



Ancient Xuzhou Houses in China: Cultural Memory , Symbol and Process  
Reconstruction in the Context of Rural Revitalization

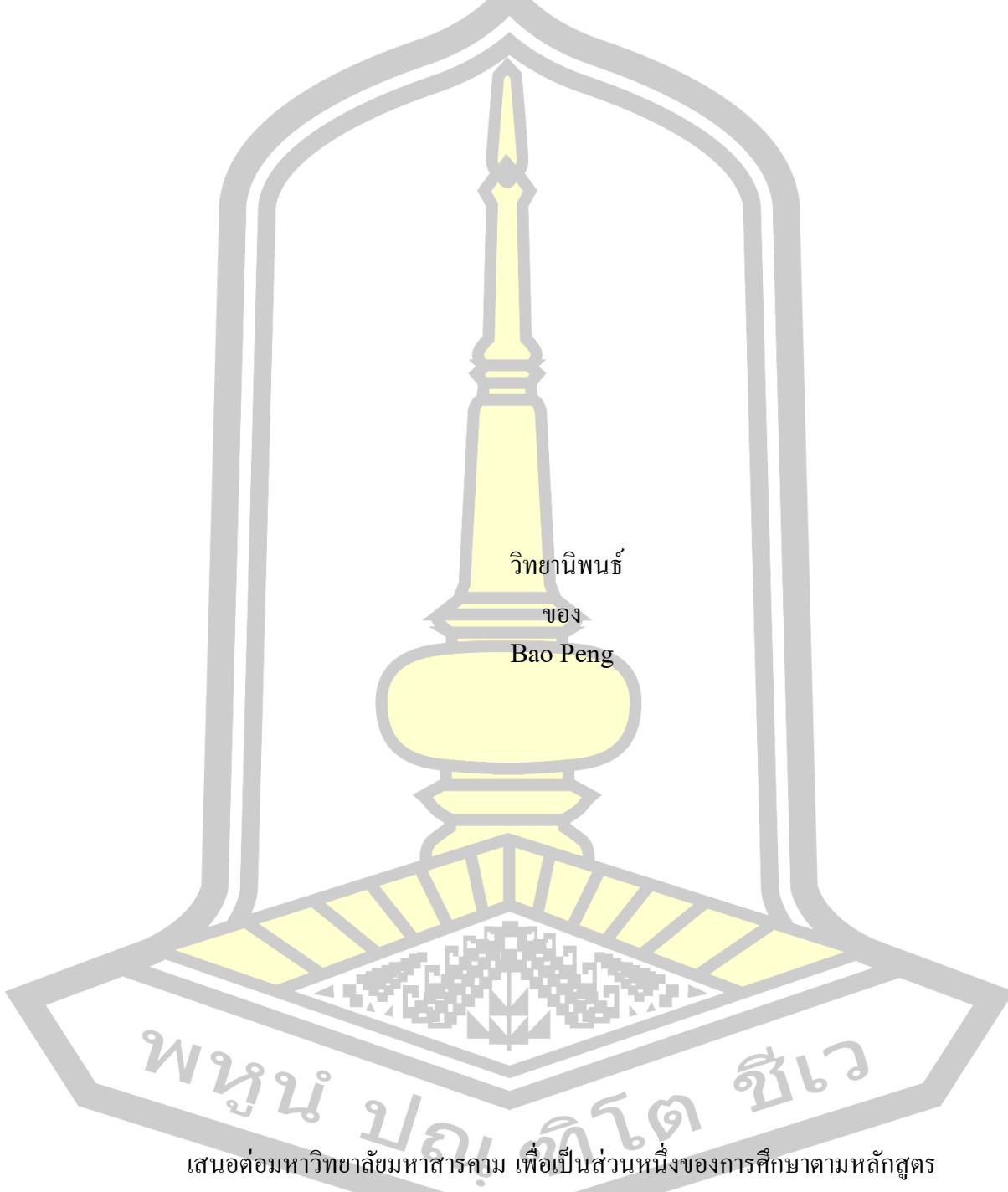
Bao Peng

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Fine and Applied Arts Research and Creation

July 2024

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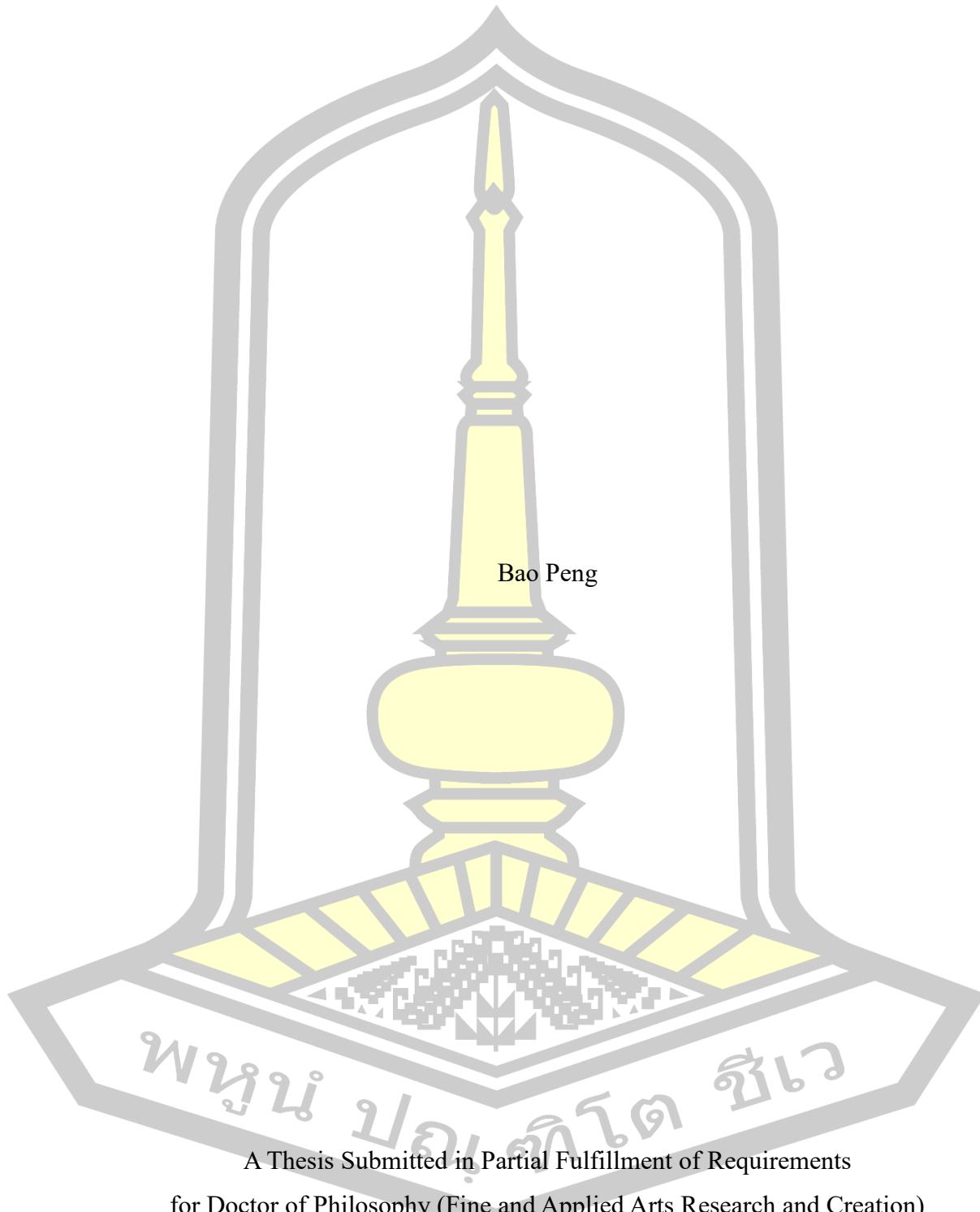


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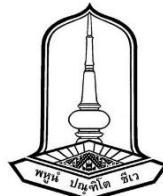
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Reconstruction in the Context of Rural Revitalization



A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements  
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July 2024

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The examining committee has unanimously approved this Thesis, submitted by Mr. Bao Peng , as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Fine and Applied Arts Research and Creation at Mahasarakham University

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### ABSTRACT

With the current rapid development of urbanization, Chinese villages are facing the threat of gradual disappearance, both in terms of physical form and cultural inheritance, and the nostalgia in society is getting stronger and stronger. Therefore, in the context of rural revitalization, using the symbols and cultural memories carried by ancient houses to inherit local civilization in contemporary residences is conducive to arousing villagers' awareness of the protection of local culture. Enhance villagers' passion for inheriting and innovating local culture, and rejuvenate the village's vitality. Therefore, this paper adopts a qualitative research method and sets four research objectives.

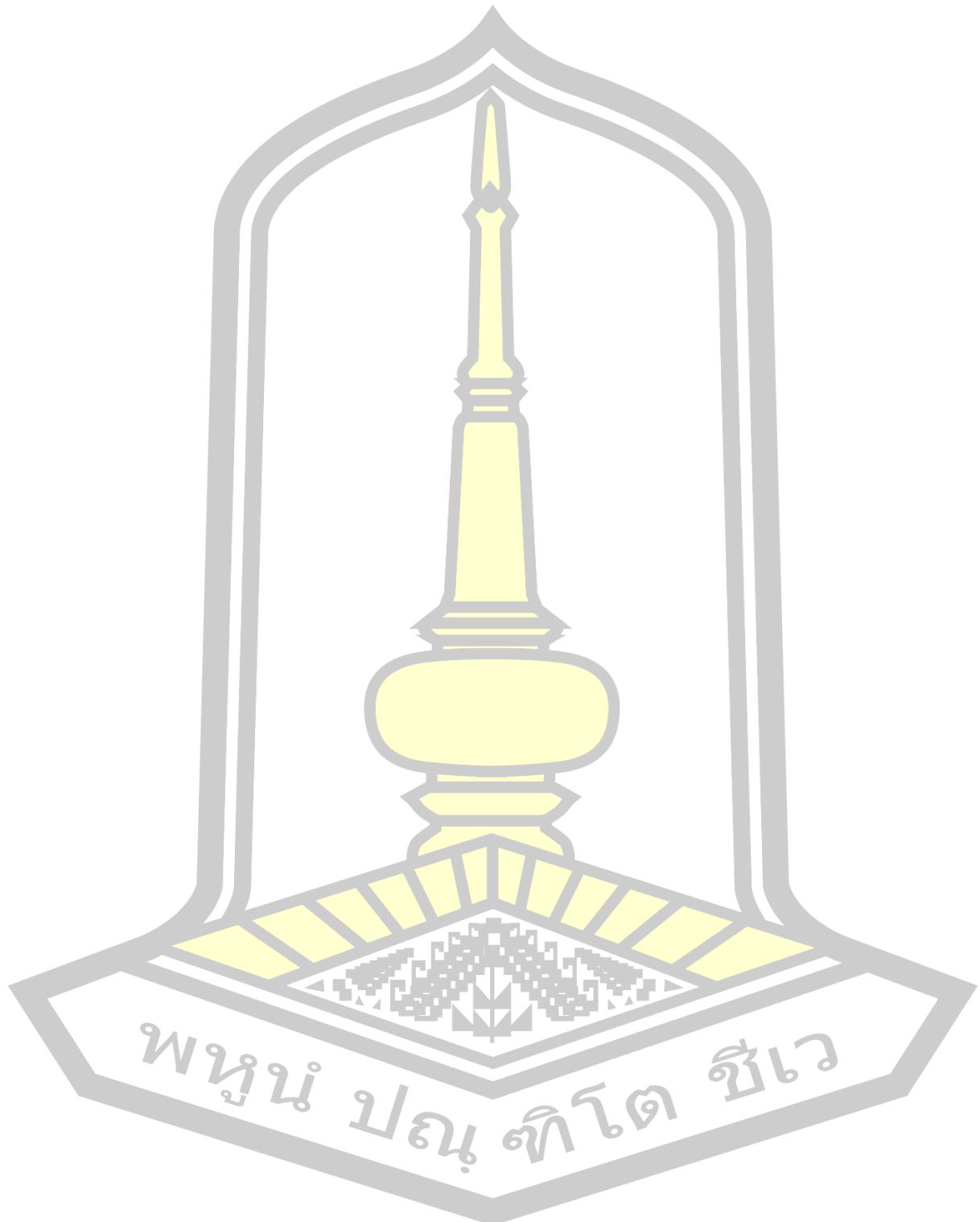
This paper first starts by studying the geographical environment and historical changes of ancient Xuzhou houses, and sorts out the origin and development process of ancient Xuzhou folk houses.

