

Panda-Watching

Historic village reconstruction, Xueshan, Sichuan, China



Main author

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Project data

Context	Landscape, urban design and infrastructure
Client	Baoxing County government
Background	Public commission
Planned start	September 2013

Summary and appraisal by the jury

The design proposes a post-earthquake reconstruction of Xueshan, a historic village known as the hometown of the panda in China. Focusing on the unique local characteristics of the site, the project uses bamboo as the main building material and revives traditional construction techniques. Approximately 50 houses will be rebuilt and a small number of new structures erected, including a hotel, panda museum, memorial hall and raised platforms for panda watching.

Is history a construct? What measures must be taken when dealing with historic preservation? To what degree can contemporary architecture refer to the past? These are some of the questions wisely posed by the project, both conceptually as well as through design. The proposal aims at a subtle balance between “the old” and “the new”, at times adhering to pure historic reconstruction based on the study of archival material, while at other moments taking greater liberties when interpreting vernacular form. The jury praises the clarity and beauty of the submitted drawings which intelligently refer to the tradition of classical Chinese painting, while acknowledging the present.

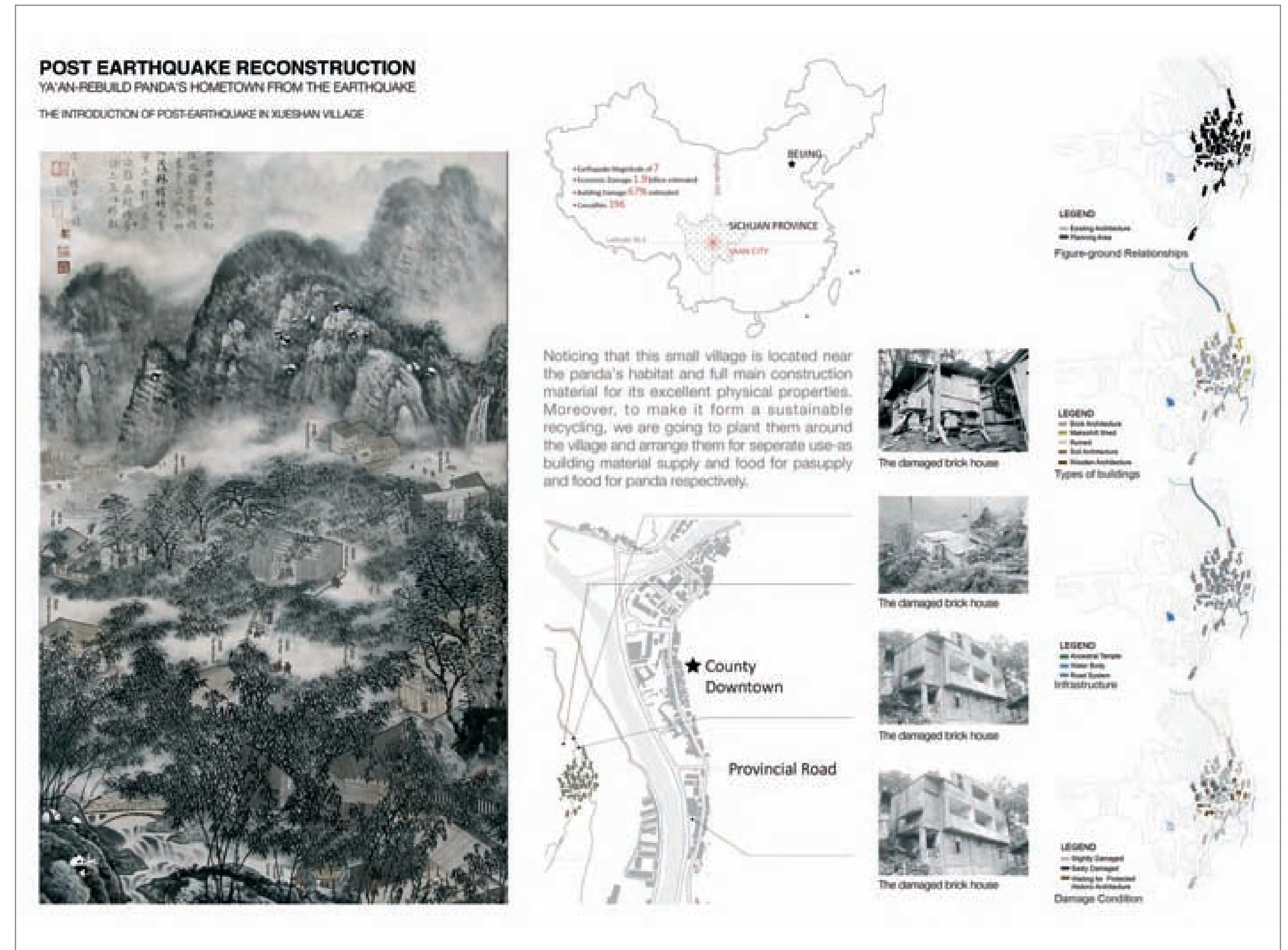


Image 1: Reconstruction is now the main task for the village following a significant earthquake. The small village is located near the panda's habitat and has an abundant bamboo supply, the project's main construction material. The bamboo has excellent physical properties for construction, and through sustainable recycling, the aim is to plant bamboo around the village and allocate crops for building material supply, food supply, and food for pandas respectively.

Sustainability concept

How can the reconstruction of Xueshan village respond to its cultural and natural identity? The proposal is a post-earthquake reconstruction plan of Xueshan village, a historic village known as the hometown of the panda.

The severe earthquake resulted in great damages to the village where people endure a poor living environment. However, compared to Baoxing county on the opposite side of the river, Xueshan village kept a primitive simplicity. Focusing on the unique local characteristics, bamboo and panda, we propose a panda-watching tourism and bamboo reconstruction program.

The project not only attempts to improve the rural living quality but also to minimize the impacts towards the natural and historical value of the area. People could take a closer look at wild panda from a viewing platform and enjoy themselves in the village. Instead of sacrificing the existing attributes of the village or uprooting their lives and working in giant industrial centers, the villagers could create better lives for themselves in their hometown.

Bamboo – which is low-cost, fast-growing, resilient, and easy to process – is widely-applied in the reconstruction program. To save time and cost, the phasing of reconstruction is deliberately planned to match the growth cycle of bamboo. Also the façade module was introduced for new residences, enabling the West Sichuan residential vernacular to be maintained. *Panda Friendly* is a program focused on harmony in the relationship between nature, culture and people.

