Chinese and Thai shophouses, and manages their cultural landscapes. The research objectives of the article are: (1) To survey the hybrid cultural characteristics of the Chinese-Thai shophouse with cultural landscape management. and (2) To Designing the Chinese-Thai shophouse handbook for tourism interpretation. This study utilized the fieldwork method to collect data from the Amphawa Floating Market and Damnoen Saduak Floating Market in Thailand, as well as the West Street of Yangshuo in Guilin and the Xingping Ancient Town in Guilin, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China. At the same time, existing studies on the hybrid culture and cultural landscape of Chinese and Thai shophouses were systematically analyzed, classified and summarized.

The research results found that the Chinese and Thai shophouses reflect a deep cultural intermingling in terms of site layout, structure, trade culture and religious customs. Based on the cultural landscape perspective, the Chinese and Thai shophouses present unique cultural characteristics in terms of District, Edge, Path, Node, Landmark. The Chinese-Thai Shophouse Tourism Interpretation Manual designed in this study is guided by the cultural values set forth in the Bura Charter Guidelines. The cultural connotations of the shophouses are interpreted from various dimensions such as historical, aesthetic, scientific and social. This study shows that Chinese-Thai shophouses have important cultural values as symbols of Chinese and Thai cultural exchanges. At the same time, suggestions for designing a tourism interpretation manual are made, which is of great significance in promoting Chinese and Thai hybrid culture exchanges and promoting the sustainable development of the tourism industry.

Keywords: Hybrid Culture; Chinese-Thai Shophouses; Cultural Landscape; Tourism interpreting

Introduction

With globalization and the rapid development of tourism, cultural tourism landscapes are attracting increasing attention from tourists and academics. In Thailand, most of the traditional shophouses sell local agricultural products, handicrafts and traditional food. For example, the shophouses in Amphawa Floating Market display the traditional economic model of Thailand and the business habits and commodities brought by the Chinese immigrants, forming a unique mixture of Chinese and Thai styles. In China's ancient towns and cities, traditional stores (shophouses) also include handicrafts, local specialties, restaurants and lodging, etc. For example, the old stores in Xingping Ancient Town in Guilin, China, and the West Street in Yangshuo, China, have retained their traditional mode of operation, which used

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to be old-fashioned residences years ago, but are now gradually becoming the form of shophouses integrating commerce and lodging with the development of the tourism industry. In the context of globalization and tourism development, there is an urgent need to preserve and manage the hybrid culture landscape of traditional Chinese and Thai shophouses.

This study aims to preserve and manage the cultural value of shophouse architecture by investigating the traditional shophouse buildings that are characterized by both Chinese and Thai hybrid culture and managing their cultural landscapes. At the same time, this study will design a handbook of traditional Chinese and Thai shophouses for tourism interpretation to enhance the cultural experience and educational function of tourists and to promote the sustainable development of traditional shophouse culture, which is important for the promotion of cultural heritage preservation.

Objectives

1. To survey the hybrid cultural characteristics of the Chinese-Thai shophouse with cultural landscape management
2. To Designing the Chinese-Thai shophouse handbook for tourism interpretation.

Literature Review

Cultural Heritage Conservation and Management

ICCROM (International Center for the Study of the Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Objects) is dedicated to the sustainable conservation and transmission of cultural heritage. The Burra Charter (ICOMOS, 1988) describes the multifaceted values of cultural heritage in terms of history, art, architecture, science and society. The Charter for Vernacular Architectural Heritage (ICOMOS, 1999) emphasizes the cultural significance and conservation principles of traditional buildings and settlements. The World Heritage Convention provides a legal framework and management guidelines for the conservation of globally important cultural and natural heritage. These documents provide the theoretical basis and practical guidelines for the conservation and management of traditional architectural heritage such as Chinese and Thai shophouses.

Cultural Landscape Theory

Cultural landscape reflects the interaction between human beings and the natural environment, and has important cultural value; Sauer (1925) firstly put forward the concept of “cultural landscape”, emphasizing the role of human activities in shaping the landscape. The Report of the Expert Meeting on Cultural Landscapes for World Heritage (UNESCO, 1992) included cultural landscapes in the World Heritage List and promoted international cooperation in the protection of cultural landscapes. The Principles Concerning Rural Landscapes as Cultural Heritage (ICOMOS-IFLA, 2017) emphasized the cultural connotation and dynamism of rural landscapes and advocated the adoption of an integrated and multidisciplinary approach to conservation. These theories provide perspectives and frameworks for understanding and interpreting the hybrid cultural landscapes carried by Chinese and Thai shophouses.

