

A study of the art of decorating the doors and windows of traditional dwellings - An example from the ancient village group of Anyi, Jingtai Ancient Village

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Abstract: The doors and windows of traditional houses in China are an important part of Chinese vernacular culture. This paper will take a look at the artistic characteristics and historical and cultural background of traditional residential doors and windows. In this paper, we study the doors and windows of the ancient buildings of Jingtai Village, such as the stone pagoda at the village gate, the old house Xi Lu, and the Mo Zhuang, based on the artistic characteristics and historical and cultural background of the decoration of traditional residential doors and windows. The study is summarised by means of field research and historical data. The study will then explain the traditional symbolism and stories of the decorative art of the doors and windows of the traditional houses in Jingtai Village, and analyse the practical, artistic and historical-cultural characteristics of the decorative art of the doors and windows of the traditional houses, as well as the ways and means of conservation.

Keywords: Jingtai village; traditional dwelling; door and window decoration; decorative allegory

I. OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT SITUATION IN JINGTAI ANCIENT VILLAGE

1.1. Geographical area and location

Jingtai Ancient Village (Figure 1) is a small village located at the foot of Meiling Mountain in Nanchang's Xishan District, China, an ancient village with a history of over a thousand years. The village is one of three in the Anyi group of ancient villages, each of which is both an individual and a unified whole, each less than 500 metres apart, spread out in a 'pin' shape when viewed from above. (Tianxu Zheng and Xiaoqing Wang, 2022). The village is located in a very convenient location. The location of the village is very advantageous and the transportation is convenient. The village is surrounded by green water in front of and behind the houses, and has thousands of hectares of fertile land along the waterfront, with beautiful mountains and clear water. The eaves, brickwork and tiles, carved beams and painted buildings are beautiful. The scenery is as beautiful as an unfurled scroll, showing an idyllic scenery and a strong countryside atmosphere, known as the back garden and oxygen bar of Nanchang.



Figure1 :Area map of Jingtai Ancient Village

1.2. History and Humanities

With a history dating back more than 1400 years, Jingtai Village is more culturally rich than Luotian or Shuinan, and it is not a single family village, but a complex social structure made up of two major surnames, Liu and Li. It was first settled by Liu Xiang, a descendant of Liu's ancestor, a scholar of the Han Dynasty, who moved here from Xuzhou, Pengcheng County, Suzhou, in the first year of the Wu De era of the early Tang Dynasty. The ancestors of the Li clan, descendants of Wu Wang Ke, the third son of Emperor Taizong Li Shimin, were granted the title by the court to settle here in the early Ming dynasty during the Hongwu period.

1.3. Characteristic culture

Jingtai Village is the village with the longest history and the deepest cultural heritage in the Anyi Ancient Village Group. In the thousand years of history, the village has been accumulating. It has created a

unique and glorious human landscape and historical culture. The exhibition features many centuries-old production and living tools, dwellings, ancient theatres, traditional embroidery, paper-cutting, pastry printing, Gan opera, shadow puppets and other intangible cultural heritage, which have been excavated and preserved to perpetuate the traditional culture of the villages. (Qing Xu, 2021) The traditional culture of the village is being preserved and passed on (Qing Xu, 2021).

1.4. Status of conservation and development

Jingtai Village is a typical Ganshang cultural village in China and is listed in the list of traditional villages in China. However, the protection efforts are still far from adequate, and with the later development of the village, the government is also making great efforts to relocate the inhabitants of the village, in order to better protect the traditional architecture and the appearance of the village, and to reduce human damage and destruction. The government is also working hard to relocate the inhabitants of the villages, to preserve the traditional buildings and villages, to reduce the damage and destruction, to protect the surrounding ecological environment, and to promote the local traditional cultural industries and crafts. However, the huge amount of work cannot be done overnight, and the government is making great efforts to protect the ancient villages.

