

An Initial Exploration of the Development Mode of Characteristic Towns

-- Taking Shaanxi Province as an Example

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Abstract: Characteristic towns have a unique geographic space, cultural space and industrial space, and is an important platform for promoting the integrated development of urban and rural areas, as well as an important opportunity for industrial restructuring and upgrading, and our country now has a solid foundation for building characteristic towns. The article succinctly elucidates the concept, characteristics, and formation paths of characteristic towns, and analyzes the development mode of characteristic towns in Shaanxi Province, and puts forward suggestions for promoting the development mode of characteristic towns in Shaanxi Province.

Keywords: Characteristic Towns; Development; Model; The New Urbanization; Rural Revitalization.

1. The Concept of Characteristic Towns

In 2014, at the Ali Cloud Developer Conference, Li Qiang, then governor of Zhejiang Province, mentioned the term "Characteristic Towns" for the first time at the conference. In January 2015, Zhejiang Province, "Government Work Report" officially put forward the "Characteristic Towns" this keyword. In the same year, "the people's government of Zhejiang province on accelerating the planning and construction of the characteristic towns of the guiding opinions" was issued, for the first time systematically put forward and clarify the positioning and requirements of the characteristic towns. In June 24, Zhejiang Province held a Characteristic Towns planning and construction work site promotion meeting, Characteristic Towns full implementation stage officially arrived. In 2016, with the gradual spread of the construction movement of characteristic towns in Zhejiang, the National Housing and Construction Bureau recognized the model and promoted it in the country. The Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (MOHURD), the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and the Ministry of Finance (MOF) jointly issued the Notice on the Cultivation of Characteristic Towns, and the term characteristic towns has begun to be widely used across the country [1].

2. Key Features of Characteristic Towns

Characteristic town as a specific space, in the opinion of Western scholars, the "special" characteristics of the town is mainly expressed in the following points: Firstly, relatively small production and living space or small scale; secondly, beautiful environment and comfortable living; thirdly, characteristic industry and operation mode; fourthly, unique culture. And when our scholars summarize the characteristics of characteristic towns, they mainly summarize and

generalize the characteristics of characteristic towns through the differences between characteristic towns and established towns, industrial parks, economic development zones, tourism zones in terms of administrative divisions, industrial structures, functions, construction and management modes, and so on [2]. The earliest to summarize this was Li Qiang, then governor of Zhejiang Province, in his article "Characteristic town is a strategic choice for the innovative development of Zhejiang", he clearly pointed out from the perspective of the strategic position of characteristic towns in the future development of Zhejiang, Characteristic town is neither an administrative concept nor an industrial park concept, but a product of the collision of Zhejiang characteristic industry and new urbanization.

According to the above formulation, some people more generally believe that the main characteristics of the characteristics town the first is the endogenous nature of the industry; the second is the composite function; the third is the form of small and beautiful; the fourth is the operation mechanism is new and live.

3. Background of the Proposed Construction of Characteristic Towns in China

3.1. China now has a Solid Foundation for Building Characteristic Towns

From the point of view of the economic foundation for the construction of characteristic towns, the scale of China's economy has already possessed the economic foundation for the development of characteristic towns after the rapid growth in the last 30 years. In terms of industrial base, China is currently the country with the most complete industrial structure in the world, and the scale and aggregation effect of industrial development is very large, which has reached a new stage of urgent transformation and upgrading. From the historical and cultural basis, China is a cultural powerhouse with a long history of 5,000 years, splendid cultural treasures

and fascinating natural scenery can be seen everywhere, so it can be said that China will be able to come out of a road of development of characteristics towns in line with China's national conditions and highlighting the charm of China.

3.2. Characteristic Town is the Development Direction to Realize New Urbanization

The current urbanization rate in the developed countries of the world is around 80 per cent, which is at the late stage of urbanization development. China's urbanization is a new type of urbanization road, emphasizing the human-centered, historical and cultural heritage and natural ecological harmony of the development concept, more scientific, more humane, more harmonious, the characteristics of the town put forward the "three-life integration" and "four-in-one" development concept is the best interpretation of the new type of urbanization![3]

3.3. Characteristic Towns Shoulder the Historical Mission of Rural Revitalization Strategy

To revitalize the countryside, it is necessary to reverse the flow of industry, capital, talent and other resources to the countryside, and the characteristic town is the most direct and effective space carrier to solve these problems. Characteristic towns are generally located in the urban and rural areas, are the head of the countryside, the tail of the city, is the bridge and link between the city and the countryside, carrying the city's industrial outreach, the important role of functional relief. Characteristic towns drive the growth of the regional economy with characteristic industries and promote local farmers to enjoy non-discriminatory national treatment with urban residents in terms of labor and employment, social security, public services, etc. It can be said that the construction of characteristic towns is an inevitable way to implement the strategy of rural revitalization.