Secondly, through the research and analysis of cultural memory. We can better understand the formation of individuals and social groups' sense of identity and belonging to the culture to which they belong. Discuss methods of transmitting spatial memory in residential buildings.

Third, by analyzing the meaning of residential symbols. We are able to deeply understand not only the visual and aesthetic value of ancient houses, but also their profound impact on the cultural and social levels.

Finally, the reconstruction process of Liyushan Village in Xuzhou is analyzed. The results show that during the reconstruction process, contemporary folk houses convey local memories to people through the implantation of symbols and arouse villagers' awareness of the protection of local culture. More and more villagers intend to return to the countryside and contribute to the protection and spread of rural development

Keyword : ancient houses, cultural memory, symbols, rural revitalization



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First of all, I would like to thank the dean (Peera Phanlukthao). Thank you for providing convenience and help to Chinese students during our studies. We feel warm in a foreign country and can concentrate on our studies.

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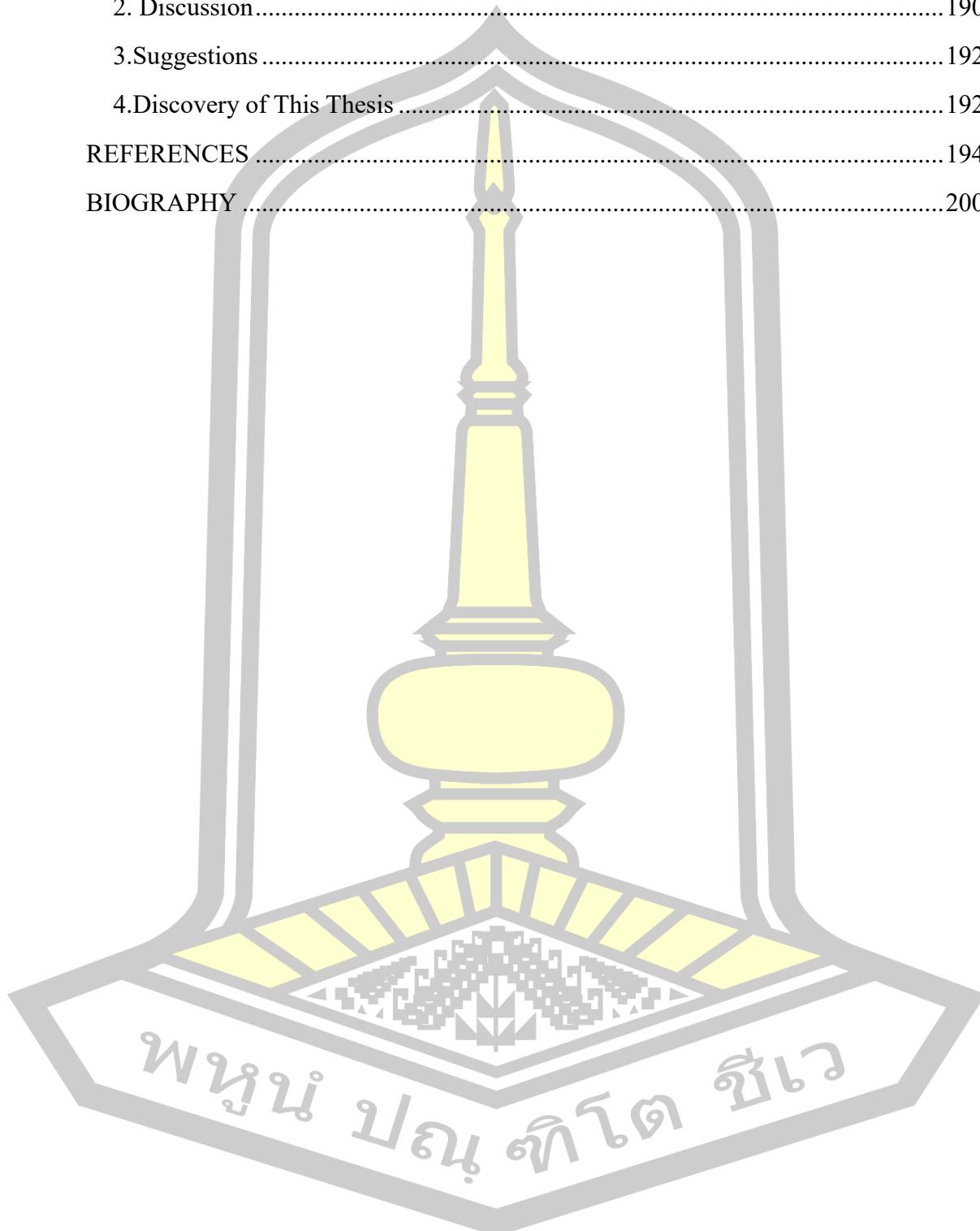
Finally, I would like to thank Mahasarakham University. The world is so big, and I got connected with Mahasarakham University because of my study. From then on, there was another place to worry about. This is a kind of fate. In the rich academic atmosphere, I spent three years of fulfilling and happy years. What I see, think, and learn here will help me in my future study work. I am lucky enough to be a part of Mahasarakham University, which is the pride of my life. Thanks to my alma mater

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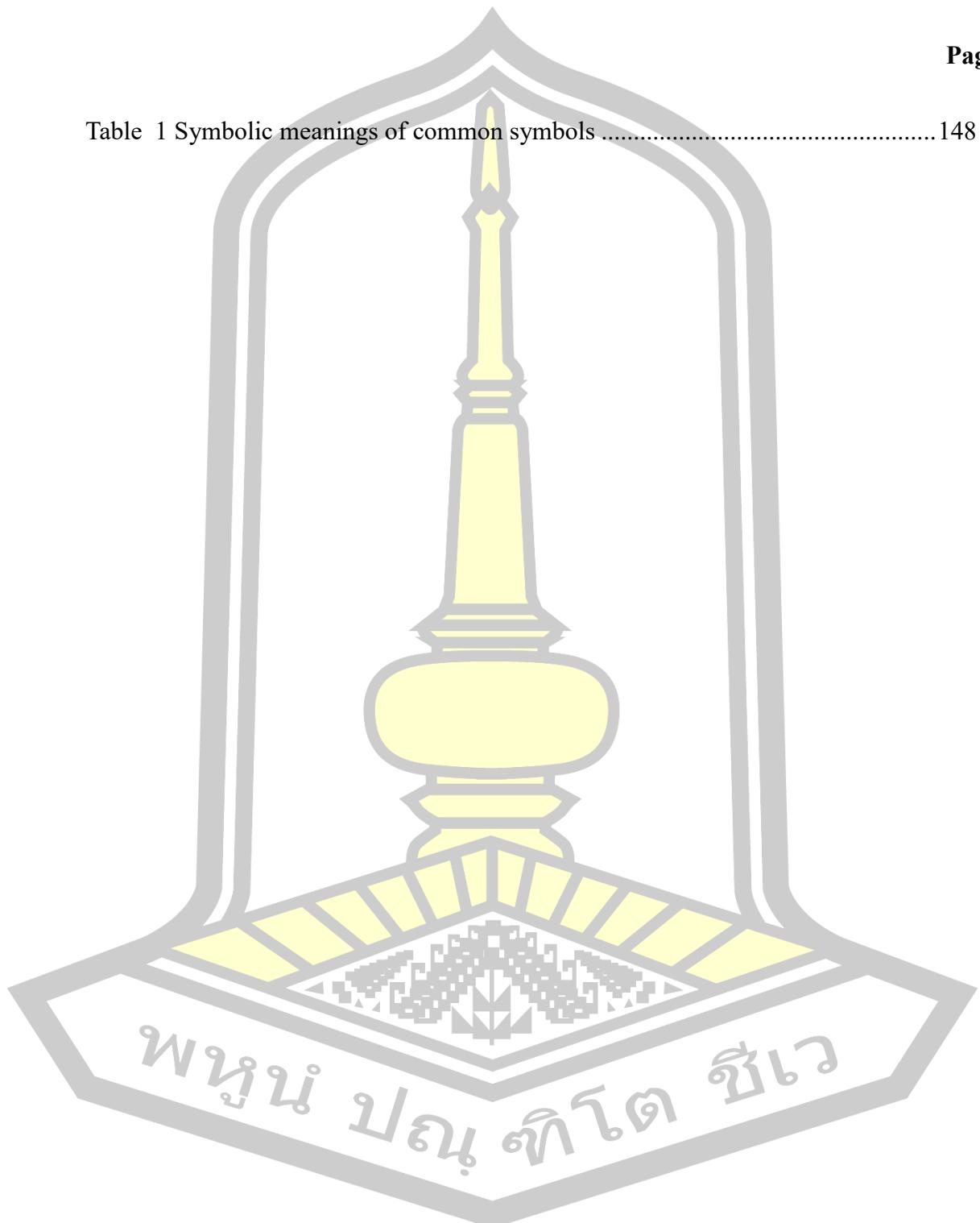
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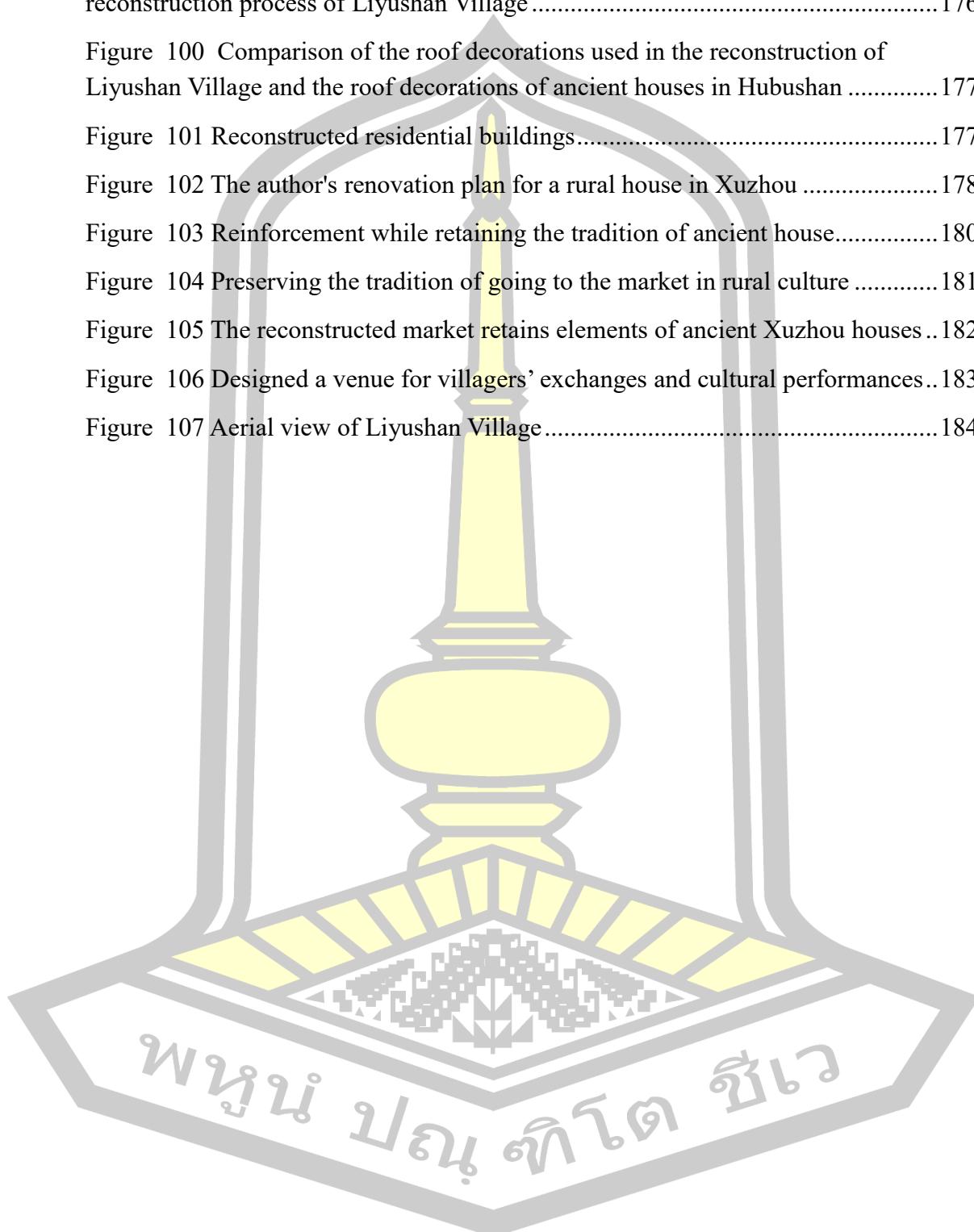
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# CHAPTER I