Dynamic Interaction between Cultural Heritage and Tourism

Heritage tourism promotes cultural exchange and sustainable development through the interaction between tourists and heritage sites. The International Charter for Cultural Tourism (ICOMOS, 1999) emphasizes the dynamic relationship between heritage sites, communities and tourists, and advocates the use of interpretation and other means to enhance public awareness and respect for the value of heritage. Tilden (1957) proposed six principles

for heritage interpretation, emphasizing that interpretation should attract tourists with appeal, inspiration and relevance. Beck & Cable (2002) further enriched the principles of interpretation, emphasizing that interpretation should be thematic, unique and participatory. Moscardo (2014) explored the relationship between heritage interpretation and tourist experience, attitude and behavior. These studies provide important references for the design of the Chinese and Thai shophouse tourism interpretation handbook.

Hybrid Culture Theory

Hybrid culture refers to the interaction and fusion of different cultures to form a new cultural form. Bhabha (1994) proposed the "third space" theory, arguing that hybrid culture is produced in the "third space" where the cultures of the colonizer and the colonized collide, and is unique and creative. Pieterse (2015) interpreted hybrid culture from a global perspective, emphasizing the dynamic process of continuous hybridization and reorganization of culture in transnational flows. Burke (2009) sorted out the manifestations of hybrid culture in the fields of language, religion, and art, revealing the complexity and diversity of cultural exchange.

As a special type of building, Chinese and Thai shophouses carry the historical imprint of cultural exchange and integration between China and Thailand. Zhang Changhong (2012) sorted out the development process of Chinese society in Thailand, revealing the interaction and integration of Chinese culture and local Thai culture. Chuenrudeemol et al. (2012) investigated the design characteristics of Chinese shophouses in Thailand, showing the mixture of Chinese and Thai cultural elements in architectural form, spatial layout and decorative style. Duan Qian (2016) conducted a comparative analysis of traditional shophouses in Bangkok, Thailand and Lancang, China, and explored the similarities and differences in the shophouse cultural landscapes of the two places.

Glamping is becoming more and more popular in China. Gansu Province has opened doors for the growth of glamping tourism because of its distinct benefits. Glamping tourism in the province has enormous potential, despite obstacles including poor infrastructure and subpar service standards. The purpose of this study is to examine Gansu Province's tourism growth and offer suggestions for glamping tourism development (Bai, & Tuntates, 2024).

Chinese education in Thailand and contrasts its many features with those of other Southeast Asian nations in terms of the transmission of Chinese culture and language. The steady growth of Chinese education in Thailand is seen to be mostly due to the country's open and peaceful ethnic policies, as well as the fusion of Buddhist and Confucian cultures between China and Thailand. There has also been some overzealous and cross-border integration in the language and cultural integration process between China and Thailand. The traits of Thai Chinese language instruction include "moderate integration" and "excessive integration," and both of these traits work together to shape the field's development (Xiao, & Tian, 2024).

The UNESCO Education Statistics Bureau's publication "Classification of International Education Standards" (1998) mentions the "Course Plan for Technicians in Museums and Exhibition Halls." It is evident that the museum sector has garnered sustained interest from international education initiatives tasked with teaching, cultural transmission, and exchange since the very beginning of the field's development. The combination of museum display education and international education can enhance the communication channels and pathways of Chinese culture, enhance the exchange channels of international education, utilize the authenticity and intuition of museum display education, and develop the way of international education—all of which are crucial for enhancing the soft power of contemporary nations. Jiang (S., X. & Yun, 2023).

Research Methodology

This study adopts the field investigation method to conduct research, and systematically analyzes, classifies and summarizes the existing research on the mixed culture of Chinese and Thai shophouses and cultural landscape.

Research tools: Field investigation records

Data collection: Field investigations were conducted in Amphawa Floating Market and Damnoen Saduak Floating Market in Thailand, as well as Yangshuo West Street and Xingping Ancient Town in Guilin, China, to collect data.

