

# Aesthetic gene and prospect of garden city from the perspective of Chinese dream

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**Abstract.** This study aims to delve into the impact of the Chinese Dream ideology on the development and aesthetic characteristics of park cities. Building upon their dialectical and unified relationship, it seeks to predict the evolutionary trajectory of urban modernization and methods to enhance residents' quality of life. Focusing on domestic cases of park city construction, the research employs innovative approaches such as on-site investigations, semi-structured interviews, and literature reviews. A distinctive contribution of this study is the introduction of the concept of "aesthetic genes," which is used to describe and interpret aesthetic elements and cultural features within park cities from five different perspectives. Furthermore, the research offers profound analyses from four distinct viewpoints regarding the future prospects of park city development in the new era. By organically integrating the Chinese Dream ideology with the concept of park cities, this study provides valuable theoretical insights and practical guidance in the fields of sustainable park city construction and urban aesthetics research.

## 1 Introduction

The concept of park cities was first introduced by General Secretary Xi Jinping during his inspection tour in Sichuan province. It stands as a significant innovation in urban development for the era of ecological civilization and represents a vital pathway towards achieving high-quality development and a high-quality life. Park city construction centers on the people, advocates democratic governance, places emphasis on preserving and enhancing the quality of the natural environment, underscores the openness and inclusivity of public spaces, promotes intelligent transportation, and employs technological means to enhance transportation efficiency and convenience. The objective is to create cities characterized by "innovation, coordination, greenness, openness, and sharing." Park cities are rooted in China's rich history and cultural traditions and represent a novel concept born out of reflections on urbanization and environmental challenges. They inherit China's outstanding traditional city planning wisdom and harbor unique aesthetic characteristics and value implications.

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## **2 The dialectical relationship between the Chinese dream and park cities**

Firstly, from their fundamental attributes and value realization, both the Chinese Dream and the construction of park cities share a common high ground, which is to create a better life for the people. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, people have developed new concerns and perspectives regarding their living and working spaces, placing higher demands and expectations on the development models and trends of cities. The planning and construction of park cities respond to the evolving times and represent the latest development path following models like low-carbon cities and landscape-oriented cities. For instance, policies such as Guangzhou's "One City, One Park" aim to increase urban green spaces and enhance the ecological environment quality, aligning with the principle and ideology of putting the people at the forefront.

Secondly, aesthetics is not only a concept but can also serve as a design strategy, empowering the development of park cities and innovatively integrating into the comprehensive construction of politics, economics, culture, society, and ecological civilization. Aesthetic principles can guide urban planners and landscape designers in the process of designing park cities to consider how to create beautiful and pleasant environments. Through the application of art, design, and aesthetic elements, park cities can become places for people to relax, appreciate nature and art, thus enhancing the attractiveness and cohesion of the city. Aesthetics, as a driving force in the context of strategic development, can better satisfy the needs and psychology of the people through design expression, spatial experiences, diversification, intelligent applications, cloud-based approaches, and green innovation. Furthermore, aesthetics can also serve to promote national spirit, consolidate Chinese strength, and showcase Chinese art through internalization and cultural expression.

## **3 The aesthetic genes of park cities based on the Chinese dream ideology**

Regarding the concept of aesthetic genes, there is currently no clear explanation or definition in both academic and design circles. In recent years, some scholars have started using the term "aesthetic genes" as a topic of discussion and research, and further exploration and research are needed in the future. In the biological sciences, genes are defined as segments of DNA with hereditary effects, possessing the dual characteristics of replication and variation. Extending this definition to the context of "hereditary segments," aesthetic genes can be summarized as a form of aesthetic heritage with characteristics and values rooted in artistic principles and design expressions. The "variation" aspect can be understood as upholding tradition while innovating and incorporating expansion. Looking at the trajectory of urban development in China, by studying policies related to urban renovation and revitalization and combining them with the current practices of park cities, the following aesthetic characteristics and genetic connotations can be delineated: ecological aesthetics, spatial aesthetics, Eastern aesthetics, red aesthetics, and a "human-centered" aesthetic perspective.

### **3.1 Ecological aesthetics: harmony**

Ecological aesthetics has long been a guiding value standard in various activities in China, including urban development, production, and daily life. The roots of ecological philosophy can be traced back to the Spring and Autumn period in ancient China. Concepts like

"advance along the Dao, retreat from the Dao" and "the unity of Heaven and humanity" emphasized the need for human practices in production and daily life to align with the ways of nature. These principles conveyed an ecological perspective of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. Ancient traditional city planning also emphasized the integration of human-made and natural elements. Palaces, bridges, roads, and other structures were designed to harmonize with the surrounding terrain, natural features, and rivers. Socialist ecological aesthetics represents an accumulation and enrichment of ecological ethics that have evolved through changing social epochs. It inherits and innovates upon ancient Chinese ecological civilization thought. Under the perspective of the Chinese Dream, the construction of park cities aims to create ideal cities that integrate the three realms (natural, human, and urban), are open and compatible, emphasize green and low-carbon principles, promote efficiency and sharing, and incorporate intelligent innovations. This vision aligns with traditional Chinese ecological philosophy and, within the context of the new era, embodies the aesthetic connotations of the "Two Mountains Theory" and the "community of shared destiny." It represents an innovative development of traditional ecological aesthetics, expresses an aesthetic discourse with socialist characteristics, and serves as an important practice for implementing the dual-carbon policies in pursuit of the goal of becoming a modernized, strong nation.