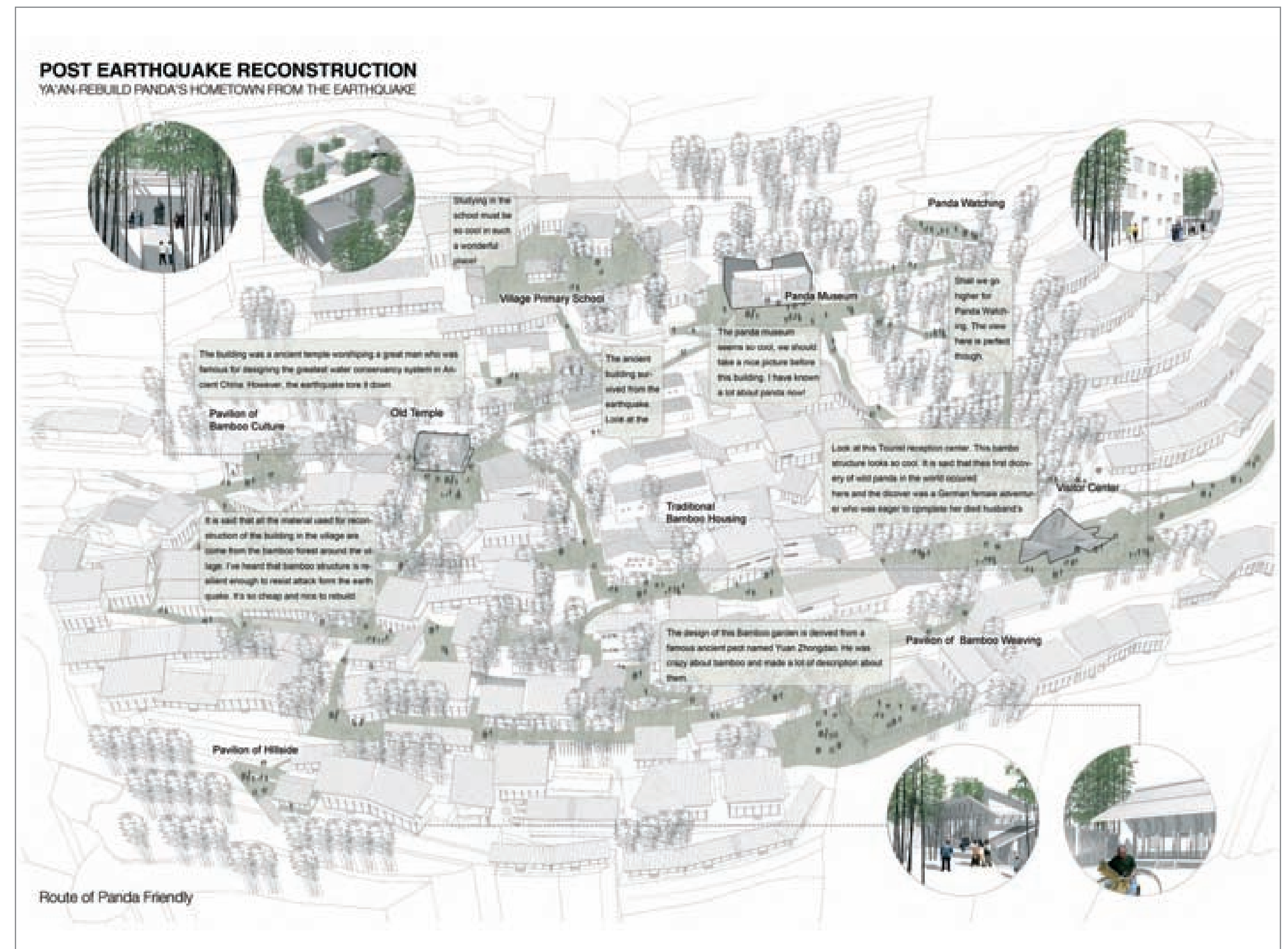


Image 2: The proposal is a post-earthquake reconstruction plan for Xueshan village, a historic village known as the hometown of the panda. The severe disaster resulted in great damage to the village where people endure a poor living environment. However, compared