Data analysis: The data obtained from the field investigation were sorted out to summarize the characteristics of the hybrid culture of Chinese-Thai shophouses.

Research Conceptual Framework

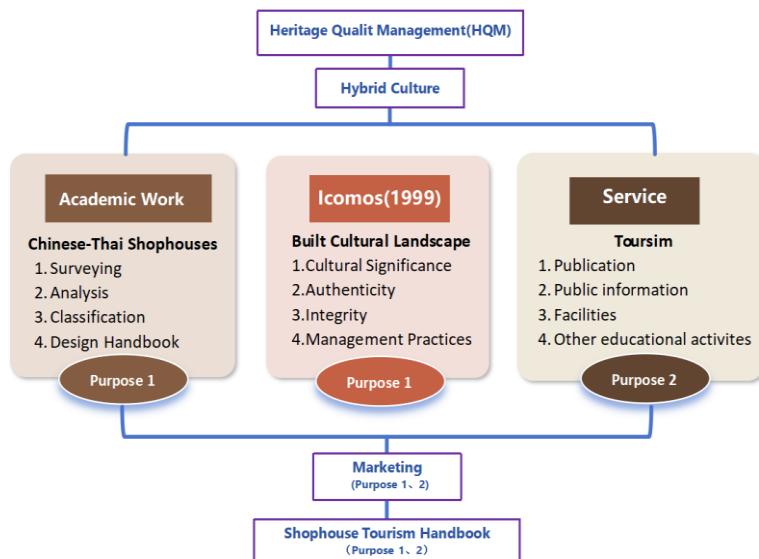


Figure 1: Conceptual framework for Chinese-Thai Shophouse cultural heritage management (Hybrid culture)

Source: (ICCROM) International Centre for Research on the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property, Researcher Designed after Huangxiaoyun and Manus.

Research results

1. The hybrid cultural characteristics of the Chinese-Thai shophouse with cultural landscape management

1.1 Placing management of Chinese-Thai shophouse

Shophouse in Thailand: Amphawa Floating Market is located in central Thailand, about 90 kilometers southwest of Bangkok, in Samut Songkhram Province. The market is distributed in a strip along the banks of the tributaries of the Mae Klong River, and the shophouses are built along the water, forming a water town cultural landscape. Damnoen Saduak Floating Market is also located in Ratchaburi Province, about 100 kilometers southwest of Bangkok. The market is composed of a crisscrossing canal system, and the shophouses are arranged in an orderly manner along the river to form a grid layout. Relying on water transportation, it is one of the most representative water markets in Thailand.

Shophouse Case China: Yangshuo West Street is located in the center of Yangshuo County, Guilin City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China. The street is about 517 meters long, and the ancient shophouses are arranged along the street. It is the core area of Yangshuo's tourism development. Xingping Ancient Town is located in the northeast of Yangshuo County, Guilin City, adjacent to the Li River. It retains the architectural style of traditional commercial towns and embodies the concept of symbiosis between man and nature.

1.2 Investigation of the cultural landscape of Chinese-Thai shophouses

According to the research content, the researchers will conduct a systematic investigation and analysis of the cultural landscape characteristics of Chinese and Thai shophouses from four aspects: district management, edge management, path management, nodes and landmarks, as shown in the table below.

	Amphawa Floating Market, Thailand	Damnoen Saduak Floating Market, Thailand
District	<p>The entire area presents an irregular tree-like water network. The Maeklong River and its tributaries run through the area, forming a crisscrossing waterway system that connects different functional areas such as commercial areas, residential areas and public activity areas. Shophouses and other buildings together form a rich and diverse regional landscape.</p>	<p>It consists of the main commercial area and the surrounding residential and planting areas. The different functional areas are connected by waterways, forming a compact settlement. The areas near the river are mostly traditional orchards, vegetable gardens and other economic crop planting areas.</p>
Edge	<p>Figure 2 : Aerial view of Amphawa Floating Market Source:https://www.soidb.com/index.html</p>  <p>Traditional shophouses and houses are built along the river, facing the waterway directly, forming a distinct interface with the water. The density of shophouses and houses is higher in areas close to the main waterway and gradually decreases inland. Large tracts of coconut groves surround the settlement, presenting a landscape pattern of "coconut grove-village-river".</p>	 <p>Figure 3 : Damnoen Saduak Floating Market River View Source: Photographed by Huang Xiaoyun</p> <p>The river is lined with shops and sheds, which are in sharp contrast to the surrounding farmland. The gradual process from farmland to market reflects the integrated life picture of "production-trading-life", which has become a unique cultural landscape.</p>