## Introduction

### 1. Background of Research

If the Chinese concept of home could be concrete, it would be a residence. Ancient houses are the Chinese people's memory of home, and they can reflect the Chinese people's own value identity. The houses here can be understood as media that carry memories and are the path to memories.

There is no doubt that houses are the earliest cultural landscape of mankind. It can protect people from cold, heat, rain, snow, wind and other weather changes. "Shelter" is the earliest prototype of a residential building. Since ancient times, people have been thinking about how to use local natural conditions to build "shelters." From the earliest days of using naturally formed places such as caves and tree shades, people later began to adapt to local conditions and use relatively abundant local building materials to build artificial houses. For example, some are made of wood and some are made of stone, establishing a certain connection between man and nature and forming local wisdom with the characteristics of each place. This local wisdom is passed from father to child, and then is passed down from generation to generation, rising to the level of value and purpose. Memories related to self-confirmation, identity, and meaning inheritance are classified as cultural memories.

houses all over China have typical and strong local or regional characteristics, so they can be understood in terms of vernacular architecture. Due to the lack of various materials such as literature, archaeology, and images. Even experts on Chinese architecture cannot define exactly how a particular building form, floor plan, or structural component evolved over history. Or explain in detail how any particular architectural element spread across the vast territory of China.

The situation of Chinese residential buildings seems to be the same, but in fact the construction conditions of each building are different. Whether sophisticated or grand, it seems that every Chinese residential building is in a state of constant change. This process of change is not only a response to the cyclical human life cycle, but also meets the special needs that often arise in the family: after the son's marriage, the newly moved in daughter-in-law facilitates the establishment of a new family unit. The daughter's marriage separated her from her parents, and the original room was left vacant. As former family members were being born, old family members were also dying. Sometimes relatives come to stay here for a long time; sometimes rooms in the house are rented to them for family needs.

Whether it is a country house or a city mansion, every home is a stage for the individual family. On this stage, we can see the production and consumption activities, religion and cosmic concepts of each family, and even complex social relationships such as age, gender, and seniority among family members can be displayed to a greater or lesser extent.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Knapp, R. G. (2012). Chinese houses: the architectural heritage of a nation. Tuttle publishing.

Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan once guided his readers to think about the question: When we call a building a 'traditional building', does it mean that we are expressing some kind of recognition or critical attitude? Why does the word 'traditional' evoke a sense of authenticity and other virtues associated with it, but at the same time imply a limitation that lacks innovation?

Ancient houses are traditional residences of the Chinese people, which embody the unique Chinese culture. The culture and art contained in them can be described as the quintessence of the nation. Ancient houses reflect the Chinese people's lifestyle and interpersonal interactions, and present the beauty of China in a unique way. Therefore, retaining ancient houses also retains the "roots of Chinese culture".<sup>2</sup>

Xuzhou is a city located in the northern part of Jiangsu Province. It has a long history, and Chinese people can always find many stories about Xuzhou in historical stories.

The Xia Dynasty used Jiuzhou to divide the country more than 4,000 years ago, and Xuzhou is one of the Jiuzhou.<sup>3</sup> Although times have changed, the term Jiuzhou is still often used by the Chinese to refer to the concept of "country".

Xuzhou has a long history and continuous civilization, but the study of ancient Xuzhou houses is not an easy task.

The first reason is that Xuzhou is located to the north of the Yangtze River and the Huaihe River, near the dividing line between north and south in China. Its important strategic location makes it one of the areas with the most wars in Chinese history. The earliest war can be traced back to the 21st century BC, when the Dapeng Kingdom quelled the Wuguan rebellion<sup>4</sup> for the Xia Dynasty. There are more than 400 wars recorded in history, and on average there is one war every ten years. The Chinese Army currently has thirteen group armies, one of which is stationed in Xuzhou.

The second reason is the flood disaster caused by the diversion of the Yellow River. The Yellow River is known as the mother river by the Chinese. It originates from the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. Its middle and upper reaches are mainly mountainous, and its middle and lower reaches are mainly plains and hills. Because the middle section of the river flows through China's Loess Plateau, it carries a large amount of sediment. So it is also known as the river with the most sand in the world, so it is called the Yellow River. But in Chinese history, the diversion of the lower reaches of the Yellow River had a huge impact on human civilization.<sup>5</sup>

Before the Yellow River came to Xuzhou, the ancient Bianshui River and the ancient Sishui River met at the northeast corner of Xuzhou City, forming an important water transport hub connecting the east and west, and connecting the north and the south.

Liu Bang once served as the "Sishui Pavilion Chief" here. Confucius once traveled here with his disciples. These are all stories that happened along the Bian and

<sup>2</sup> Ju Ping, special researcher at the National Historical and Cultural Cities Research Center of Tongji University

<sup>3</sup> During the Warring States Period, Lu Buwei's "Lu Shi Chun Qiu Youshi Lan": What is Kyushu? Between He and Han is Yuzhou, Zhouye. Between the two rivers is Jizhou and Jinye. Between He and Ji is Yanzhou, Weiye. To the east is Qingzhou, also known as Qi. Sishang is Xuzhou, Lu. To the southeast is Yangzhou, Yue County. To the south is Jingzhou, also known as Chu. To the west is Yongzhou, also known as Qin. To the north is Youzhou, Yanye.

<sup>4</sup> Xia Qi's battle to attack Hexi: "Chu Yu" said: "Qi has five views." Wei's note: "Five Views, Qizi, Taikang Kundi". This means that in the fifteenth year of Xia Qi, Wuguan and Xihe rebelled. Peng Boxou led his troops to conquer Xihe and defeated Wuguan.

<sup>5</sup> Xiao Nan. 2011. Yellow River: Carrying the heavy years to the sea

Si rivers. In 1194 AD, the Yellow River broke through the old embankment of Yangwu and flowed all the way south, seizing the Sishui River and surging to the foot of Xuzhou City, and then went all the way south to occupy the lower reaches of the Huaihe River and enter the sea. This is the famous "seizing the Huaihe River and entering the sea". From then until 1855, when it changed its course again from Dongying, Shandong Province to the sea, the Yellow River raged at the foot of Pengcheng for more than 660 years. From the first year of Hongwu in the Ming Dynasty (1368) to the fifth year of Xianfeng in the Qing Dynasty (1855) when the Yellow River was diverted to Shandong, a total of 108 Yellow River floods occurred in Xuzhou. Among them, during the 276 years of the Ming Dynasty, there were 48 floods in Xuzhou, one in less than six years on average. From the first year of Shunzhi (1644) to Xianfeng (1855) of the Qing Dynasty, a total of 60 Yellow River floods occurred in Xuzhou, an average of one every three years.

The large amount of silt carried by the Yellow River made Xuzhou continue to build cities on the ruins, thus forming the unique phenomenon of "city on city" and "well on well" in Xuzhou. Although the ruins of ancient Xuzhou houses<sup>6</sup> from various dynasties have been buried in the soil, they are slowly being unearthed. During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, in order to adapt to Xuzhou's special geographical environment, the local people chose to build residential houses on relatively high altitude terrain, and fortunately they have been preserved to this day.

In the concept of cultural memory, we call stories with foundational significance "myths." Although the ancient Xuzhou houses were forgotten by wars and natural disasters, Xuzhou was fortunately not forgotten in history and was recorded in ancient classics, Han stone portraits and local chronicles. Xuzhou was influenced by Pengzu culture, Confucian culture, Taoist culture, and Han culture. The words and legends left behind constitute the "myth" in Xuzhou's cultural memory.