### **3.2 Spatial aesthetics: order**

The concept of "ritual or propriety" has been a cherished governing philosophy throughout various dynasties in Chinese history, and it is intimately related to political aesthetics. When applied to architectural and urban construction, "ritual or propriety" becomes an immensely important principle in the planning of ancient cities. Corresponding terms include order, hierarchy and symmetry, all of which represent manifestations of rational beauty. Order can be observed in various elements such as color, changes in light and shadow, and textures. Due to differences in intrinsic conditions, geographic influences, and varying perspectives, order not only embodies rational beauty but also contains elements of emotional beauty. In the spatial planning of park cities, traditional order serves as the foundation. It tightly integrates functionality, psychological needs, and experiences while considering the development of the times. The layout is unified, the planning is rational, and priorities are clearly defined, all of which highlight the charm of the city. The central axis culture is the most representative example of spatial aesthetics in ancient Chinese urban planning and design. It exhibits a sense of order with buildings arranged symmetrically in the east and west, creating a magnificent and awe-inspiring spectacle.

Today, in the planning of the new urban landscape belt along Beijing's central axis, this concept not only carries forward the historical and cultural legacies of the Yuan, Ming, Qing, Republic of China, and New China periods but also continues the unique grand order and central ideological connotations. Additionally, it combines with the development blueprint of the times, showcasing the charm of the "Dual Olympics City."

### **3.3 Eastern aesthetics: imagery**

The important design principle of "emulating Heaven and conforming to Earth", as applied in the construction of ancient capital cities, had a profound influence on various aspects of Chinese urban form, layout, and detailed decorations. It laid the foundation for the unique imagery of Eastern aesthetics within the realm of urban aesthetics in China. It is an integral part of the genetic makeup of Chinese urban aesthetics. Traditional Chinese aesthetic thinking is rich and expansive, encompassing aspects of urban construction such as spatial organization, functional divisions, governance, as well as daily life including clothing, food,

housing, transportation, and more. It represents the humanistic and cultural heritage of a city's history and serves as a significant cultural foundation and framework for urban planning and landscaping. The challenge lies in the seamless integration of modern urbanization needs with Chinese imagery, merging Eastern charm to convey the essence of China. This is a crucial research point and practical principle in the construction of park cities. Traditional culture provides valuable insights and commonalities for modern park cities. By incorporating aesthetic genes such as traditional thoughts, folk arts, and the essence of Chinese spirit into urban development, it better reflects a city's historical heritage and cultural significance, radiating a unique Eastern artistic charm in the new era.

### **3.4 Red aesthetics: accumulation**

The "Red Gene" refers to the revolutionary spirit, the spirit of struggle, and the commitment to serving the people embodied by the Communist Party of China. It is an important component of China's core socialist values and represents the valuable qualities that Chinese Communist Party members have accumulated at various stages of socialist revolution, reform, and development. It has a distinct contemporary relevance and is closely related to the development history of cities. For urban residents, the Red Gene is not only a historical memory and cultural identity but also a commitment to core socialist values and the direction of national development. The application of Red Aesthetics in park cities refers to the influence and inheritance of Red culture and ideology within the city. For example, some buildings with historical Red significance preserve and display Red history, transmitting the Red Gene to city residents and visitors. Organizing various Red cultural activities, such as Red-themed exhibitions and artistic performances, can ignite people's interest and love for the Red Gene, enhancing cohesion and appeal. The inheritance and creative transformation of the Red Gene are key points in the construction of park cities in the new era, as emphasized by the Party and the country.

### **3.5 "human-centered" aesthetic perspective: ethics**

The concept of "people-oriented" places human beings at the center of its ideology, representing a fundamental principle of ancient social ethics. Traditional Chinese culture and practices have always placed a strong emphasis on the feelings and expressions of individuals. They prioritize creating a sense of artistic mood. This principle extends from ancient architectural construction to decorative arts, permeating both the material and spiritual aspects with a central aesthetic principle centered around human beings. It fully articulates people's aspirations for a better life. As time has progressed, the concept of "people-oriented" has evolved through the awakening of modern democratic thinking and, in the new era, into a people-first value system. Its connotations continue to grow and improve. The concept of park cities vividly reflects this "people-oriented" aesthetic view. Park cities are steadily advancing toward high-tech and intelligent directions, all while radiating a vibrant human touch. Ultimately, the goal is to make people's lives more vibrant and their cities more efficient. The construction of park cities, the planning of functional spaces, the renewal of cityscapes, and management all emphasize the spirit of sharing, benefiting the masses to the greatest extent possible, fully embodying the essence of people-oriented principles, and transitioning from the material level to the level of consciousness.