Path	 <p>Figure 4-5 : Roads in Amphawa Source: Photographed by Huang Xiaoyun</p> <p>Pedestrian walkways: Narrow wooden walkways and bridges connect the shophouses, forming a pedestrian system that is convenient for tourists to visit and shop.</p> <p>Land transportation: The main land transportation lines run through the entire area, connecting Amphawa with the outside world. These roads not only transport tourists, but also serve as important channels for local residents to travel. The main trails directly connect to transportation nodes such as docks and bridges, making it convenient for people to switch between land and water.</p> <p>Water transportation: Many docks are distributed on both sides of the main waterway, becoming the connection node between land and water transportation. Tourists can take long-tail boats and other water transportation tools to experience the water style in depth.</p>	 <p>Figure6 : Damnoen Saduak Water way Transportation Source: Image from Wikipedia</p> <p>Pedestrian walkways: Narrow wooden walkways are built along the shophouses on both sides of the canal for pedestrians to access the shops, and are connected by small bridges across the canal to connect different areas of the market.</p> <p>Land transportation: The main land transportation is a narrow road parallel to the main canal, connecting the market to nearby roads. Lanes and paths branch off from the main road and lead to the back of the shophouses, where vendors, suppliers and residents can transport goods and carry out daily activities.</p> <p>Water transportation: The main canal, Khlong Damnoen Saduak, is the central artery of the market, and smaller canals and tributaries branch off from it, forming a network of waterways. Various boats transport people and goods on the waterways, which are an important way for tourists to visit and locals to commute and trade.</p>
Node	<p>The open water and squares in the market have become the main node spaces for people to gather and trade, such as the Central Waterway Trading Area and Nakawarang Community Market Ground, which not only meet commercial functions but also provide places for community activities. These node spaces are intertwined with surrounding shophouses, houses, temples, cultural exchange centers and other environmental elements to form spiritual places for residents.</p>	<p>Podjawan Wharf and Yuwanda Wharf, located at the intersection of the canals, are important connecting points for water transportation. They are composed of various water shops and stalls, forming a dense water trade community. They provide tourists with a place to rest and sightsee, and concentrate a variety of goods for tourists to purchase. These prosperous water trade nodes play an important role in the development of the local economy and also showcase the unique cultural landscape of Thailand's traditional water markets.</p>

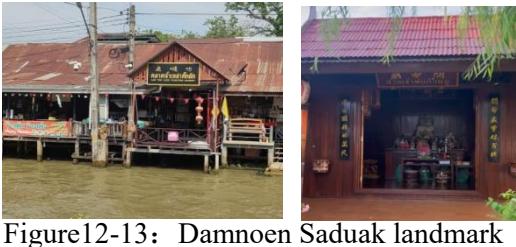
Land mark	 <p>Figure 10-11 : Amphawa landmark Source: Image from Wikipedia</p> <p>The colorful flags and festive folk performances hung at the entrance area constitute an important landmark that combines visual identification with cultural activities; Wat Phet Samut Worawihan is a local belief center and a famous tourist attraction; the century-old traditional wooden stilt houses of the Amphawa Chaipattananurak Conservation Project have been transformed into a comprehensive community cultural center, becoming a carrier that connects human history, cultural landscape, and architectural features, shaping a unique place spirit.</p>	 <p>Figure12-13: Damnoen Saduak landmark Source: Image from Wikipedia</p> <p>"老噠叻 (LAO TUK LUCK) " means "old market" in Thai. It is a historic landmark in the Damnoen Saduak floating market. It retains traditional Thai wooden buildings, mostly stilt houses. It is the most original and traditional trading area for many Chinese immigrants to Thailand, and it gathers many old shophouses.</p> <p>Chinese name: Guan Di Temple: This is a Chinese-style temple dedicated to Guan Yu, reflecting the influence of Chinese culture in Thailand. There are Chinese couplets and archways on the wall. It shows the fusion of Thai and Chinese mixed cultures, reflects the existence of the local Chinese community, and is a place for local Chinese and Thai people who believe in Guan Gong to worship.</p>
District	<p>West Street, Yangshuo, Guilin, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China</p> <p>It consists of different areas such as commercial blocks, neighborhood communities and surrounding scenic spots. There are traditional shops and houses on both sides of the street, forming a staggered and high-low street space.</p>	<p>Xingping Ancient Town, Guilin, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China</p> <p>It is composed of ancient commercial areas, residential areas and surrounding scenic spots. In addition to traditional retail, catering and other commercial formats, the traditional shophouses in Xingping Ancient Town have also introduced homestays and other tourist reception functions, enriching the use functions of the block.</p>