Pengzu culture is the foundation of Xuzhou culture. Peng's surname was Qian and his name was Keng. He was the third great-great-grandson of Emperor Zhuanxu and the eighth generation descendant of Emperor Xuanyuan Huang. He was granted the title of "Pengzu" in Dapeng (today's Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province) because of his ability to make soup and offer it to Yao. It is said that he lived to be 800 years old, so later generations called him "Peng Zu". Peng Zu is considered the originator of Chinese cooking culture. According to legend, during the period of Emperor Yao among the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors, the Central Plains region was flooded. As the leader of the tribe at that time, Emperor Yao directed flood control. Because he had long been concerned about the safety of his tribe and people, Emperor Yao became ill from overwork and was bedridden. There was no water for several days and his life was in danger. At this critical moment, Peng Zu cooked a pheasant soup based on his own health regimen. Before the soup was brought to him, Emperor Yao smelled the aroma from a distance. He jumped up, moved his index finger, and drank it all in one gulp. His face was radiant the next day. From then on, Emperor Yao would eat this soup every day. Although he took care of all kinds of things every day, he never got sick. It became a good story and was passed down.

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<sup>6</sup> Ancient Xuzhou houses refer to the houses in areas under the jurisdiction of Xuzhou in history

Xuzhou now holds the Pengzu Fuyang Festival every summer. The Pengzu Fuyang Festival is a festival created based on the Xuzhou folk food customs with Pengzu cultural connotations. During Peng Zu's time, there was a common custom of eating sheep in Xuzhou. The "sheep side with fish" created by Peng Zu was the sublimation of the sheep cooking skills of that era. In 2022, the Xuzhou Pengzu Fuyang Festival became a national intangible cultural heritage. Starting from the legend of Peng Zu, the Chinese began to advocate the catering culture of "food is the first priority for the people". In the splendid civilization of China for five thousand years, diet and kitchen culture play an extremely important role.

This myth affects every aspect of Chinese people's life, so the position of the kitchen in houses in Chinese culture is particularly important. The stove is where food is eaten, and kitchen feng shui is one of the three most important feng shui. If you want to create a feng shui auspicious house, you cannot ignore the kitchen.<sup>7</sup> Almost all kitchens in traditional Xuzhou houses are located in the southeast. The kitchen is a symbol of "fire" in Feng Shui. In Feng Shui, the five elements in the east and southeast belong to "wood". According to the principle of mutual generation of the five elements, wood can generate fire, which can improve the fortune of the owner of the house.

There is no denying that there are some superstitious elements in the Chinese "Feng Shui" theory (Ronald G. Knapp, 2012, Chinese houses: the architectural heritage of a nation. Tuttle publishing. P27). He focuses on those parts that have positive significance, and he will extract these in research and writing. For example, the Chinese have to select a building location before building a residential building, which reflects a certain wisdom of the Chinese people in understanding nature. Talking about the situation of Americans in this regard, they will also add their understanding of nature when selecting the location of the building, and will plant trees around the building or arrange rivers and waterways. But this is at best an unconscious and natural choice, and it has not risen to the theoretical level like Chinese "Feng Shui", it is just a folk custom.<sup>8</sup> In China and nearby East Asia, Feng Shui theory is a factor that people should consider when transforming the environment. Even people who don't usually pay attention to Feng Shui, If he is told that a certain place has bad feng shui, he will also be influenced by this spiritual idea.

The people of ancient Xuzhou were the first to be influenced by the three philosophical thoughts of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. The greatest event during Lao Tzu's stay in Pei occurred in 501 BC. "Confucius was fifty-one years old and had not heard of the Tao, so he met Lao Dan in Pei in the south." Representatives of the two major schools of Taoism and Confucianism gathered together, kicking off the opening ceremony of the Hundred Years of Confucius. The curtain of the family era. More than two thousand years ago, Confucianism and Taoism complemented each other and went hand in hand, forming the fundamental feature of Chinese cultural spirit. It originated here. The introduction of Buddhism was the first huge impact of foreign culture on Chinese culture, and it was the first time that Chinese civilization encountered a strong ideological opponent.

<sup>7</sup> Common ideas in Chinese Feng Shui, such as "Three Essentials of a Yangzhai"

<sup>8</sup> Ronald G. Knapp. (2018). *China Reading News*

In recent years, many domestic and foreign scholars have conducted research from different perspectives such as Buddhist statues, cliff carvings, and utensil shapes. It is believed that the coastal area from southeastern Shandong to northern Jiangsu where Xuzhou is located is likely to be the northern landing port area of the Maritime Silk Road for a long period of time.<sup>9</sup>

Archaeologists have unearthed cultural relics such as cliff statues, Han painting stones, and statues around Xuzhou, and reasonably inferred that Buddhism may have first spread to ancient Xuzhou from the Western Regions through the Maritime Silk Road. In the early Eastern Han Dynasty, King Liu Ying of Chu began to "shangfutu" because he liked Huang Lao. Fan Ye's "Book of the Later Han·Biographies of the Ten Kings of Guangwu" contains an edict given by Emperor Ming of the Han Dynasty to Liu Ying, making Liu Ying the first king among the vassal states to advocate Buddhist doctrine, and also made Pengcheng the earliest recorded Buddhist temple in China. land. Liu Ying also established China's first Buddhist group in Pengcheng, making Pengcheng a center for the establishment and spread of Buddhism. At the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty, Xiapi State (ancient Xuzhou during the Han Dynasty) became one of the areas where Buddhism was spread on a large scale and with a strong atmosphere.

At almost the same period, Zhang Daoling, a native of Xuzhou, founded Taoism, and Xuzhou became the ancestral home of Taoism. Since then, this Chinese native religion has been passed down from generation to generation. Zhang Daoling and his descendants have inherited it for sixty-five generations without replacement. It is known as "Zhang in the South and Confucius in the North", and Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism are three pillars.<sup>10</sup> The spread of three philosophical thoughts in Xuzhou at the same time was bound to take the lead in influencing the way ancient Xuzhou intellectuals viewed the world. As one of the spatial frameworks of memory, houses are also one of the carriers of memory and spiritual reflection. , is bound to be affected by others.

By comparing the Panlong Column unearthed in Xuzhou with the Western Spiral Column, Professor Liu Guan of Beijing Forestry University believes that ancient Xuzhou may have integrated with other civilizations in the world in terms of architectural and decorative art through the Maritime Silk Road.

The traditional architectural history community is more accustomed to emphasizing the independence and distinctive technical concepts of ancient Chinese architecture and construction activities. Through the analysis of the decoration of stone pillars in Han tombs, it can be seen that in the context of cultural exchanges between the East and the West in the Han Dynasty, at least the input of external factors cannot be ruled out. The possibility of integrating sexual influences with local architectural decoration themes, craftsmanship, etc. (Liu Guan, Beijing ,2021)

This type of consolidated memory always works through some written or non-written, objective external objects that are fixed. The forms of these objective external objects include rituals, dance myths, clothing, ornaments, tattoos, paintings, etc.

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<sup>9</sup>Liu Guan, Eastern and Western sources of traditional Chinese Panlongzhu in the Han Dynasty

<sup>10</sup>Professor Zhao Mingqi of Jiangsu Normal University

Han portrait stones are known as "the history of the Han Dynasty in embroidered portraits". They are treasures in the treasure house of ancient Chinese culture and the most direct and comprehensive basis for studying the architectural styles and decorative arts of the Han Dynasty. Xuzhou is one of the places where the Han Dynasty portrait stones are concentrated in China, and a large number of architectural and roof decoration images of the Han Dynasty have been recorded. From a large number of Han Dynasty portrait stones in Xuzhou, it was found that architecture during the Han Dynasty paid more attention to roof decoration, especially roof ridge decoration. The roof structures of the Han Dynasty are mainly divided into veranda roofs, gable roofs, hard gable roofs, suspended gable roofs and pointed roofs. Rich ridge decorations stand on the ridges. The first reason is that it reveals the popularity of Taoism in the Han Dynasty. Early Taoism integrated religious ideas such as the worship of gods and gods, and the decoration on the roof reflects the tomb owner's longing for immortality and longing for immortality. Second, in addition to beautifying the architecture, these decorations also have the meaning of turning evil into good luck, punishing evil and promoting good, eliminating disasters, and making wealth and good luck. As typical decorative symbols of Han Dynasty architecture, they all played an important role. (Pang Yicun, Southeast University, 2017)

This decoration continued into the ancient buildings of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, and gradually evolved into a status symbol. Decoration of residences is an important expression of class status. The "dragon" among the roof beasts represents supreme nobility and is a symbol of auspiciousness. In the Ming and Qing Dynasties, it symbolized the emperor and represented the real dragon and the emperor, which was a symbol of imperial power. The number of roof beasts also reveals the idea of "imperial power being supreme". Take small beasts as an example. In the ancient buildings of the Han nation, the number of small beasts will change with the level of the building. The maximum number is ten, which indicates perfection. In the Ming and Qing dynasties, there were strict regulations: only the Golden Palace in the Forbidden City could use ten small beasts, and all other buildings should be increased or decreased according to the grade, and no more than ten animals could be used.

For example, the important houses of the ancient houses in Hubu Mountain in Xuzhou are equipped with animal heads on the roof ridges, and the levels are clearly defined. Generally, a house has "five ridges and six beasts", that is, a straight ridge beast is placed at each end of the main ridge, and a vertical ridge beast is placed at two-thirds of the four vertical ridges. One level higher than the "Five Spine and Six Beasts" is the "Flower Arrangement Beast", which is a bluegrass-shaped iron flower installed on the head of the straight-spine beast. One level higher than "Flower Arranging Beast" is "Flower Arranging Cloud Swallow". That is, an iron pillar is erected on the head of the vertebrate, with three to five layers of iron clouds inlaid on it. As branches of the iron pillar, the iron pillar is also inlaid with a pair of iron ears, and there is an iron ear on the top of the iron pillar. Feiyan. Hence the name "Flower Arranging Cloud Swallow". It is a unique symbol of Hubu Mountain houses like the "horse stepping on flying swallows" in Lanzhou. Moreover, only when the owner of the house has achieved fame can the animal head and cloud swallows open their mouths. Otherwise, the animal heads and cloud swallows with closed mouths can only be used .(Teng Youping & Guo Weimin, *Research on the Traditional Architectural Decoration Art of Hubu Mountain in Xuzhou*, 2014)

Since houses have typical and strong regional or local characteristics, they can be understood with the concept of "vernacular architecture". (Ronald G. Knapp)

But with the development of society, all people and things related to society are also developing and changing. Especially in the late 20th century, due to the rise of internationalist style and the wave of globalization, local culture has been lost in almost every region in the world. Xuzhou is no exception.

Xuzhou is rich in history and culture, and ancient houses have a long history. The local style of contemporary villages has gradually weakened during the construction, and it is even difficult to see it. Prefabricated house materials can quickly improve construction efficiency. Modern construction materials are mainly new materials such as steel, cement, and aluminum alloys. The sturdiness of newly built houses has been significantly improved, and design styles that conform to contemporary aesthetics are gradually replacing traditional houses. Therefore, the house structure construction methods involved in traditional residential construction and the traditional decoration requirements are also weakening. The demand for carpenters and stonemasons with traditional skills has been greatly reduced. This has also resulted in fewer and fewer craftsmen who understand Xuzhou's traditional house construction techniques.