## **4 The visionary perspectives of park cities in the new era**

Based on the shortcomings in China's urban development, taking into account the current

status of park city construction, and drawing inspiration from outstanding international experiences, our focus is on urban development for the betterment of society and improving the lives of the people. Consequently, we propose the following four visionary perspectives: Special Needs Accessibility, Localization, Public Health, and Aging in the New Era.

#### **4.1 Perspective on Accessibility for Special Needs Individuals: Inclusion**

Conducting investigations and optimizations in park city construction from the perspective of accessibility for special needs individuals will result in more precise and human-centered improvements in spatial design, functionality, and aesthetics. It will offer city services in a more comprehensive and effective manner. While the needs of special groups such as the elderly, children, and people with disabilities are receiving increasing attention in the development of the new era, it is crucial to integrate their requirements into the overall planning and layout of park city construction. This integration should address their physiological, psychological, and social needs. Specific standards and evaluation systems for the adaptability of park city construction to special needs individuals should be developed, covering aspects such as spatial layout, supporting facilities, management, cultural atmosphere, and more. For example, Baoding in Hebei Province is creating a new identity as a "Child-Friendly City." They are implementing various initiatives, services, community planning, and activities that respect the voices of children and safeguard their rights during their growth. "Child-Friendly, Illuminating the Future" is an optimization path for urban development from the perspective of accessibility for special needs individuals.

#### **4.2 Localization perspective: urban memory and regional features**

Public park cities need to consider not only the physical aspects but also serve as important carriers of cultural information. Local indigenous culture and distinctive cultural elements are emotional memories and profound recollections of local residents. The construction of public park cities should not be a one-size-fits-all standardized transformation, nor should it be a replication of other cities. Instead, it should be a distinctive transformation and renewal based on the local cultural foundation. For example, the landscape art of Shenzhen Talent Park highlights people's contributions to the city, emphasizes diverse themes, and embodies the eternal public spirit and regional characteristics. Therefore, in the future construction of public park cities, how to sense the humanistic atmosphere and urban characteristics on the basis of modernity is a key issue for us to consider. Furthermore, we need to understand the relationship between urban memory, regional features, and artistic expression at a deeper level.

#### **4.3 Public health perspective: reflections in the era of pandemics**

In early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic spread worldwide, profoundly impacting people's lifestyles and perceptions. Social order and economic development suffered severe blows, and people's health and lives were threatened. Health-related topics received unprecedented attention. The "new" economy and "new" cities prompted new reflections on the value of life. In this context, new requirements and updated perspectives have been proposed for the construction of park cities. Achieving harmonious coexistence between humans and nature, building a community of shared destiny, promoting a circular economy, and creating green and healthy living environments will undoubtedly be the issues that park city construction must consider in the future. Comprehensive considerations encompass environmental psychology, interactivity, public health protection, and functional enhancement, all contributing to the realization of new goals for a healthy society for all.

#### **4.4 New era elderly care perspective: elderly care services with Chinese characteristics of socialist society**

In recent years, the topics of aging and elderly care services have garnered significant attention and importance, with widespread demand and room for development. The design of aesthetic spaces and urban planning can play a crucial role in improving the quality of life for elderly individuals, promoting social inclusivity, and constructing more livable cities. For instance, enhancing aesthetic experiences can be achieved by integrating artworks, sculptures, and cultural elements into public spaces. Elderly individuals often rely more on public transportation, so urban planning should consider the convenience and accessibility of public transportation. Furthermore, providing elderly-friendly amenities such as seating, signage, and wheelchair ramps should also be taken into consideration. By combining aesthetic spaces with urban development, it is possible to create more vibrant and elderly-friendly cities that meet the physiological and psychological needs of older people, integrating their social participation with livable environments, upgraded social services, and management services to create a more dynamic and friendly urban environment.

### **5 Conclusion**

In summary, park cities align with the historical trend of urban civilization development and represent a crucial initiative towards achieving a socialist modernized nation. This article focuses on the aesthetic genes of park cities, aiming to elucidate the significance of aesthetics in the construction of park cities in the new era. As we draw closer to our grand dreams, the people's pursuit of beauty becomes more profound, and the role of art and design becomes increasingly potent. To fully harness the empowering role of aesthetics, we must consistently lead the way on the path of innovative construction in park cities.

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