3.4. Characteristic Towns Construction is an Important Opportunity for Industrial Transformation and Upgrading

The current economic situation in China is facing a period of opportunity for strategic transformation. Characteristic town as a space platform for innovation and entrepreneurship provides an excellent development environment and industrial policies for emerging industries and innovative talents, and plays a very positive and important role in promoting economic transformation, industrial upgrading, cultivation and innovation of emerging industries. It can be said that the construction of Characteristic towns has become an important opportunity for the country's economic transformation.

4. Formation and Cultivation of Characteristic Towns

4.1. The Formation of Characteristic Towns

Since the reform and opening up, the development of small towns in China has shown a gradual and slow growth trend, Since 1998, when the central government proposed that "the development of small towns is a major strategy to drive the economic and social development of rural areas" and made the cultivation and construction of small towns the main policy objective, China's urbanization rate has increased from

33.35% in 1998 to 58.52% in 2017, which is just over the world's average urbanization level of 55%. However, there is still a gap of more than 20 percentage points compared with the urbanization rate of over 80 per cent in developed countries. With the acceleration of the new urbanization process and the need for supply-side structural reform, there is an urgent need for a new development model to promote economic transformation and development. Throughout the development history of characteristic towns in China, there are mainly the following formation paths:

The first path is transformed from industrial parks. Traditional industrial parks and characteristic towns attach importance to the development of industry, but industrial parks are led by the government, the development mode is relatively single, in the ecological, residential, service and other functions are not perfect, the function is limited to do only labor-intensive industries, And characteristic towns is an innovative development platform that organically combines industry and town, emphasizing industry while also having diversified functions, a rich living atmosphere and strong development potential. Characteristic towns provide opportunities for the transformation and upgrading of industrial parks, and many industry-aggregating characteristic towns are transformed from traditional industrial parks. For example, the Xiaoshan Information Port Town in Hangzhou is an industrial park that has been successfully transformed into a characteristic town on the basis of its existing industries.

The second path is the transformation from an incorporated town. Most of the towns in the administrative division will be divided into key towns and non-key towns, key construction towns are generally located in areas with convenient transportation and have a good industrial and economic base, while non-key construction towns are generally subject to the limitations of the terrain conditions, the economic development of the situation is not good. Therefore, the former is more likely to be transformed into an industry-based characteristic town, while the latter is more likely to be transformed into an ecological and humanistic characteristic town.

The third path is formed based on the local ecological environment and historical and cultural resources. Many ecological as well as historical and humanistic characteristic towns are based on the local unique ecological natural resources as well as historical and cultural heritage, forming their own characteristics, attracting a large number of tourists, thus becoming a unique characteristic town. For example, Moganshan Town in Zhejiang is a rural tourism-type specialty town formed based on Moganshan.

The fourth path is formed under the cultivation of human development. The artificially cultivated characteristic town cannot be separated from a large amount of capital investment, and it needs to be developed and cultivated by a strong leading enterprise within a certain area to develop and cultivate unique industries and cultures according to the local conditions, and to create a characteristic town from scratch. For example, Dongyang Hengdian Film and Television Town is a cultural-type characteristic town created by artificial investment under the leadership of Hengdian Group.

4.2. Cultivation of Characteristic Towns

Cultivating characteristic towns should grasp the three key elements of industry, ecology and traditional culture, and adhere to the enterprise-led and government-guided model.

First, we should follow the principle of tailoring to local conditions and cultivate leading industries with distinctive features. In the process of fostering the characteristic town, we should be based on the actual situation of the locality, combine the existing resource advantages and industrial foundation in the region, and cultivate the leading industry suitable for its own development with distinctive characteristics. Secondly, we should set up a green ecological concept to create a livable and enjoyable town feature. The vitality of the characteristic town cannot be separated from the support of ecological resources, and under the support of ecological resources, it is necessary to insist on the equal importance of characteristics and connotation. When fostering a livable and enjoyable characteristic town, it is necessary to start from the living environment as well as the town's style, focusing on the greening construction of the town as well as the architectural style, and also doing a good job related to environmental protection and restoration. Thirdly, we should adhere to the cultural leadership and strengthen the cultural confidence of the town. Culture is the soul of the characteristic town and the core spirit of the characteristic town[4], therefore, the cultivation of the characteristic town cannot be separated from the inheritance of the characteristic traditional culture, and cannot be separated from the in-depth excavation of the history and culture and the elaboration, when cultivating the cultural characteristics of the characteristic town, we should not seek for the speed blindly, but we should do the culture sufficiently, so as to make the cultural characteristics of the town to produce a big and far-reaching influence, in order to form the unique cultural brand.