The core of the Marxist school of political economy is that the economic base determines the superstructure. With China's economic reform and opening up, China has taken off rapidly economically, and at the same time, the call for cultural self-confidence has become stronger. In particular, the problem of urban-rural imbalance caused by economic development has become more and more obvious, and the Chinese government has proposed a national strategy for rural revitalization. The birth and development of Chinese civilization is based on agricultural civilization. The rural revitalization strategy is China's national strategy. When answering the question of how to take the path of rural revitalization of socialism with Chinese characteristics, one of the strategies proposes that we must inherit, develop and improve farming civilization and take the path of prosperous rural culture.

As the smallest spatial unit in the countryside, a house is both the residence of the family and a place for work. From a social perspective, residential buildings are the most closely related to people. From the perspective of cultural inheritance, residential space is also the spatial carrier of rural memory. Various cultural memories in farming civilization are inseparable from residential space.

An in-depth study of the formation of Xuzhou's houses and cultural inheritance reveals that it has been more than 3,000 years since the earliest written records of Xuzhou City. There is no doubt that there are some blank recording stages in the development process of Xuzhou. The formation of regional culture is a kind of cultural identity. However, the collective memory within the corresponding historical period has also merged and differentiated. Some of these memories are recorded in formal books, and some are not. Within the framework of contemporary rural revitalization, how to explore the context between the memory, identity and cultural continuity of Xuzhou houses is an academic issue involving cultural memory, meaning symbolism and reconstruction.

I read Chinese and foreign literature on residential buildings. We found a very interesting result. We have always known that there are some differences between Chinese and Western concepts of family. This difference is also reflected in the

academic understanding of "house" between China and the West. In the conceptual dimension, the words more commonly associated with houses in the West are palaces, wealth, and class. When Chinese people mention houses, they are almost always associated with family, traditional culture, ethics, etc. In the academic dimension, Chinese researchers currently conduct a lot of research on residential buildings, but the focus of existing research is more on the architectural pattern, decorative patterns, architectural structure and other buildings themselves. Western research on residential buildings is generally analyzed from the perspective of wealth distribution and class. There is no doubt that the above research is very important, but how to analyze the family concepts, collective memory and farming civilization contained in the residential memory field through the dimension of cultural memory. Then, by extracting the symbols and meanings contained in the residential space, we can reconstruct the rural civilized space within the framework of contemporary society. This is a very meaningful academic goal. Practical value will also arise under the dual background of the promulgation of the World Rural Landscape Heritage Guidelines and the emergence of rural gentrification in developed countries.

## 2. Research Objectives

This research is to study the Ancient Xuzhou House in China. There are 4 important objectives as follows.

2.1 To study and analyze the historical changes of Xuzhou and the historical development process of ancient Xuzhou houses

2.2 To study and analyze the concept of cultural memory and the construction of the memory field of ancient Xuzhou houses space

2.3 To study and analyze the artistic value and artistic characteristics of ancient house architecture under symbol dimensions

2.4 To study and analyze symbols and memory transmission in the reconstruction process of houses in the context of rural revitalization

## 3. Research Questions

3.1 What is the historical change of Xuzhou and the historical development process of ancient Xuzhou houses

3.2 How to build the ancient Xuzhou houses space memory field under the dimension of cultural memory

3.3 What are the artistic value and artistic characteristics of the ancient house architecture under symbolic dimension

3.4 What are the symbolic evolutions and changes in the memory field of Xuzhou's contemporary houses under the context of rural revitalization

## 4. Definition of Terms

### Houses

Houses refer to rural houses with a traditional courtyard layout.

### Ancient Xuzhou Houses

It refers to the collective name of Xuzhou houses in various time periods in history.

## Rural landscape

Rural landscapes are terrestrial and aquatic areas formed by the interaction between humans and nature, through agriculture, animal husbandry, nomadism, fishing, aquaculture, forestry, wild food gathering, hunting and other resource extraction (such as salt), Produce food and other renewable natural resources. Rural landscapes are versatile resources. At the same time, the people and communities who live in these rural areas also give them cultural significance: all rural areas are landscapes.

Compared with the urban landscape, Xuzhou rural houses vividly reflect the clearer, primitive and simple interactive relationship between human and nature, and reflect the most basic aspects and requirements of human clothing, food, housing, transportation and entertainment. By analyzing the development process of ancient Xuzhou houses and the changes in Xuzhou's geography, history, and culture, we can obtain the history of interdependence between human beings, social structures, and nature, show the diversity of cultural history in this area, and reflect people's restrained use Ecological ethics and ecological wisdom of natural resources or vice versa.

## Collective Memory

It is a concept studied in social psychology. It was first proposed completely by French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs in 1925 to distinguish it from personal memory. Collective memories are things or things that are shared, inherited and constructed together by people in a group or in modern society. A 'place of memory' is any important thing, whether it is material or immaterial, that becomes a symbolic element in a group's memory heritage due to people's will or the baptism of the times.

## Communication Memory

What communication memory contains is the memory of the past that has just passed away. This is a memory that people share with their contemporaries, a typical example of which is intergenerational memory. This kind of memory arises in the collective during the historical evolution; it arises and disappears with time, more precisely: it arises and disappears with its carrying. When the bearers who materialized it die, it gives way to a new memory. This kind of memory space is built purely on the basis of individual protection and communication experience. It is a record of everyday life, a spontaneous but informal memory that develops through interactions with other people. The duration of time is about 80-100 years, three to four generations of people in the time horizon advancing simultaneously with the advancing present.

## Locality

Locality is the particularity of a particular place, manifested both in physical and in consciousness. Physically, it is manifested in the spatial and geographical differences between this place and other places; in consciousness, it is reflected in the cultural and psychological differences between this place and other places. These two kinds of specificity are linked through the native who are the subject of local identification.

In this paper, when discussing the ancient village houses in Xuzhou, the concept of locality will also be involved. Use the concept of locality to explore the differences between Xuzhou area and others.

## Architectural symbolism

The concept of architectural symbolism has been proposed in the 1880s. According to the theory of symbolic science in Sosuer, the "capable" in architectural symbolism refers to the appearance of the building, which is reflected in the visual external form, spatial design, surface material processing and its structure expression through the external expression of the building; "referred to" It is a potential hidden symbol that cannot be obtained directly. The basic theory of architectural symbolics is to describe and express the appearance characteristics of the building, the characteristics of the building materials, and the characteristics of the building's use with the help of abstract symbols to ensure that the specific architectural cultural connotation is given to the architectural symbols, so that the symbolic language system in the architecture field can be formed.

## 5. Research Methodology

This research uses a qualitative research methodology. Collect research data by field working and document studies. Analyze through the humanities and social science concepts. Present the research result in a descriptive analytical, accompanying photographs and line drawings. To explained research methodology as follows:

### 5.1 Research crowd and research group

Research topic "Ancient Xuzhou Residents: Cultural Memories, Symbols and Process Reconstruction in the Context of the Rural Revitalization" contains multiple research groups. The specific classification is as follows:

5.1.1 Case representative of the cultural memory of ancient Xuzhou houses houses:

The research crowd of Target II is the residents who lived in the villagers living in ancient Xuzhou. These residents are familiar with the traditional layout of the Xuzhou houses houses. , I divide this part of the crowd into the following four categories:

- People who have lived in ancient Xuzhou houses houses
- People living in the contemporary Xuzhou rural houses
- Government personnel responsible for the transformation of ancient houses
- People who move away from the village residents of Xuzhou

For those who live in ancient Xuzhou houses, the unique life memory of the ancient houses period is completely different from the current era.

The ancient houses of No. 14 Labor Lane has been turned into the salt trading center of the Xuzhou area from the Republic of China. The area surrounded by Laoyan Store is surrounded by Labor Lane, Hunan Lane, and Xiangwang Road, with an area of about 3,000 square meters. The existing gate, Xibuhiro, Tower, etc. are well preserved in the overall pattern. Government testimony.

In this area, since the liberation (after the founding of the New China), the government has adjusted the salt industry policy, and the old salt shop slowly lost its original function. Most of the houses were divided into the employees of the state - owned enterprise at the time, and the area of each household was about 20 square meters. Later, the employees got married and had children, and the small house was covered next to the house, which became what they are now. Looking at this area from Xiangwang Road, it is a low bungalow. This year may be relocated. Work. (Chen Juan, head of Pengcheng Street Office, Yunlong District, 2023)

Enter from the gate of Laoyan Store, walk near Xiang Wang Road, return back, go west to the south lane of the house to the north to Xiangwang Road, and walk into the house with ancient buildings in the middle. Most of these areas are low -rise houses that are later built, and they are also unprepared areas in the bustling city. Many of the original homeowners leave here and many of them live here are rented households.

Enter the gate of Laoyan Store. Some of the brick walls and shops here have faintly let the elderly remember the bustling time of the salt shop. The arc -shaped door is rarely seen now. Only old houses can still see this. Species structure.

There are only people in the Western Walls of the Ministry of Labor Labor, and the others have been demolished. It is a pomegranate tree in the most prominent position in the alley and the alley. The owner of the pomegranate tree is Yu. He is 77 years old. He has lived here from his grandfather's generation. This tree is older than his age and is more than 100 years old.

"This pomegranate tree has thin pomegranate skin and small seeds, but sweet. In the 1960s and 1970s, the nearby children were secretly taken before they were familiar. There are fewer children. When you are familiar with you, come and eat. "," Someone asked me, I wanted to pay for this tree, I didn't sell it. I think, when the transformation is over, if the government needs Donate to the government. "

In order to implement the protection goals and requirements of the historical and cultural cities in Xuzhou, through active protection and rectification, protect the essence of the historical and cultural city of Xuzhou, improve the traditional function of historical areas, and maintain the vitality of historical areas. (Historical and Cultural District of the Guanyuanfu) Ancient building complex carry out protective repair and repair, and at the same time, the facade facade of the characteristic features along the street is renovated and renovated. The project covers an area of 22,500 square meters, with a construction area of 19,400 square meters, with a total investment of 100 million yuan. This project protects the authenticity of historical information by protecting the authenticity of historical relics; protects the integrity of historical features, and protects the space environment of historical areas; combines protection and reasonable use to maintain the vitality Microcirculation "" methods are step by step and gradually improvement. (Jie Yong, Minister of History and Culture

## District Management Center of History and Culture District Management Center of History and Travel)

After hundreds of years of historical changes in the ancient houses of the Ministry of Households, the houses have changed from the private houses of officials and chaebols to the office of the government's special functions, and finally became the staff dormitory of state-owned enterprises. In order to solve the problem of crowded family members, employees have stamped a lot of temporary small houses in the later period, making the originally sophisticated private courtyard into a crowded living area. An ancient pomegranate tree is one of the few landscape elements preserved. It is a symbol of a good blessing to the family to give a good blessing to the family. In the later period, the households will have a new identity and become a tourist attraction. (Peng Bao, the field is located in the ancient house of the Ministry of Households, 2023)

The ancient houses in Liyushan Village, Xuzhou City are different from the household houses of the Ministry of Households. This difference is reflected in different geographical locations and the social levels of residents. The ancient houses building materials in Liyushan Village are mainly soil embryo walls. The foundation part, as well as the half-meter-high wall on the ground, is based on larger stones, which is not only strong, but also to prevent moisture. The stones are dug up on the yellow mud, and then the feet are tamped. In order to prevent the wall from cracking, the soil is mixed with wheat stalks or thatched grass roots by the river, making the wall connect to the whole. The roof is generally used as the beams and roofs, and then the roof is covered with reeds or wheat stalks, and then fixed with soil. The position of the bed in the bedroom is also particular. According to the different gender, there is a saying that "men are near the wall, female near the beam". The kitchen of the ancient houses of Xuzhou is called "pot house" (meaning: the room where the pot is placed), and the location of the stove is very particular. In the southeast direction of the houses house, the vulnerability direction of the stone mill plate is also particular, and it must be directed to the southeast. Generally, the pigpen is also located in the south of the house. These customs are generally consciously observed, but they can't tell why they are so arranged. (Uncle Chen, farmers in Liyushan Village, Xuzhou City, lived in a newly built house ten years ago).