II. GENERAL LAYOUT OF THE BUILDING SPACE OF XI LU AND MO CHUANG

The Xi Lu (Figure 2) is made up of two parts, the Xi Lu and the Mo Chuang, and is one of the largest groups of ancient houses in Jing Tai village. There are 48 old patio houses, also known as 48 patio houses. It took two brothers, Liu Huasong and Liu Huajie, a total of 32 years to complete. Xi Lu has experienced three generations of emperors, Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong. Xi Lu is a set of living, living, learning, Ganshang, rest equal to a large group of buildings. There are Mr. residence room, the library (also known as Yangzhu Zhai), ink Yangzhu Zhai directly opposite is the piano room (also known as Yangcheng Zhai). On the wall of the front courtyard are the words "Maintain the Garden", which means to sharpen and strengthen, both for the name of the private school and for the purpose of running the school. It is a constant reminder for the family to learn well.

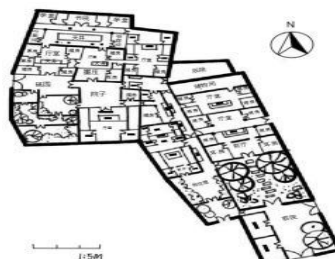


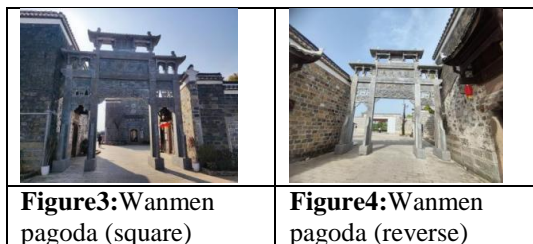
Figure2:Master plan of Xi Lu and Mo Chuang

III. OVERVIEW OF THE TYPES OF RESIDENTIAL WINDOWS AND DOORS

3.1. Overview of the types of traditional residential doors in Jingtai Village

3.1.1. Village gate (Wanmen pagoda)

There is a tall eight-character stone gate (Figure 3-4) when you enter Jingtai Village from the ancient road, and the inscription on the gate is "Han Tang Liu Xin" and "Yuan Yuan Liu Chang" on the back, which means that Liu and Li surnames live together as a family and get along well with each other and help each other. The people of Jingtai regard it as a feng shui building and decorate it with emphasis, creating a large number of Ganshang characteristic and beautifully shaped gatehouses.



3.1.2. Rimon (Shunde Gate)

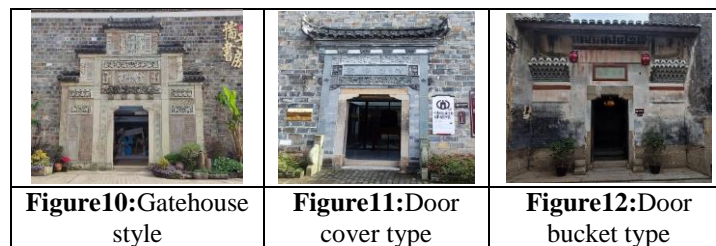
Shuangde Gate is the combined name of Shide Gate (Figure 5) and Chongde Gate (Figure 6). The two gatehouses are located in the center of the village and are the landmarks of the fourth and third houses of the five major house clans of Jingtai Liu in the village. The two gatehouses are built with rocks and bricks, and one

gatehouse is inlaid with a lifelike dragon head pattern, while the other gatehouse is inlaid with a dragon tail, signifying the integration of the two houses, the creation of the future together, the deepening of resonance, and the deepening of honor and shame together. Jishao Zhongbei Gate Square (Figure 7) was built in the first year of Yuanhe of the Tang Dynasty (AD 806), where the plaque is constructed from a complete stone block synthesized with four large characters of Jishao Zhongbei engraved. With the Shuangde Gate respectively, it is a single type mainly of one-character and eight-character shape (Xin Cheng, 2022). The one-character and eight-character shapes are the main ones (Xin Cheng, 2022). Among them, the one-character shape is simple in construction, while the eight-character shape is complex in construction, and in terms of feng shui, it can gather qi and attract fortune.