Table 1: Cultural landscape of Chinese and Thai shophouses
Source: Researcher Designed Huang Xiaoyun

1.3 Hybrid cultural characteristics of Chinese -Thai shophouses

1.3.1 Characteristics of the blend of architectural forms and styles of Chinese and Thai shophouses

Layout: Mixed form of street level shophouses

Edge	 <p>Figure14: environment of Yangshuo West Street Source: Photographed by Huang Xiaoyun</p> <p>The interface on both sides of West Street is composed of continuous traditional shophouse facades, forming a distinct street outline. The end of the street connects to the surrounding natural environment such as rivers and mountains.</p>	 <p>Figure15: environment of Xingping Ancient Town Source: Image from Xiaohongshu</p> <p>The ancient town is built along the river and consists of traditional shops and houses. The facades of the buildings on the river side face the water directly, while the back side is connected to the mountain, forming a unique river-town-mountain boundary landscape.</p>
Path	 <p>Figure16: Pedestrian walkway on Yangshuo West Street Source: Photographed by Huang Xiaoyun</p> <p>Pedestrian walkway: The east-west main street is the main commercial pedestrian space of West Street. The shops on both sides of the street provide pedestrians with continuous shade and rain shelter. The space is wide and unobstructed, which is convenient for tourists to visit and shop. The branch lanes connect the main street with the surrounding residential areas and scenic spots.</p> <p>Water transportation: There is a cruise ship pier in the waters near West Street, which is convenient for tourists to take a boat to visit the mountains and rivers of Yangshuo. The location of the pier takes into account the convenience of water transportation and pays attention to the coordination with the surrounding landscape. The architectural shape and</p>	 <p>Figure17: Pedestrian walkway on Xingping Ancient Town Source: Image from Xiaohongshu</p> <p>The streets along the river are the main commercial routes of the ancient town, with all kinds of shops on both sides. The horizontal lanes perpendicular to it connect to the residential area. The streets are narrow and tortuous. Through paving and placing guide signs, the comfort and recognition of the walking environment are improved.</p>

	<p>material of the pier itself also reflect the traditional cultural characteristics and become an important symbol of the water gate of West Street.</p>	
Node	  <p>Figure 18 - 19 : Shophouses and gardens along the street Source: Image from Xiaohongshu</p> <p>Node space creation: Shops, restaurants, teahouses, etc. arranged along the street constitute the most important commercial activity nodes of West Street. Most of these node spaces are located on the street, and the exterior decoration style is coordinated with the overall style of the block.</p> <p>Garden space: Located at the intersection of streets or wide sections, it plays a role in evacuating people and relieving congestion on the one hand, and provides a place for tourists to view and rest on the other hand. The garden will carry out some cultural activities from time to time, such as intangible cultural heritage exhibitions and folk performances.</p>	 <p>Figure20: The riverside wharf of Xingping Ancient Town Source: Image from Xiaohongshu</p> <p>The docks along the river are the main transportation nodes and places where commercial activities are frequent. The ancestral hall regularly holds traditional festivals such as ancestor worship, and is also an important place for holding weddings, birthdays and other festive activities. In recent years, the ancestral hall has also been opened to tourists from time to time, becoming an important platform for displaying local clan culture.</p>
Land mark	 <p>Figure21: Yangshuo West Street Sign Source: Image from Xiaohongshu</p> <p>Yangshuo West Street Sign: The archway is located at the entrance of West</p>	 <p>Figure22: Wanfeng Stage and the sign of the national key protected cultural relic Source: Photographed by Huang Xiaoyun</p> <p>Wanfeng Stage is one of the important</p>