The architectural forms of the traditional houses of Xuzhou are dominated by the couple in the north, which is very different from the units of contemporary buildings. The living facilities around the house are relatively backward. Therefore, since 2000, people with economic strength will leave the countryside and buy cities near the hospital near the hospital. , School and Park's new high-rise communities, such a houses house has better thermal insulation performance, direct supply with natural gas and heating, and life is more convenient. Although this group of people leave the countryside, the ancestral houses in their rural hometown will still be retained, but the house has been uninhabited for a long time and lacks maintenance. Many old houses houses of unmanned houses in the countryside are facing the crisis that is about to collapse. (Peng Bao, from the countryside in Xuzhou, he came to Xuzhou City for 30 years with his family, 2023)

5.1.2 Target three involves symbolic significance contained in ancient houses. I chose people who studied and revisit ancient houses for the collection of fields to

collect fields. This part of the crowd is divided into two categories, including ancient architectural experts and workers.

Many of the ancient Xuzhou houses houses have become dangerous houses because of their age. Ancient architectural experts and craftsmen have made great contributions to the protection and repair of ancient Xuzhou houses houses. This crowd also provides a lot of information for the symbolic significance of this thesis to study the symbolic meaning of the houses house.

According to Teacher Sun Tongyi, the ancient households of the Ministry of Households can represent the architectural style of the traditional house of Xuzhou. The Household Mountain is located outside the south gate of the old city of Xuzhou. It is the closest commanding height from Xuzhou City. It is the main point of controlling Xuzhou City. In order to avoid the Yellow River water, some officials and gentry, the rich and gentlemen, who hesitated to choose a house around the House of Households, and the middle and rich households also scrambled to imitate it. From the end of the Ming Dynasty to the early years of the Republic of China, the High House Courtyard around the Ministry of Households was densely covered, and the houses were lined up.

As the saying goes, a person in the soil and soil of one side is relatively straightforward, so the overall style of the building is relatively rough and atmospheric. Xuzhou's architectural culture is different from other regions. There have been 35 emperors in Xuzhou history. Therefore, Xuzhou hopes that their children can be promoted, reflected in the architecture that there are two corner flowers: grass dragons, grass phoenixes, that is, the meaning of looking at the son of Jackie Chan and the daughter into a phoenix. The roof of Xuzhou is slowly raised, and the lines are very beautiful, but the angle band (ridge) is very masculine. Different from other places, the most representative is "Flower Cloud Swallow": there is a swallow to show the wings on the top, and the auspicious clouds under the swallow are stacked and surrounded. The entire combination reflects the meaning of Xiangrui and is one of the representative symbols of the local culture of Xuzhou. (Sun Tongyi, ancient architecture protection and repair expert, Xuzhou, 2022)

Che Village, Liuji Town, Xuzhou City, is a well-known building in a well-known building. For hundreds of years, it has inherited the exquisite construction technology. Since the Song Dynasty, the ancestors of the Zhang family of Che Village have taken architectural construction as their industry. This skill has been continuously developed through generations, and has continued to grow and grow. In the Republic of China, the "Che Village Gang" of the construction industry was formed. The architectural craftsmanship in Xuzhou and even the surrounding areas originated from Che Village, so it has always enjoyed a high reputation in the industry. Teacher Sun Tongyi is also a disciple of the "Che Village Gang".

Xuzhou is a place for soldiers in history. In addition to the Yellow River, everyone is unwilling to build luxury houses houses, so the house volume is small. Water suffers, you can't grow big trees, you can only use very thin wood to make beams. Xuzhou's craftsmen rely on scientific principles and built a beam frame, called "heavy beam starting shelf", which can withstand the pawwa roof 200 meters per square meter 200 meters per square meter. The pressure of more kilograms is indeed very safe, and the material is only one-third of the beam. It is said that the great invention of the "Che Village Gang" is widely used in Xuzhou, and even the entire

Huaihai Economic Zone. (Cheu Village Gang, Jiangsu Province -level non -heritage inheritance project)

The architectural structure of ancient Xuzhou houses houses has far -reaching influence. Because of the similarity of geographical environment and human history, the architectural structure of many ancient Xuzhou houses houses is not only used in Xuzhou, but also is widely used by surrounding areas. When the traditional houses of the hut in the countryside, the structure basically followed the ancient method. (Peng Bao, Xuzhou,2023)

### 5.1.3 Designers and new rural people in rural houses

In order to make the humanity, artistic and overallness of the countryside better, the process restructuring process of the goal four needs to take rural landscapes including rural houses as the target of reconstruction. The field crowd who studied the goal four chose designers and new rural people.

In the process of rural rejuvenation, some villages have adopted the method of restructuring the facade decoration of the original house, and some found a professional design institute for overall planning. (Min Qingxue, landscape designer) The current economic status of rural houses in northern Jiangsu is not matched with the developed economic status of Jiangsu. The new houses houses lack local style, house function does not keep up with the times, and lacks public facilities in rural areas. Some houses houses in Liyushan Village have a history of more than 100 years. Because the Yellow River has passed through Xuzhou before, the Yellow River brings a lot of sediment from the upstream. Therefore, the building here has obvious regional characteristics. The building is mainly stone and rammed earth walls. The reconstruction idea of Liyushan Village is: While retaining the architectural skills of traditional villages, it is necessary to present the appearance of contemporary villages. (Feng Zhenggong, Chairman of Zhongheng Design Group, master of national engineering survey and design)

There are no mortgages, car loans, property fees in the countryside, no urban anxiety, and you can also have your own small yard. This kind of house similar to villas may not be able to afford it for a lifetime. According to Chinese law, rural homesteads do not belong to the individual of villagers and belong to the collective ownership of the villagers. Therefore, they are not allowed to buy and sell. The form of 10-20 years in the form of renting and selling for outsiders can be converted. But life in rural areas is not only enough. As a foreigner, there are rural areas in the countryside. I must respect and integrate into the culture here in order to allow the locals to accept me and become a group of this collective. The farmers in the countryside are very simple. As the saying goes, distant relatives are not as good as close neighbors. Only by respect and integration, so that they can pull the distance from the folks. (Wang Jingye, writer, new rural people)

Therefore, the reconstruction of contemporary villages must not only design houses with local style characteristics, but also consider local local culture to continue the context of the countryside. (Peng Bao, 2023, fields are located in Liyushan Village)

## 5.2 Field of Research:

### 5.2.1 The main fields

As described in the research crowd <5.1.1>, my main research field is the place where the ancient Xuzhou houses houses left by the ancient Xuzhou residents. These places are facing different development directions, some have become historical attractions, and some have been transformed into new rural areas.

### 5.2.2 Secondary field

My secondary research field is a university and design company that is undergoing rural reconstruction research. They are regarded as professionals and are invited by the government to transform the countryside and provide strategies for the development of the countryside.

## 6. Research Data Collection Tools

### 6.1 Data Collection

#### 6.1.1 Fieldwork and data collection

- 1) Interview ; Formal interview, Informal interview, Focus group interview.
- 2) Observation ; Normal observation (or general observation), Participatory observation.

#### 6.1.2 Documentary data collection.

#### 6.1.3 Tool or Equipment for data collection.

- 1) Motion picture (cameras, video recording equipment).
- 2) Voice record .
- 3) Field notebook .

#### 6.2 Data synthesis and Data analysis

6.2.1 Data synthesis : The researcher will set group the data simply while collecting data using the research conceptual framework as the primary tool. And synthesize information in detail after collecting data by providing information in the system according to research objectives. I will continually review the data whether Is each group of information sufficient or not, and is there any part that is not enough? This is for the purpose of collecting additional information.

6.2.2 Data analysis : The researchers analyze the data by descriptive analysis with concepts in each chapter of the research. In addition, I will analyze by dialogue with other people's studies. Both the study of ancient Xuzhou houses and the work of the same concept group in my study of this matter.

## 7. Scope of research

### 7.1 Scope of research area

I divide the area of study into main areas and secondary areas. The main area is the area of people involved in 5.1.1, which is the location of ancient Xuzhou houses and contemporary houses. At the same time, the houses of new rural people in 5.1.3 is also the main area of research.

The location of the population in 5.1.1 allows researchers to better understand the past, and the new rural people in 5.1.3 allows researchers to analyze rural houses from another perspective. The scope of the secondary area is museums, design

studios, government planning agencies involved in the 5.1.2 and 5.1.3 groups . Research on the existing achievements of these places and analyze what role they can play in the context of rural revitalization.

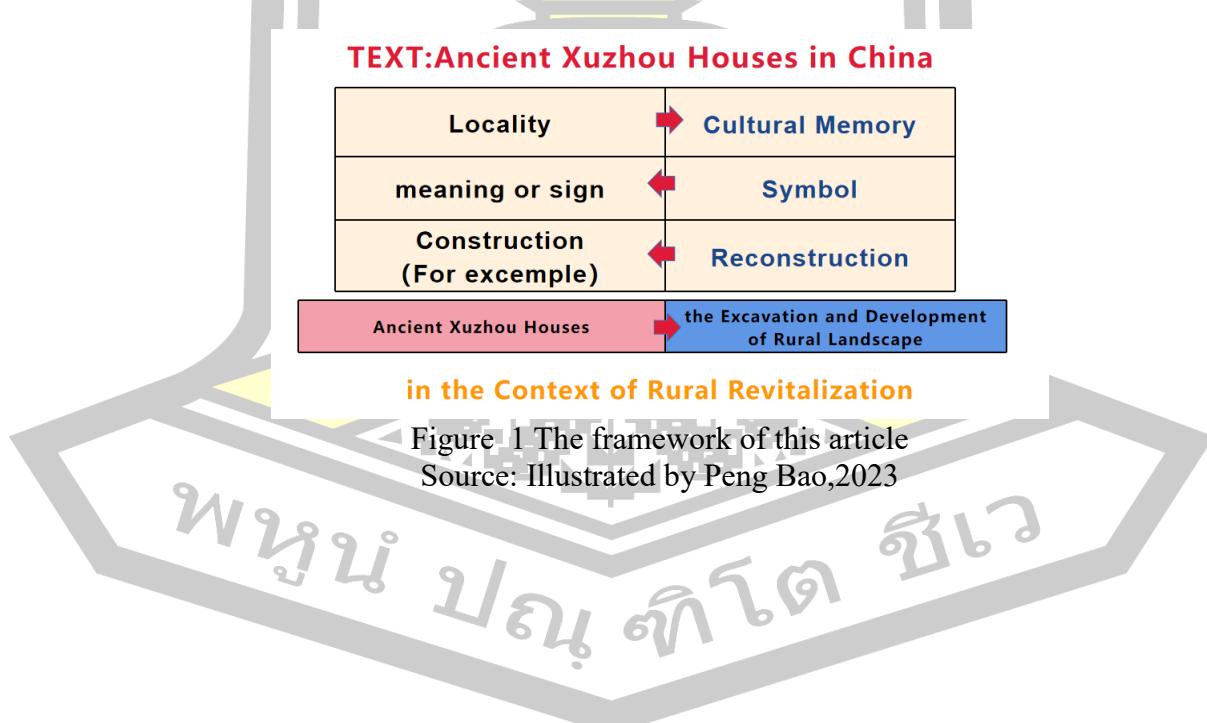
## 7.2 Scope of the Time

The time scope of this study is divided into three nodes, the first node is before the Yellow River diversion in 1128, the second is after the Yellow River diversion in 1128, and the third node is from the reform and opening up of the People's Republic of China to the current period of rural revitalization. Through the first two nodes, in order to study and analyze the impact of the historical changes of ancient Xuzhou on the houses, the last node is to explore how to use the cultural memory contained in the ancient houses to reconstruct the contemporary rural landscape under the background of rural revitalization.