to Baoxing county located on the opposite side of the river, Xueshan village retains a primitive simplicity. All the historical heritage is connected by a route through the village.

Further authors

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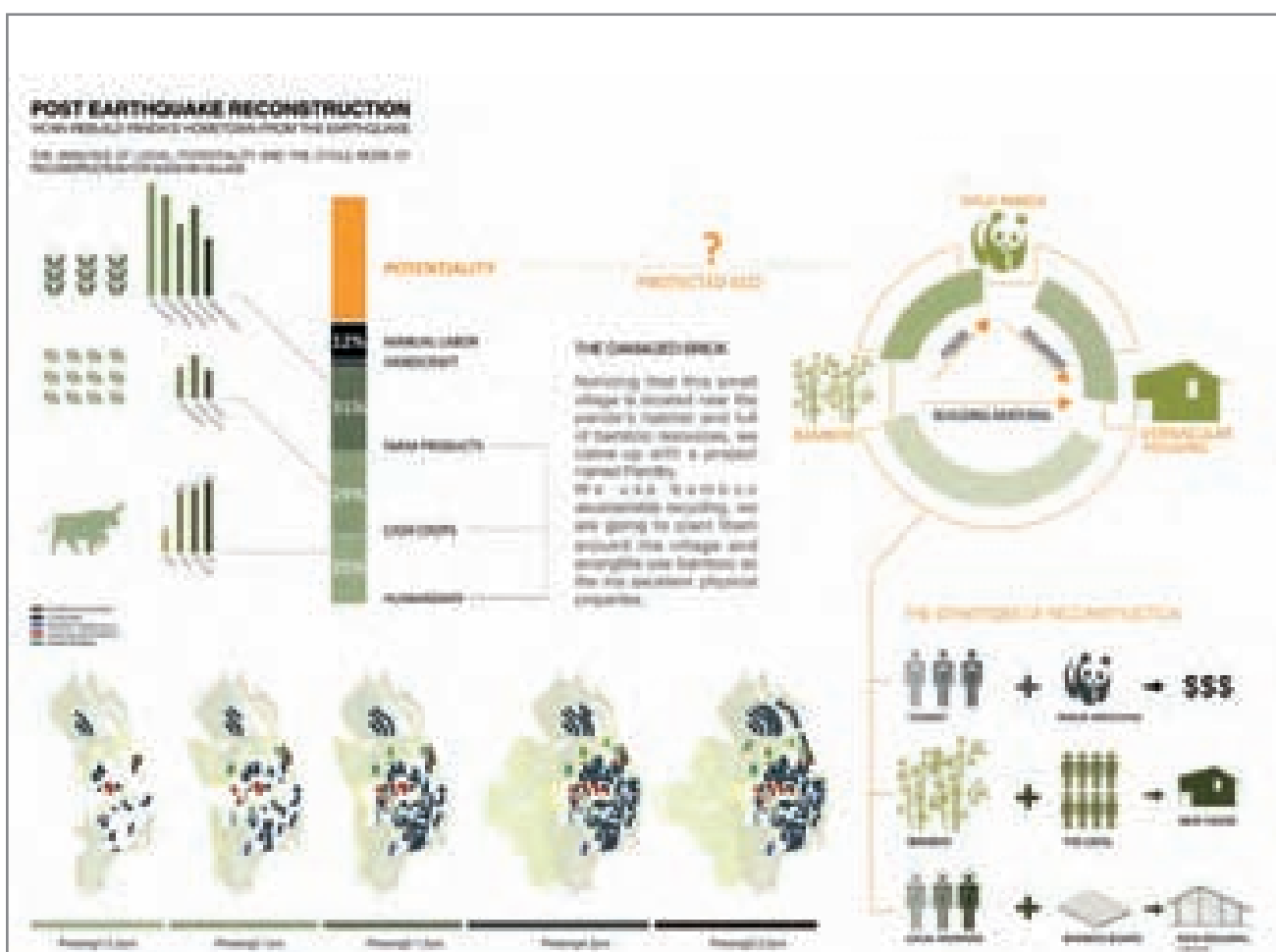