5. Shaanxi Characteristic Town Development Model

Shaanxi Province has unique natural geographic conditions as well as a rich variety of traditional cultural resources. In the first and second batch of national characteristic towns announced by the Ministry of Housing and Construction, a total of fourteen characteristic towns in Shaanxi have been approved. Characteristic towns in Shaanxi Province are divided according to industrial development paths, including tourism industry development mode, agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fishery industry development mode, and comprehensive industry development mode [5].

5.1. Tourism Industry Development Model--Qingmichuan Town

Qingmichuan is located in southern Shaanxi Province, Hanzhong City, Ningqiang County, northwest corner of the town's total area of 208 square kilometers, more than 8,000 people, is located in Shaanxi, Gansu, Sichuan provinces at the junction of the east neighboring Anle River Town, south of the town of Guangping, west of Sichuan Province, depending on the Qingshan County, Gansu Province, north of Wudu County, Kang County, known as the "a foot pedal in the three provinces", the national AAAA scenic area! Qingmichuan Town, due to the historical and cultural resources brought about by the Qinlong Ancient Road and the superior geographic location of the "Three Provinces of the Rooster", and the richness of primitive ecological resources, has become a town of great cultural, ecological, architectural style and other rich regional characteristics of Shaanxi Province, the National Famous Town of Characteristic Scenic Tourism,

the Famous Towns of China's History and Culture, the Top Ten Ancient Towns of the Country's Greatest Potential, and the Country's most Promising Rural Tourism Destination[5].

5.2. Agriculture, Forestry, Animal Husbandry and Fishery Industry Development Model - Wuquan Town

Located about 12 kilometers northwest of Yangling Demonstration Zone, central Shaanxi Province, Wuquan Town is one of the key towns in Shaanxi Province. The whole town has convenient internal and external transportation, and possesses land and climatic conditions suitable for agricultural development, and in addition, because of relying on the development of agricultural technology in the Yangling Demonstration Zone, the town has been developed for its rich humanistic and touristic resources, aiming at becoming a key central town with an idyllic cityscape, perfect infrastructure, comprehensive services, energy-saving and environmental protection, unique features, and at the same time, it is a suitable place to live, work and have a good time and a good place to have a cultural and touristic experience.

5.3. Comprehensive Industrial Development Model - Tingkou Town

Tingkou Town, Changwu County, Xianyang City, Shaanxi Province, which is known as "Han and Tang Dynasty Thoroughfare and Silk Road Station" and "Coal and Electricity Heavy Town and Landscape Tingkou", is the second batch of "National Characteristic Small Towns" approved by China's Ministry of Housing and Construction. Prior to this, "National Key Town", "Provincial Key Demonstration Town" and other more than thirty honorary titles have become the brightest endorsement of Tingkou Town. Walking into Tingkou Town, the banner aiming to build "landscape Tingkou, red hotspot, Silk Road ancient stage, Coal Heavy Town" will be reflected in the eyes, under the planning of such a path of development, the town is mainly led by the industrial development of coal and electricity, agriculture, tourism and trade and logistics, and then molded to become a typical integrated industrial development model in Shaanxi Province as a characteristic small town.

6. Suggestions for Promoting the Development of Characteristic Towns in Shaanxi Province

Characteristic town is to create a new platform for high-quality economic development, a new space for the construction of new urbanization, a new fulcrum for the integrated development of urban and rural areas, and a new carrier for the inheritance and protection of traditional culture. In the future, Shaanxi should do a good job in the construction of the characteristic town of the word "special" article, according to the resource endowment and location characteristics, clear foundation, advantages, potential industries as the goal, different positioning, staggered development, digging connotation, derivatives development, enhance the characteristics of the industrial agglomeration, to avoid homogenization of the competition. Focusing on perfecting the functions of towns and cities, through the effective integration of market, government and social forces, the construction of characteristic towns has become a new carrier for accelerating the transformation and upgrading of

industries, a new engine for pulling effective investment, and a new platform for pushing forward the structural reform of the supply side, so that characteristic towns have become a powerful push to accelerate the integrated development of urban and rural areas and boost the construction of new towns and cities, and the characteristic towns have been made into a form of civilization in which the public can not only enjoy the convenience of urbanization, but also "see the mountains, look out over the water, and remember nostalgia", so that they can become the second residence for urban residents who return to their hometowns to spend their leisure time, vacation time, and retirement, as well as to send up their native sentiments.

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