3.1.3. Main entrance

Most of the main doors of Jingtai village buildings are elaborately decorated and luxuriously decorated, and the doorway is regarded as the "face" of a person (Jingtai Wan, 2006). The gatehouse is regarded as the face of a person (Jingtai Wan, 2006). The people of Jingtai even regard it as a feng shui building and decorate it with emphasis, creating a large number of beautifully shaped doorways with great Ganshang characteristics. For example, the main door of the study of Confucius (Figure 10) is a walled gatehouse with extremely exquisite and exuberant carvings. The carving techniques are round carving, shallow relief carving, deep relief carving, hollowing and shading carving. The decorative themes are also rich and varied, and the tall walled doorway not only shows the master's grandeur but also the role of disaster and fire prevention.



3.1.4 Side doors

Side doors are the entrances and exits for people in the courtyard of traditional residential houses other than the main door, usually set in the secondary position of the residential buildings on the side yard or mountain wall surface. The side doors of traditional houses in Jingtai are of doorway type and door cover type (Figure 13-14). Unlike the solemnity of the main entrance, the side entrance is relatively freer, more diverse in form, and much smaller in scale than the main entrance.



3.1.5 Room doors

Room door is the door located in the interior, depending on the location, and is divided into the main room door and compartment door. It is used to protect privacy and shelter from wind, etc. It is also divided into solid wood doors and hollow grille doors depending on the use (Figure 15-16).

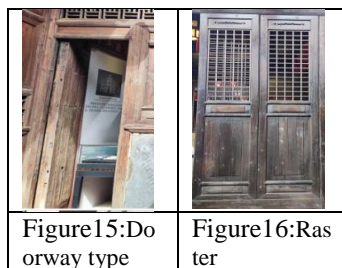


Figure15:Doorway type

Figure16:Rasster

3.2. Overview of the types of traditional residential windows in Jingtai Village

Through field research on the windows of traditional houses in Jingtai village and study of related literature, we found a variety of types and forms in conjunction with the actual use of traditional window beards (see Figs. 17-20).

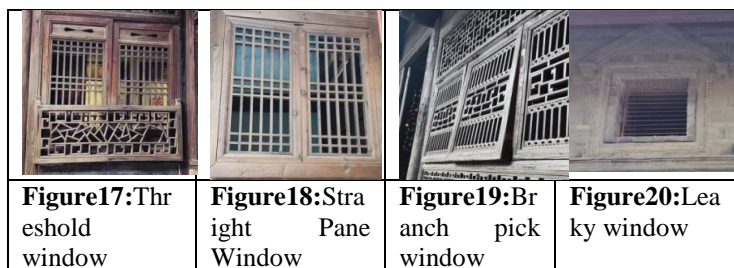


Figure17:Threshold window

Figure18:Straight Pane Window

Figure19:Branch pick window

Figure20:Leafy window

3.3. Statistical analysis of door and window decoration motifs in Jingtai Village

The decorative art themes of doors and windows of traditional famous houses in Jingtai are mainly inspired by life, with high carving skills and extraordinary craftsmanship mostly in wood and stone carvings, etc. According to the statistical analysis of the decorative materials in the field research of Jingtai village (Chart 1), it can be seen that the decorative patterns are mostly geometrical, which can be used for doors and windows, and maintain the overall effect, simple but not simple, fresh and elegant. The mutual application of animal and plant motifs, such as the "happy eyebrows" magpie and plum blossoms, is an auspicious and beautiful expression of the traditional inhabitants' hope for a better life. Mandarin ducks and lotus flowers are used in "Yuanyang Guizi", which means that the couple will love each other and grow old together. "The bat and the longevity peach are used to express the hope for a good life. It means many blessings and longevity. The pattern is mostly used in the center of the doors and windows. Character stories, mostly used on the doorway. For example, the "study of the children" (Figure 10) is carved with the Eight Immortals, the Great Mother of the King, and the traditional story of Fu Lu Shou, etc. The overall decoration is exuberant and atmospheric. The objects are used for decoration and embellishment, such as the "bottle" which means peace. Most of the decorative patterns on the doors and windows of traditional houses in Jingtai Village have a good meaning.