## 8. Research Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of this study consists of the relationship between text, context, concepts, and questions. Based on the relationship between ancient Xuzhou houses and related issues and concepts. Design concepts such as cultural memory, symbolism, process reconstruction, and rural revitalization to solve corresponding problems.

According to the above ideas, I designed the following research conceptual framework as a thinking tool in research work(Figure 1):



## 9. Literature Review

### 9.1 History of houses in ancient Xuzhou, China

As mentioned in the research background, houses are the earliest cultural landscape of human beings. It can protect people from weather changes such as cold and heat, rain and snow, and wind and tide. The "shelter" is the earliest prototype of a dwelling. Avoiding risks is the instinct of life, and building a comfortable living environment is the constant pursuit of human beings in the interaction with nature. The function of the house has led to him being the most intimate necessity in life. Different historical periods and different cultural backgrounds have led to obvious regional differences in the external form of houses, but in terms of spiritual connotation, the house is sublimated to the level of family and country feelings and family blood. In Chinese philosophy, a house is like this. a spiritual space.

Xuzhou has a history of more than 3,000 years and is located at the strategic midpoint between the north and the south. Its rich collection of Han portrait stones and underground city ruins provide natural soil for the study of Xuzhou's houses.

Ancient Xuzhou houses are generally courtyard structures, which have been recorded in stone carvings more than 2,000 years ago. The scenes of Han portrait stone carvings unearthed in Xuzhou contain a large number of architectural themes and involve many types of buildings (including palaces, gates, pavilions, courtyards, pavilions, etc.). "Book of Han Chao Cuo Zhuan" describes houses as a courtyard houses, which includes a hall, two inner rooms, and an outer door and an inner door. Therefore, "doors, courtyards, households, halls, and inner rooms" constitute the basic form of courtyards in the Han Dynasty. The "door" here refers to the courtyard gate and gate tower, the "house" refers to the inner door, and the doors of halls and rooms are called "hu". "Tang", that is, the hall, is the core building of the courtyard in the Han Dynasty. The owner and his family can hold banquets, receptions, worship and other activities in the hall. "Inner", that is, the inner room, is used for the daily life of the owner and his family. "Ting" refers to a courtyard, and the buildings, courtyard walls or corridors in the courtyard naturally form a courtyard.

After analyzing the stone reliefs of the Han Dynasty, Wang Can roughly summed up the characteristics of the spatial layout of the courtyards in the Han Dynasty, including the following two points:

First, the courtyard is laid out with a front hall and a back room. Halls and rooms constitute the longitudinal axis relationship in the north-south direction of the courtyard space. In terms of plane form, "tang" is often rectangular, while "room" is closer to square. The area of the hall is generally larger than the area of the room.

Second, the central axis principle of building layout. The gatehouse, hall, and room are all arranged on the central axis of the courtyard, and the hall is located in the middle of the axis. The courtyard has an east-west symmetrical layout. The verandah not only connects the buildings together, but also serves as the enclosure wall of the courtyard, making the courtyard closed. (Wang Can & Ling Feng, 2022, Research on the Formal Characteristics of Courtyard Buildings on Han Dynasty Stone Relief Stones)

In the cultural relics of the Han Dynasty, not only the layout of the houses and courtyards at that time can be reproduced, but also the way people of the Han Dynasty lived and produced in the houses can be understood. The animal pen model Ming

ware was an important burial object in the Han Dynasty. In her article, Li Mingzhu also pointed out through the study of Ming ware that "according to the archaeological records of the Han Dynasty, pig pens are usually built together with toilets, which is consistent with the ancient Chinese character 'Qian' for toilets, which means pigs in the pen." . Most of the pottery pigsties unearthed by archeology are also composed of toilets and pigsties. The researchers pointed out that "to determine the level of agricultural development in an era, farming techniques and fertilization cannot be ignored". Most of the pottery pigsty models with toilets indicate that the people at that time already had mature experience in accumulating fertilizers. It also shows that the Xuzhou area had realized the important role of fertilization in agricultural production at least in the early Western Han Dynasty. (Li Mingzhu.,2022,Discovery and discussion of pottery pigpens in the Western Han Dynasty in Xuzhou area)

The Jiangnan houses gardens, which are well-known at home and abroad, have also been influenced by Xuzhou houses buildings in history.

During the period of the Three Kingdoms, Jin and Southern and Northern Dynasties, there were two waves of southward migration in the ancient Xuzhou area due to wars. First, the large clans in the Huaisi River Basin at the end of the Han Dynasty and the beginning of the Three Kingdoms fled to the east of the Yangtze River, and those who later moved south after the Sun Wu Group crossed south to establish a foundation in the south of the Yangtze River (Hu Axiang. A review of the evolution of Jiangsu regional culture in different directions during the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties) [J]. Xuehai, 2011(04):173-184.). The second is the Eastern Jin and Southern Dynasties. From the Yongjia Rebellion in the Western Jin Dynasty, through the Eastern Jin Dynasty to the end of the Liu Song Dynasty, for more than 160 years, the migration of northern people to the south was surging. Based on Yu Kailiang's "Garden Aesthetics of the Six Dynasties", and comprehensively integrating ancient documents such as "Book of Jin", "Book of Song", "History of the South", "Book of Southern Qi", "Quan Liangwen", "Book of Liang", "Book of Chen", and "Records of Jiankang" According to the statistics, there were 80 folk gardens built in the Jiangnan area during the Six Dynasties, and the basic situation of each garden was verified. According to the statistics of the native place of the "owner", there are 33 built by Xu people who moved south, accounting for 41.25% of the total.

Qiu Benjun believed that Xu people often moved their whole families to seek refuge when traveling to the south. In order to avoid land competition with the Jiangdong aristocratic families who occupied the highly developed fertile fields, they mostly sought land and homes in sparsely populated hilly and mountainous areas, and "sealed mountains and consolidated rivers." "Let the scholars who migrated to the south go deep into the landscape gardens, which are part of the houses courtyards. They are beautiful places and have direct communication with the natural landscape, allowing them to feel more about the natural beauty of the Jiangnan landscape that is completely different from that in Xu.

In the process of designing and constructing the manor, Xu culture advocated elegance and elegance, and the deep genes of elegance and ease hidden under the deep, majestic, simple and simple appearance, combined with the new style triggered by the unique peaks, forests, springs and rocks of the mountains and forests in the south of the Yangtze River. The collision and fusion of perceptions of beauty caused Jiangnan folk gardens in their infancy to get rid of pure materiality and utilitarianism

from the beginning, and formed a landscape with landscape aesthetics as the main body, with the purpose of promoting harmony and emotion as the purpose, and focusing on natural aesthetics.

The unique aesthetic temperament and artistic outlook of the image established the "unity of man and nature", "elegance and refinement" and "exquisite beauty" of gardens in the south of the Yangtze River (Meng Qingzhi. Research on the art of private gardens in the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties [D]. Baoding: Hebei University, 2013. & Wu Gongzheng . Gardens of the Six Dynasties [M]. Nanjing: Nanjing Publishing House, 1992.) cultural awareness, basic form and the overall development tone of Jiangnan gardens (Qiu Benjun, Liu Xiaolu. Xu people's southward migration and Jiangnan gardens during the Six Dynasties period). Although Qiu Benjun's article is mainly a study of gardens, it also provides an important basis for the influence of ancient Xuzhou houses on southern Chinese houses.

## 9.2 Cultural Memory

The concept of cultural memory is that Asman develops in the concept of "collective memory" in Habwa. In the 1920s, Habwah proposed the concept of "collective memory". He also wrote "Social Framework of Memory", "Legend of the Holy Land in the Gospel: The Research on Collective Memory" and "On Collective Memory" to explain this concept. Asman agreed with Habvach's view of "memory is restricted by social factors (restricted by the framework)", and also agreed that "there is no social reference framework, personal memory is not possible to form and save". But Asman does not recognize the owner of the collective as memory and memory. He believes that he should still treat individuals as the subject of memory and memory.

"Framework (Social Factors)" was proposed by Habwah, which reasonably explained the principle of memory and forgetting. Social factors tell people what people need memory and memories, and which are important. The memory that can be memories is reconstructed in the reference of "framework (social factors)". I think this reconstruction is in the context of the current social factors, with past memories or memories as clues, and memory of collective values.

Asman subdivided the concept of the collective memory of Habwakh, distinguishing the memory and cultural memory of communication.

Asman believes that the memory of communication is contained in the past memories of the past. This memory occurs in the collective in the evolution of history; it produces and disappear over time, and it is more precise: it is produced and disappeared with its bearer. After the death of its substantive bearer, it is located in a new memory. So I think that communication memory is a kind of memory of life, such as the memory of the family life in the house of Xuzhou because of family life. This kind of life memory will be preserved in the memory of family members, and the storage of memory is produced or disappeared due to the birth or death of the family. The houses house has established a memory space for the experience of family members. Memories of interaction record daily life in the house, and through the internal interaction of the family, it is a natural development but informal memory. This memory is generally a 100-year limit, and the family does not exceed 3-4 generations. The memory of the old communication is replaced by the memory of the new communication over time.

The concept of cultural memory is determined by society and culture to how much memory is. Tradition to cultural memory, just like communication with the memory of communication. Cultural memory points to the distant past, forming a durable timeline. (Asman. "Religious and Cultural Memory").

Asman believes that cultural memory is not necessarily related to text, it can also be saved by rituals, myths, images and dance. The magnificent Wangling, Temple and officials of officials play the role of cultural memory, and they play a role in carrying the past.