Image 3: Analysis of the income of locals.

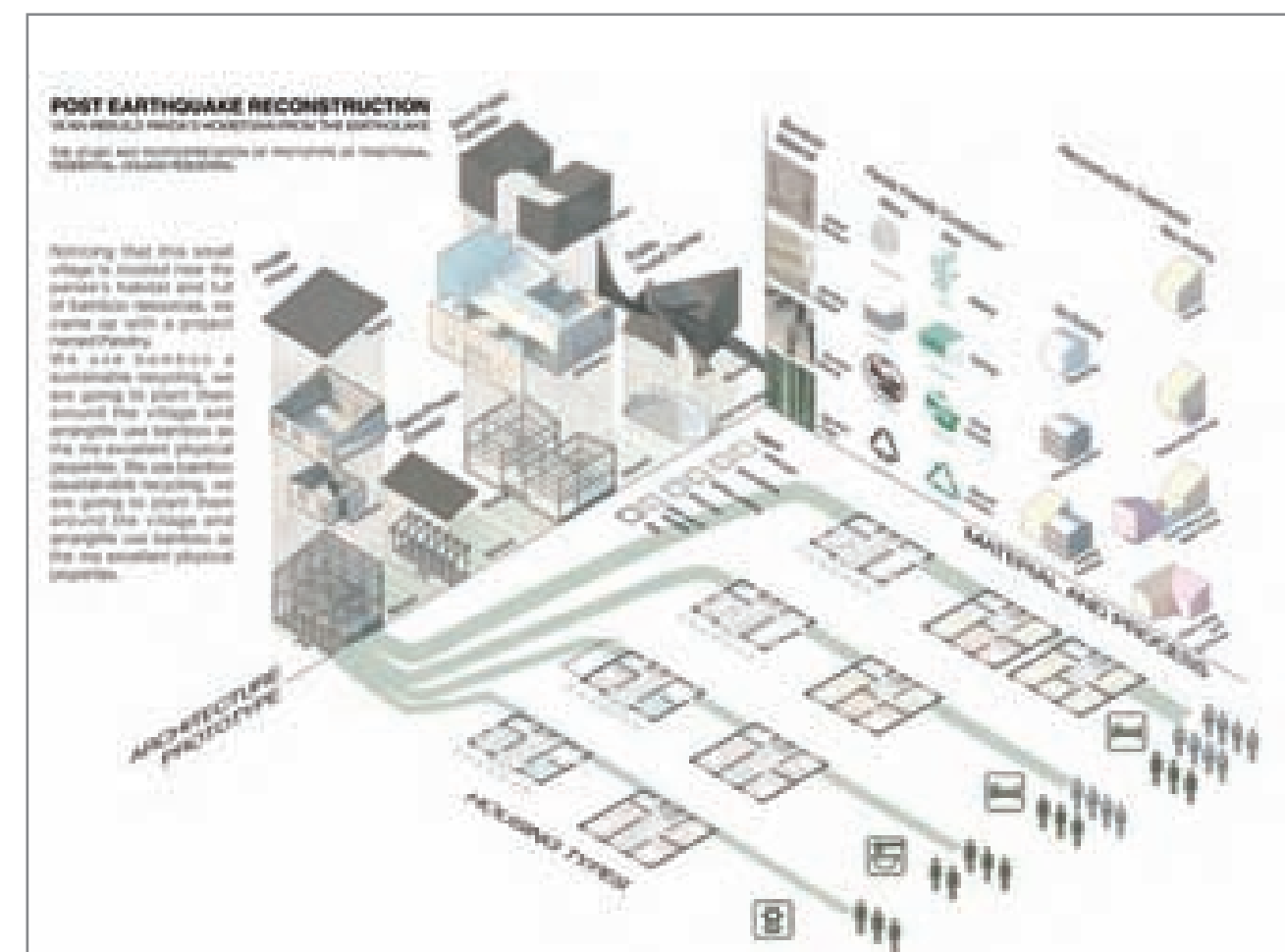


Image 4: New traditional residences.