Table 1: Statistical analysis of the motifs of door and window decoration

| Type | Decorative materials | Subject matter | Pattern | Number of applications |
|---------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--|------------------------|
| Door | Stone carving; wood carving, | Geometric patterns | Back, curly grass, plant, longevity, fortune, ice crack, ten thousand characters, windmill, double happiness, simple lattice, etc. | 315 |
| | | Plants and flowers | Lotus, peony, chrysanthemum, plum blossom, bamboo, orchid, lonicera, etc. | 140 |
| | | Animals Fish and Insects | Dragon and phoenix, unicorn, magpie, crow, elephant, sheep, crane, etc. | 154 |
| | | People Stories | Folk myths, fairy opera stories, historical stories, etc. | 94 |
| | | Supplies and artifacts | Vases, swords, lanterns, eight treasures, fans, etc. | 129 |
| | | Poetry Articles | Inscriptions, poems, couplets, etc. | 73 |
| Windows | Stone carving; | Geometric patterns | Back pattern, ten thousand characters, | 229 |

| | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|---|----|
| wood carving, the | | windmill pattern, double happiness pattern, longevity pattern, fortune pattern, ice crack pattern, curly grass pattern, plant pattern, simple lattice pattern, etc. | |
| | Plants and flowers | Lotus, peony, chrysanthemum, plum blossom, bamboo, orchid, lonicera, etc. | 72 |
| | Animals, Fish and Insects | Dragon and phoenix, unicorn, magpie, crow, elephant, sheep, crane, etc. | 43 |
| | People Stories | Folk myths, fairy opera stories, historical stories, etc. | 16 |
| | Supplies and artifacts | Vases, swords, lanterns, eight treasures, fans, etc. | 54 |
| | Poetry Articles | Inscriptions, poems, couplets, etc. | 22 |

3.4. Allegorical expression of decorative patterns of doors and windows

3.4.1 Image comparison

In Jingtai Village, the doors and windows are decorated with rich and exquisite themes, including many animal images more commonly used dragon, phoenix, qilin, lion and other patterns. Qilin is called "four spirits" together with folk phoenix, turtle and dragon. Animal motifs have a variety of auspicious meanings for the Chinese people (Juan Guo, 2015). For example, Mo Zhuang uses a large number of animal motifs. For example, Mo Zhuang used a large number of animals to express far-reaching meanings, and the doors and windows were carved with images of crows feeding and sheep feeding lambs, signifying that "crows have the right to feed and sheep have the grace to kneel" (Figure 21). In addition to animals, there are also many plants used in the decoration of doors and windows of traditional Chinese houses, especially peonies, which symbolize wealth and prosperity; pine, bamboo, and plum, which symbolize noble character; and vases, treasure vases, and other artifacts, which symbolize peace and tranquility.



Figure21:The Lamb Kneeling

3.4.2 Harmonics comparison

In addition to the direct expression of the traditional residence building decorative themes, also applied a lot of harmonic themes decorative techniques. For example: goldfish, with the symbolic meaning of the year, rich. "The bat is a symbol of longevity and longevity, and children look up to the bats in the world, which means they are looking forward to the gospel, reflecting the respect for life and deep attachment to good things. (Wangwen Hao, 2012) The bat is a symbol of respect for life and deep attachment to good things (Wangwen Hao, 2012). Rooster" harmonizes with "Ji", which means "great luck". It embodies the deep vision of people's desire for a better life in the future.

3.4.3 Decorative programming

In addition to the elaborate reproduction of original images, traditional Chinese architectural decorative motifs also have a large number of programmed decorative motif images, such as the distortion of real images into simpler ones. In the architectural decoration of the doors and windows of Jingtai Village, there are a large number of images of plants, animals, and artifacts that are applied to the doors and windows through a simple program. For example, plum blossoms, peonies, begonias, peach blossoms, chrysanthemums and so on. For example, the "Eight Immortals" were carved and decorated on the doors and windows by craftsmen in order to enhance the programmatic decoration, facilitate production and improve efficiency by replacing the images of each deity with their own. The programmed decorative patterns have formed a fixed form after a long period of experimental testing.