<p>Street and is an important sign for entering the scenic area. The archway spans across the street and becomes the gateway image of West Street.</p> <p>Yangshuo West Street Wharf: It is an important transportation landmark of West Street. It is located on the north side of Yangshuo West Street, close to the Li River and the ancient theater. It is a stop for cruise ships and a distribution center for land transportation. The barge wharf is connected to the main road of West Street. Various transportation modes such as buses and taxis meet here, which facilitates the transfer and distribution of tourists.</p>	<p>landmarks of Xingping Ancient Town. It is located in the central area of the ancient town. The stage retains exquisite wood carvings, brick carvings, stone carvings and other decorations. During traditional festivals, Wanfeng Stage also holds temple fairs, folk performances and other activities. These activities provide tourists with an opportunity to deeply experience local culture.</p> <p>20-yuan RMB pattern location: It shows the unique natural and cultural landscape of Xingping Ancient Town. The ancient ferry wharf in the center of the picture is an important water and land transportation node in Xingping Ancient Town. The ferry shuttles between them, showing the long history of local water transportation.</p>
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The combination of Chinese and Thai cultures is evident in the design of shophouses, particularly at Thailand's Amphawa and Damnoen Saduak Floating Markets. These markets feature stores built along the river, allowing easy access from the water and maximizing commercial potential. The typical layout follows the traditional Chinese model of "store in front and residence at the back," which originated from China's trading customs to enhance space efficiency and provide convenient living spaces for merchants. This influence from Chinese immigrants has been preserved in places like Yangshuo West Street.

Moreover, the interior design of these shophouses merges both cultures, showcasing Chinese carpentry techniques alongside Thai decorations, such as lanterns and bamboo crafts. The façade integrates architectural elements from both traditions, featuring wooden doors and sliding doors that are practical yet stylish. Public walkways inspired by Thai architecture enhance pedestrian experience, providing shelter and display areas for merchandise.

Constructed on cement pile foundations to combat humidity, the shophouses utilize a mix of Thai and Chinese construction methods, incorporating wooden frame structures with traditional joinery techniques. Roofs are typically made of light corrugated materials suited for the local climate, sometimes combining modern elements while retaining traditional styles. This hybrid approach reflects both practicality and cultural richness in the architecture of these shophouses.



Figure21: Elements of the construction of the shophouse of the Amphawa Floating Market Source:Photographed by Huang Xiaoyun

1.3.2 Mutual integration of business culture

At the Amphawa and Damnoen Saduak floating markets, trading activities demonstrate the fusion of Chinese and Thai commodities and trading methods. These floating markets focus on local Thai agricultural products, such as tropical fruits, spices and herbs, seafood and dry goods, as well as There are some unique coconut shell handicrafts. With the influence of Chinese immigrants, Chinese goods gradually entered the market and became an indispensable part. Traditional Chinese goods such as tea, porcelain, and ceramics can be seen everywhere in the stalls. At the same time, traditional Chinese snacks and foods, such as moon cakes, steamed buns and red bean paste buns, also add a Chinese flavor to the market. Especially during festivals, traditional Chinese costumes such as cheongsam and Tang suit have become popular souvenirs for tourists. These costumes have become products with festival cultural representation and commemorative significance. The diversity of these commodities not only reflects the business tradition of Thai Chinese, but also reflects the long history of trade between China and Thailand.

On the Damnoen Saduak Floating Market, the Chinese sign of "老噠叻" (LAO TUK LUCK) is particularly eye-catching. It means "Old Market" in Thai, indicating that this area was an important business area for early Chinese immigrants. From the picture It can be seen that these traditional wooden structure shophouses have an elevated bottom floor and a multi-slope roof on the top, showing the combination of Thai local architecture and southern Chinese architectural styles, forming a unique cultural landscape of the floating market, suspended from the top. The detailed decoration of red lanterns can also show the strong Chinese cultural color. It can be speculated that many time-honored shops operated by Chinese were once gathered here, becoming an important landmark showing the Chinese business culture in Thailand.



Figure22: “老噠叻 (LAO TUK LUCK), an important trading area for early Chinese immigrants.