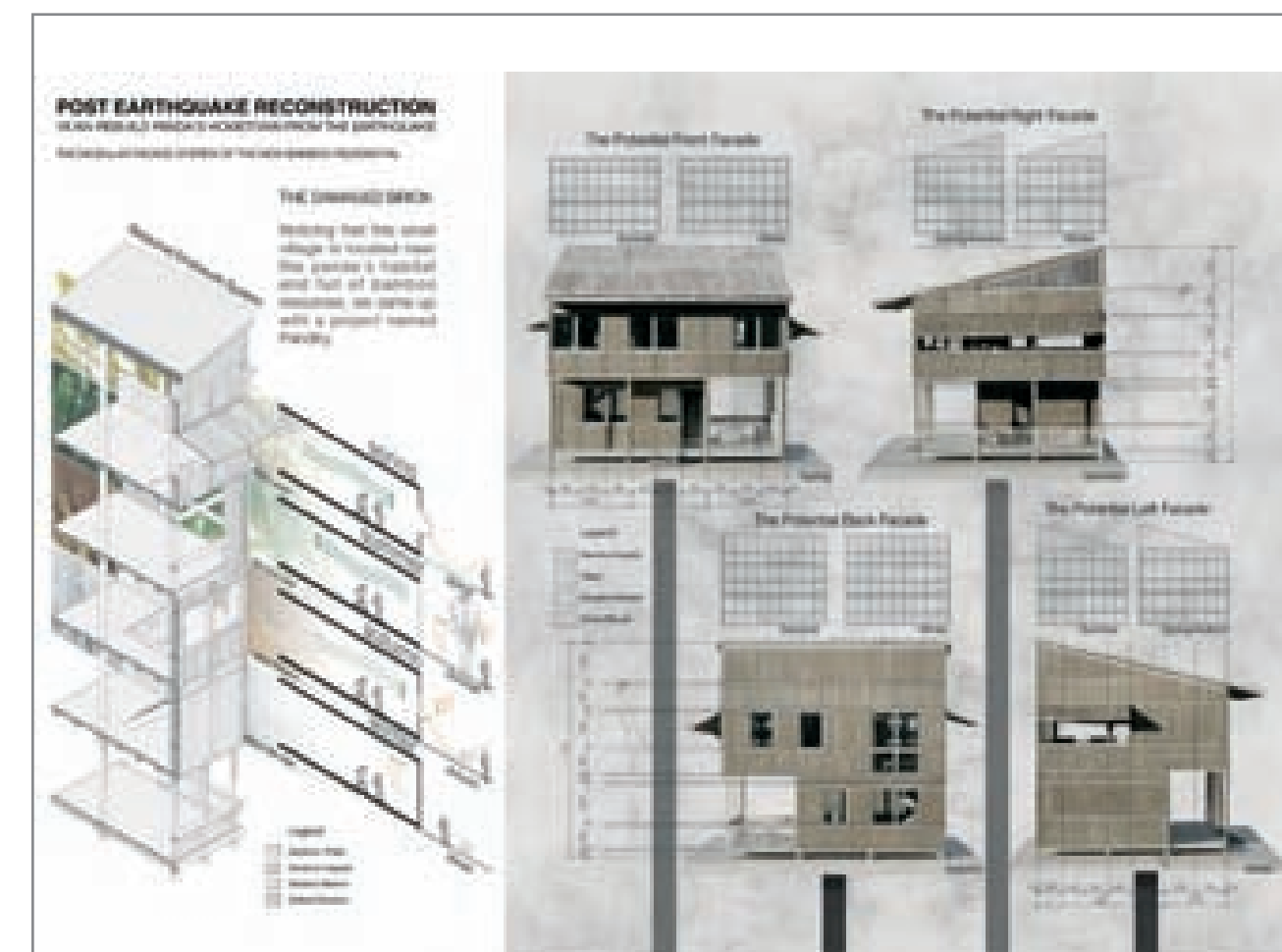


Image 5: Modular façade system.



Image 6: Panda-watching program and route arrangement.