3.4.4 Variations of the decorative image

Although the programmatic expression of traditional Chinese residential architectural decorative patterns is easy to manipulate, too much use can appear dull and unvivid. To make up for these defects, the wise ancient craftsmen created a large number of totem patterns about dragons. Such as: "grass dragon pattern",

"back dragon pattern", etc., shaped like the dynamic posture of the dragon. However, among plants, there are also variations of decorative images, such as "Baoxianhua pattern", where the century lotus, peony and chrysanthemum patterns are used in one. The "grass pattern" has a lush and long-lasting, auspicious meaning. "Grape pattern" means abundant grain, long-lasting descendants and prosperous family.

IV. JINGTAI ANCIENT VILLAGE REASIDENCE DOOR AND WINDOW DECORATION

4.1. Practicality

In terms of the integrity of traditional architecture, the form and decoration of windows and doors are the finishing touches of traditional residential architecture. Windows and doors have the function of ventilation and lighting, which can make the indoor air circulation absorb more light and change the indoor temperature environment. In addition to their ornamental function, beautifully carved windows and doors are also practical (Naiming Cheng, 202005). For example, in addition to decorating the doors and windows, the bird's nest can also be used as a decoration. For example, in addition to decorating the windows and doors, they also serve to stabilize the beams and columns between the doors and windows (Xinglei Liu, 2018). (Xinglei Liu, 202018). For example, in addition to decorating the doors and windows, the bird stand also served as a stabilizer between the door beam and the door post (Xinglei Liu, 2018). In addition to decorating the door, the cymbals were used in ancient times as a substitute for door bells, and the ringing of the door made a clear and pleasant sound. These seemingly complicated decorations were actually of great practical use. We sometimes have to admire the ancient people in the most simple life at the same time, but also full of infinite awe and beauty of life. The essence of the traditional decorative culture that has been preserved is not only a treasure of Chinese culture and art. More than that, they contain the traditional Chinese virtues of courtesy, righteousness, loyalty and filial piety, which are the role models for countless Chinese sons and daughters to learn from.

4.2 Artistic value

The decoration of doors and windows of traditional houses in Jingtai Village contains a profound culture. For example, the doors and windows had a special symbolic meaning in ancient times with a strict feudal hierarchy, rituals that could not be exceeded, and irregularities. This was common in Jingtai Village due to the interaction between social culture, race, economy and various social environmental factors of the time. The decorative themes are colorful, including figures and animals, flowers and birds, and other objects. The decorative techniques also reflect the ingenuity of the craftsmen of the time, both in terms of the choice of materials, carving techniques, as well as psychological, physical and spiritual artistic values such as artisanal beauty, content beauty, formal beauty and context beauty.

4.3 Historical and cultural values

Jingtai Village has undergone thousands of years of historical changes, multiple cultures, fused and intermingled, and the decorative arts have taken in all the best and formed the message of the times, coalescing in the architecture. From the decorative themes of the doors and windows, we can interpret the life of the inhabitants of Jingtai Village and their ideal cultural concepts. At the same time, the highly varied decorative patterns reflect the technical level, aesthetic orientation, socio-economic, cultural and social phenomena of the era, which are highly historical and cultural, and can be said to be a diverse and complex material culture collection. (Lei Ting, 202022). It can be described as a diverse and complex material culture collection (Lei Ting, 2022). The historical and artistic values are the essence and valuable resources of the traditional houses of Jiangxi Jingtai ancient village, which are recorded into every dimension of human material and spiritual life in each era, and symbolize the rich information of learning and exchange among various ethnic groups and regions as well as the whole process of change in the era.

V. CONCLUSION

As one of the traditional characteristic villages in Anyi Ancient Village, Jingtai Village has rich motifs in the decorative art of doors and windows of its traditional dwellings, which are highly skilled, well preserved and have profound meanings with great Ganshang cultural characteristics. Through the study and exploration of the decorative patterns of the doors and windows of traditional houses in Jingtai Village, we further analyze the patterns, types, symbolic meanings and quantities of the decorative patterns. We further consider how the patterns of decorative motifs can be applied to modern design and how they can be reflected in modern design, so as to seek some help and fill the gaps for modern design inspiration. In addition to its decorative role, the window and door decoration of traditional houses in Jingtai Village also contains its profound regional cultural characteristics and high artisanal spirit. Through the deep excavation of the cultural heritage behind the traditional decorative patterns, we can promote the profoundness of Chinese culture.

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