Source: Photographed by Huang Xiaoyun

1.3.3 Hybrid culture of religious customs

The Guandi Temple serves as a vital symbol of Chinese immigrants in Thailand, preserving and promoting the faith of Guan Gong. Revered as "Guanyu" in China, Guan Yu was an esteemed general known for his bravery and intelligence. In folk beliefs, he is regarded as a divine figure with exceptional martial skills, capable of warding off evil and bringing good fortune. Following his death, Guan Yu was honored as a deity who blesses peace and protects against malevolent spirits, earning him the title "Guan Gong." Temples dedicated to him are built widely as places of worship and protection.

At the Guandi Temple in Damnoen Saduak Floating Market, a statue of Guan Gong is enshrined, featuring traditional Chinese couplets and an antique, solemn ambiance. This temple's location at the market's center highlights its role in the spread of Chinese culture in Thailand. Many nearby shophouses also contain Guan Gong shrines, reflecting how the belief in Guan Gong has become intertwined with the daily lives of Chinese and Thai merchants, particularly those engaged in commerce who seek blessings for prosperity.

In Xingping Ancient Town, Guangxi, China, a grand statue of Guan Gong stands prominently, dressed in armor and wielding the Green Dragon Crescent Blade. This statue symbolizes the essence of Chinese martial arts culture and enhances the cultural atmosphere of the area. The stage nearby often hosts traditional performances, such as shadow puppetry and opera, serving as a key venue for cultural heritage.

Thus, shophouses and Guandi temples significantly contribute to the cultural exchange between China and Thailand, fostering the integration of their mixed cultures. The belief in Guan Gong not only signifies Chinese cultural identity and values like loyalty, righteousness, and bravery but also encourages local Thai participation. Through this cultural exchange, Thai people have enriched the portrayal of Guan Gong, resulting in a unique folk belief that strengthens the ties between the two nations.



Figure23-24: Guan di miao at Damnoen Saduak Floating Market in Thailand and Guan gong statue at Xingping Ancient Town in Guilin, Guangxi, China.
Source:Photographed by Huang Xiaoyun

2. Designing the Chinese-Thai shophouse handbook for tourism interpretation.

2.1 Design background and purpose

As a historical witness of the people-to-people exchanges between the two countries, the shophouses of China and Thailand contain rich mixed cultural connotations. With the rise of cultural tourism, tourists' understanding of shophouses often seems one-sided and lacks systematic explanatory materials. Therefore, it is very important to compile the "China-Thailand Shophouse Tourism Interpretation handbook". The handbook aims to help tourists fully understand the culture of Chinese and Thai shophouses through easy-to-understand language and vivid and interesting forms, enhance the tourism experience, and guide tourists to establish awareness of cultural heritage protection.

2.2 Design principles

Comprehensiveness: The content covers the history, culture, society, tourism and other dimensions of shophouses, and constructs a complete picture of shophouse culture.

Interesting: Use a lively language style, interspersed with historical stories and cultural allusions, with exquisite pictures and illustrations to enhance the readability of the handbook.

Practicality: Provide practical strategies such as guide information, special projects, food shopping and other practical strategies of shophouse attractions to facilitate tourists' actual tour needs.

2.3 Content structure

Using the cultural values set forth in the Bura Charter Guidelines as a guiding principle, this handbook interprets the cultural connotations of the Chinese and Thai shophouses in four dimensions: historical, aesthetic, scientific and social values.

Chapter 1, Overview of Zhongtai Shophouses and Introduction to Representative Shophouse Scenic Spots

Chapter 2, Historical Value, explores the historical and cultural background of shophouses in China and Thailand, using representative shophouse attractions such as Amphawa Floating Market, Damnoen Saduak Floating Market, Yangshuo West Street, and Xingping Ancient Town as examples to showcase the style of shophouses in different historical periods.

Chapter 3, Aesthetic Value: Interpreting the construction characteristics of shophouses in China and Thailand, including the location layout, spatial structure, and unique aesthetic styles of architectural elements in both countries.

Chapter 4, Scientific Value: Interpreting the Wisdom of Building a Store House, and Interpreting the Scientific Adaptability of Store House Architecture to Tropical Climate in terms of Ventilation, Lighting, Moisture Prevention, etc.