Image 7: Panda study and history museum.

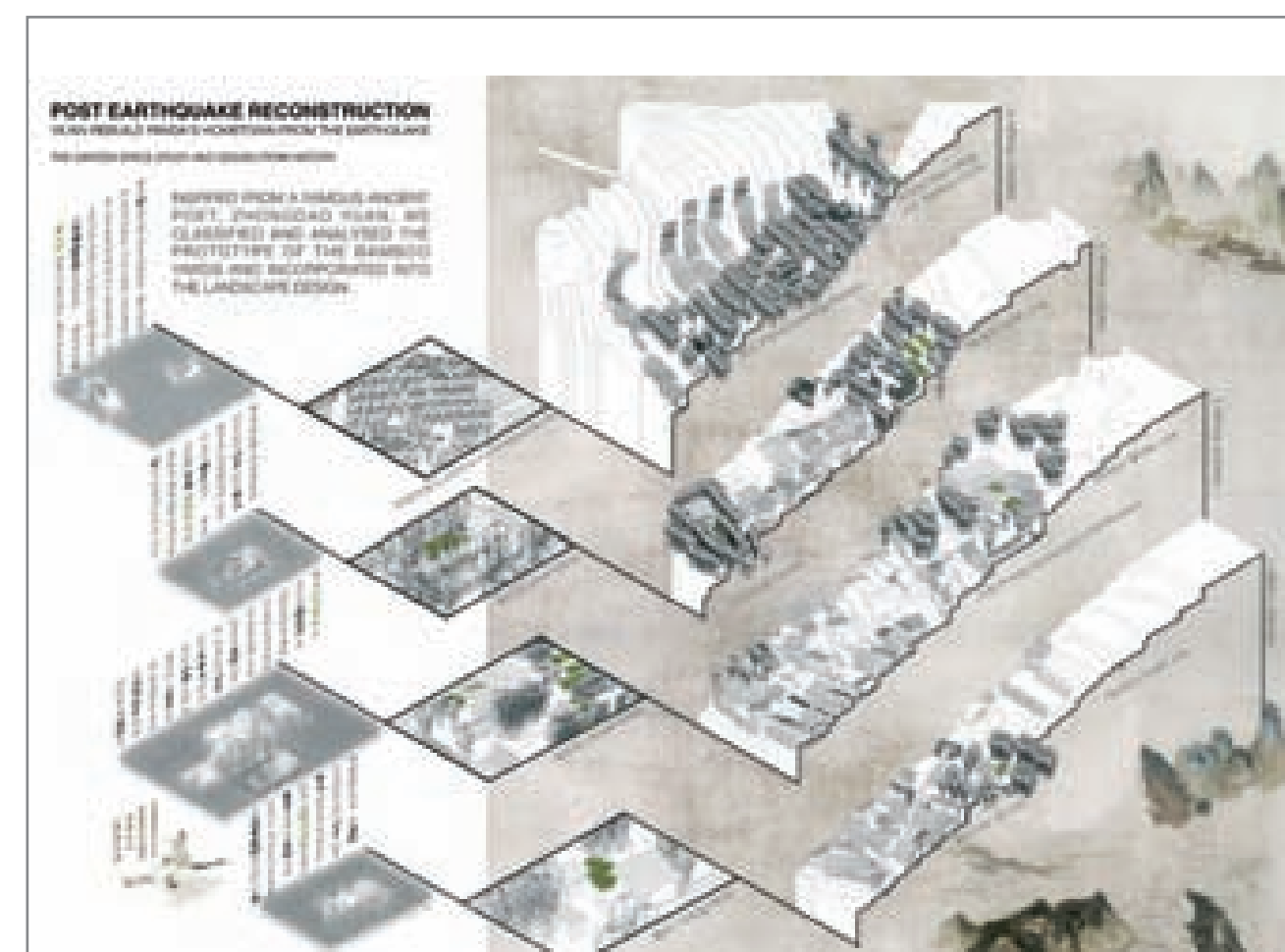


Image 8: The study and reinterpretation of ancient garden design.

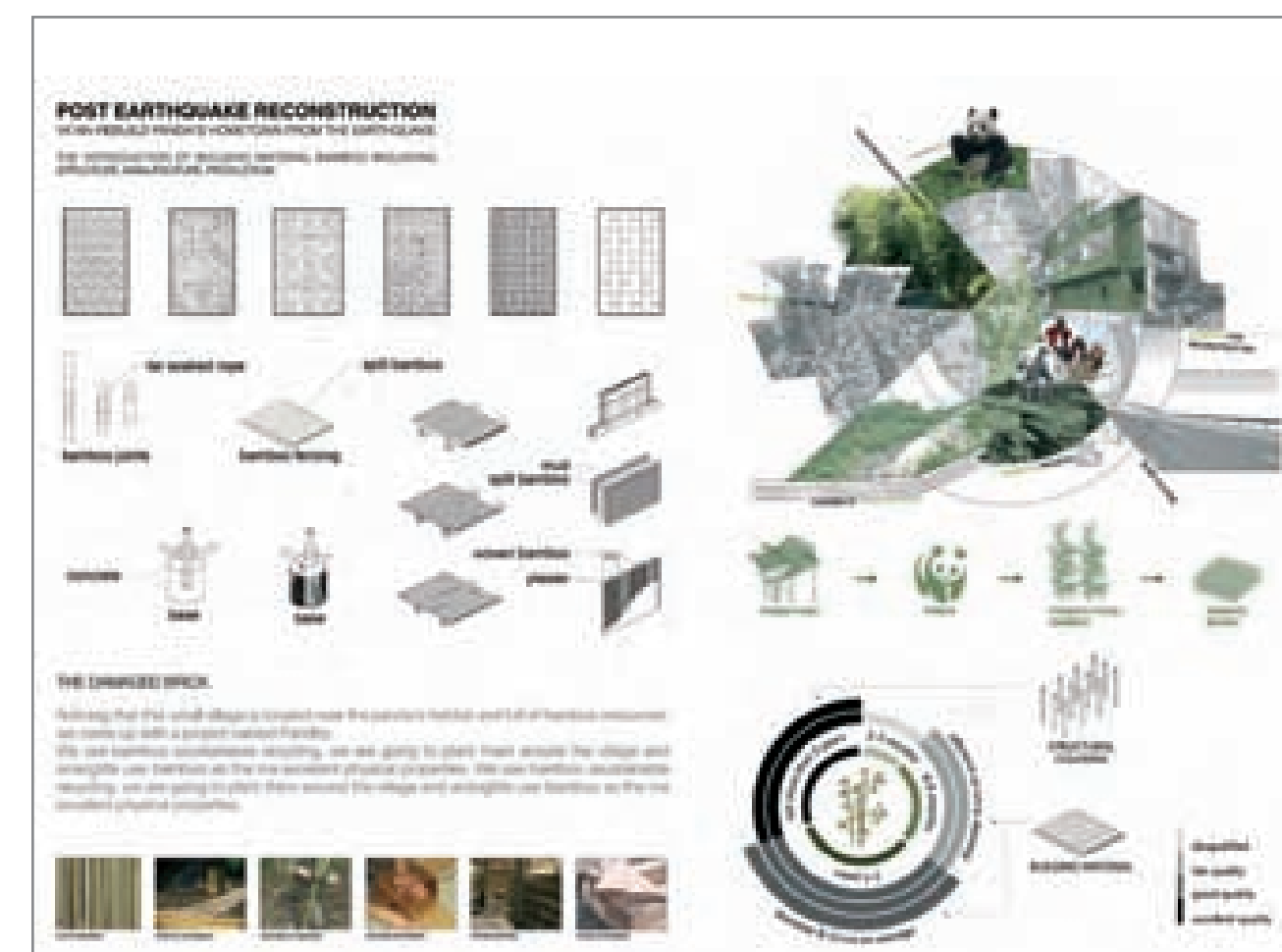


Image 9: Bamboo production and bamboo structure.