Chapter 5, Social Value: Interpreting the social functions of shophouses in China and Thailand, the relationship between commercial venues and economic development, community life and folk customs, introducing the social role of shophouses as commercial venues to promote economic exchanges between China and Thailand, and unique project experiences such as cultural activities and handicraft production.

2.4 Visual design

The overall use of warm beige and muted gradient tones on the cover, paired with pictures of a busy water town market at night, creates a visual contrast. The warm colors give people a sense of comfort and echo the dusk lights of the market, highlighting the cultural atmosphere of Chinese-Thai fusion.

the inner page continues the beige color and warm tone collocation, the main picture is also having a sense of history of ancient buildings and streets, reflecting the historical and cultural connotation of Xingping Ancient Town.

The pictures are high-definition photography, highlighting the architectural details and cultural scenes of the store house.

The illustrations are interspersed to vividly show the commercial activities and folk customs of the store house and enhance the visual appeal.

The map should be eye-catching and beautiful, clearly labeling the tour route and main attractions, so as to facilitate the use of visitors on the ground.

2.5 Application Promotion

The handbook is in Chinese, English and Thai, which is convenient for tourists with different language backgrounds.

Make exquisite printed handbooks and distribute them in places where tourists gather, such as shophouse scenic spots, tourist centers, and hotels.

Simultaneously launch the electronic version of the handbook, which can be downloaded for free on tourism websites, APP and other platforms to expand the scope of dissemination.

Integrate the content of the handbook into the explanation of the shophouse guide, develop related cultural and creative products, and enrich the in-depth experience of tourists.

Discussion

The research results found that the Chinese and Thai shophouses reflect a deep cultural intermingling in terms of site layout, structure, trade culture and religious customs. Based on the cultural landscape perspective, the Chinese and Thai shophouses present unique cultural characteristics in terms of District, Edge, Path, Node, Landmark Comply with (ICOMOS, 1999) emphasizes the cultural significance and conservation principles of traditional buildings and settlements. The World Heritage Convention provides a legal framework and management guidelines for the conservation of globally important cultural and natural heritage. These documents provide the theoretical basis and practical guidelines for the conservation and management of traditional architectural heritage such as Chinese and Thai shophouses. Tilden (1957) proposed six principles for heritage interpretation, emphasizing that interpretation should attract tourists with appeal, inspiration and relevance. Beck & Cable (2002) further enriched the principles of interpretation, emphasizing that interpretation should be thematic, unique and participatory. Moscardo (2014) explored the relationship between heritage interpretation and tourist experience, attitude and behavior. These studies provide important references for the design of the Chinese and Thai shophouse tourism interpretation handbook.

The steady growth of Chinese education in Thailand is seen to be mostly due to the country's open and peaceful ethnic policies, as well as the fusion of Buddhist and Confucian cultures between China and Thailand. There has also been some overzealous and cross-border integration in the language and cultural integration process between China and Thailand. The traits of Thai Chinese language instruction include "moderate integration" and "excessive integration," and both of these traits work together to shape the field's development (Xiao, & Tian, 2024).

Suggestion

The suggestion of research

Based on field investigations, this study attempts to interpret the mixed cultural characteristics of Chinese and Thai shophouses from the perspective of cultural landscapes. This research perspective helps to systematically understand the material and intangible cultural heritage carried by shophouses, revealing the rich connotations of Chinese and Thai mixed culture. However, at the same time, as a grand conceptual framework, cultural landscapes and traditional functions of shophouses are gradually facing challenges of commercialization and homogenization with the development of the tourism industry. How to achieve sustainable management of cultural landscapes while protecting cultural heritage is an important issue in the future cultural protection of Chinese and Thai shophouses.

The suggestions for further research

Research for Establish a comprehensive archive database for Chinese and Thai shophouses. The system collects the historical evolution, architectural features, cultural stories, etc. of shophouses, providing a foundation for in-depth research and tourism interpretation.

Research for Promote the active utilization of shophouses. Encourage the transformation of shophouses into cultural experience venues, such as characteristic homestays, cultural and creative shops, intangible cultural heritage exhibition halls, etc., allowing tourists to experience the charm of traditional architecture while experiencing the long-standing Chinese and Thai culture.

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