In ancient Xuzhou houses houses, as Asman said, it also constituted the carrier of culture and pictures. This kind of solid memory is not only to convey its past as people, but also tell people's eternal future.

At present, there are not many academic achievements in using cultural memory to study Xuzhou's houses houses. In the CNKI, there were 69 doctoral and master's dissertations of keywords "houses, cultural memory", and 14 doctoral dissertations. There are 58 doctoral and master's dissertations in the keywords of "rural and cultural memory", including 8 doctoral dissertations and 50 master's dissertations. With "cultural memory, Xuzhou" as the keyword search, the results showed that there were 4 master's dissertations and 3 academic journal papers. One of them was the ancient port group as research text, and the rest was mainly literary research.

In the above -mentioned literature, Wang Ruixia's doctoral dissertation "Space Memory and Situation Reconstruction -Contemporary Jiangnan Village Cultural Landscape Design Research Research" mainly uses the Jiangnan region as the background, and uses the concept of cultural memory to explain the "hometown thoughts" in people's hearts. The author chose to use the cultural landscape of the entire Jiangnan region as a text as a text to use the concept of cultural memory into the landscape reconstruction. However, the focus of this article is to solve the phenomenon of contemporary, superficialization, and hollowing in the construction of contemporary rural landscapes, and design the landscape that conforms to the memory of people's nostalgia. The focus is not to analyze the relationship between rural landscapes and society, people, and space in the method of anthropology. Zhang Jingling's thesis "Research on the Art of Traditional House of House in Northern Jiangsu" is mainly based on the decorative art of traditional northern Jiangsu's traditional houses. It systematically analyzes the characteristics and artistic value of the architectural decoration in northern Jiangsu. However, there was no in-depth study of the artistic forms, artistic value of northern Jiangsu, and the artistic value of traditional houses in northern Jiangsu, and the relationship between houses houses and local people and social development. Dr. Lulong's thesis "The Evolution and Reconstruction of the Cultural Memory Space of Rural Tourism Land" and Dr. Wang Xiaofen's thesis "Research on the Ancient Town of Dali Shaxi in the tourism situation in the tourism situation". From the text of the ancient town of Dali Dali, we followed the cultural changes of the ancient town from the perspective of tourism anthropology. It used the inherited characteristic traditional custom development of contextual tourism. However, there was no concept of "cultural memory" in research methods.

Search, "cultural memory", "houses", "dwelling" and other keywords in Google. There are not many related results. Among them, Joe Moran's Housing, Memory and Everyday Life in Contemporary Britain pays attention to the relationship between housing, memory and daily life, but there is no concept of using cultural memory.

Therefore, it is feasible to use the concept of cultural memory to study the ancient villages of Xuzhou. First of all, the concept of "cultural memory" currently uses less academic achievements in houses houses. Secondly, through the concept of cultural memory, we can analyze what the houses space is used as a carrier of memory and what connections have happened with people and society. The houses house records which local collective memory, and its impact on people and society, to extract the spiritual connotation of ancient houses using the concept of symbolic concepts later, and lay the foundation in the background of contemporary rural rejuvenation.

### 9.3 Symbol

As a new type of research tool, symbolics has gradually been accepted by the world since its creation in the 20th century, and has been practically applied in research in the fields of literary and artistic design. Synthetic research architecture began in the 1950s, first applied to Italy, and then passed to other European developed countries. It was later passed to the Americas. The theory of symbolism in the 1980s began to be valued by the Chinese academic community.

Symbol is a concept in symbolism, which refers to the concept of abstract or other things with specific things or images. The use of symbols and symbolic words exists in all human culture, and is part of the general rules of universal culture. The first symbol of symbolics is Symbol in English, which is derived from the ancient Greek verb symballein, which means "to put together", and its term is Symbolon. In linguistics, art, literature, and other fields, the term "symbol" (symbol "has a long history, but there are differences in contempt.

This article uses symbolics theory to try to interpret the ideological content and symbolic significance of ancient Xuzhou houses houses. American philosopher Pierce defines the concept of symbols in a logical sense, and systematically divides and describes the types of symbols. Swiss linguist Sosur believes that each language symbol is dual, namely the so-called "Signifier" and "SIGNIFIED". Taking Xuzhou's houses houses as an example, "capable" refers to the graphic decoration of house architecture, and "referred to" refers to the content and significance represented by this graphic symbol. British scholars Ogden and Lichaz put forward the point of view (referring to actual people, things, or events) on the basis of the duality of Sachel. The "semantic triangle" of "energy finger" (symbol, symbol), "referred to" (symbols, implicit content and ideas), and "referring to objects" (referring to objects "(referring to objects". The relationship between the symbols and the objects and thoughts it represents is clarified. houses houses are a complex complex. It contains many factors. The essence of the house is a diverse building. No matter from which perspective, it is just a part of Xuzhou's houses houses. Using "can finger", such as dragon and phoenix, bat, flowers and other symbols in architectural decoration, the "referred" implied after the symbol, such as dragon and phoenix represents noble and imperial power; five bats are homophonic symbols of the five blessings of Chinese idioms; Flowers mean wealthy flowers. They are expressing the blessings of life with the help of residents to express their blessings, escape from disasters, and nostalgia for life.

As one of the carriers of Xuzhou culture in ancient Xuzhou, it can reflect the characteristics of the era of various social stages. Its composition and its role can be reflected through the materials, decoration characteristics, styling and use functions it

use. This corresponds to the level, semantic and functional level in the concept of Pierce's "three -point method".

As mentioned above, the use of symbolic and symbolic words, existing in all human culture, is part of the general rule of universal culture. Therefore, although the symbol can explain the symbols and symbols in the building, if the connotation of the building needs to be systematically studied, the symbolism needs to expand the building itself. Therefore, it can be regarded as a system of symbols or a system of symbols. Since the building has the characteristics of symbols, it is inevitable that they have dual characteristics of "energy finger" and "referred to". "Can refer" consisting of material appearance (such as form, space, surface, volume, etc.); "referred to" is a kind of thought or concept. This kind of thought or concept must be translated into energy finger. At this time, the energy finger of the houses house in the symbology is not just the patterns and other graphics, it has expanded to the style, space, and surface of the house. You can answer some of the spatial layout of Xuzhou's houses houses. For example, the space layout of the hall, bedroom, and kitchen is used in the current method, and whether the residents have hidden the philosophical thoughts of the occupants for heaven, earth, and the universe.

So how does the information transmission in symbolics be expressed through symbols and meaning? Umberto Eco believes that architecture is a signal medium that expresses meaning, and architectural signals are usually a spatial system surrounded by processed transmission functions on the basis of agreed customs. In the explanation of the functions and forms of the building, this system contains not only the sign of the form and the function of the function, but also reflects the concept of the formal reflection function. And as an objective and realistic building, only the form of expression (umberto Eco) on the basis of the signal code. As a signal medium that expresses meaning, Xuzhou houses houses are a spatial system with information transmission function in the collective of Xuzhou cultural memory. In the theory of symbolics, the houses houses conveyed specific meanings and information through external elements, forms, structures, and colors. The code of the houses houses depends on the relationship between symbols, significance and cognition. It can stimulate the perception, understanding and emotional response through visual elements. From this perspective, the signal of the houses house involves the following elements:

1. Symbols: Residents themselves, architectural elements and decorations can be regarded as symbols, expressing specific meaning and information by expressing specific meaning and information.

2. Significance: The significance of the houses houses affects the understanding and perception of the viewer through the meaning conveyed by the symbol. Different elements and forms may have different significance in a specific culture and social background.

3. Cognition: The process of viewers' understanding of the houses code involves their knowledge, experience, cultural background, and the perception and interpretation of architectural elements.

The code of the house can convey information and meaning in various ways, such as architectural style, architectural elements, Color and material. In short through external forms, structures, and meaning to convey specific information and significance to the viewer. Therefore, the code of the house can affect the perception

and understanding of the viewer, and the emotional relationship with the houses house.

The communication function of the ancient Xuzhou houses symbol includes two conversion processes: "information conversion into symbols" and "symbol conversion into information". If it is explained from the perspective of "information theory", we can think that the design of the houses house is the process of information transformation into a symbol process. Essence The designer is the transmitter of the information, and the design process is the process of gradually transforming ideas and concepts into image symbols. After the completion of the houses entity, the public's understanding of the house is the process of symbolic restoration as information. In the process of these two conversion, there is a "two -way communication" between designers, users, and admirers. The former transmits the "intent" to the latter through the "symbol", and the latter's understanding of the symbol (the convention of society) is limited and influenced the former's application of symbols. The word "information" ahead can be understood as an individual's perception of things based on collective memory, and wants to express it to realize some kind of communication. This kind of information refers to any abstract ideas, emotions, and invisible things, and do not directly indicate, but through the image recognized by a certain public as a medium, the expression of indirectly statement is "symbolic symbol """.

This two -way communication information transmission will inevitably produce significance. Meaning is essentially the connection between the symbols and the objects and ideas it represents, and it is an emotional and knowledge reaction caused by people's feelings of symbols. For example, the form of a houses house is a product of the designer's internal consciousness concept and external materialization conditions. This will inevitably make the symbolic symbol of the houses houses have the ability to express significance.

In the context of rural revitalization, the concept symbol of symbols in symbols analyzes the characteristics of ancient Xuzhou houses houses, and analyzes the symbols and significance of ancient Xuzhou houses houses from the aspects of houses construction methods, spatial layout, and building decoration. Traditional and modern interaction.

#### 9.4 Process Reconstruction

The term reconstruction comes from information computer science. The purpose of improving quality and performance by adjustment makes the design pattern and structure of the program more reasonable, and improves the scalability and maintenance of software.

In the context of the revitalization of contemporary rural areas, this article borrows the symbols and cultural meanings of ancient houses in accordance with the symbolic significance of ancient Xuzhou houses houses, and uses the concept of rebuilding to adjust and improve the cultural landscape of Xuzhou villages.

#### 9.5 Rural Revitalization

China is a country of farming civilization, so the dynasties have attached great importance to the countryside. After the reform and opening up, China's economy has developed rapidly, and China's rural policy is constantly improving.

### 9.5.1. Stage (1978-1994)

After the reform and opening up, rural areas actively promoted the "packaging to households and households to households". Farmers' production enthusiasm was greatly improved. The remaining labor force gradually liberated from the land into the non-agricultural sector. House construction provides an economic foundation and set off a wave of farmhouse construction. Farmers have built new houses to solve the problem of shortage of housing area, but problems such as unreasonable housing structure, incomplete function, and occupation of cultivated land have emerged. In order to regulate the construction of rural houses, the Rural Construction Administration has been established to guide and coordinate the construction of rural houses across the country.

### 9.5.2. Exploration phase (1992-2004)

The 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of China clearly proposed to establish a socialist market economy system, prompting the rapid development of the market economy, and driving the acceleration of urbanization process. Rural capital, land, and labor resources have flowed into cities in large numbers, and urban and rural development is uneven. To this end, the Third Plenary Session of the 16th CPC Central Committee of the Party in October 2003 placed the "five overall planning" of the country's comprehensive development strategic concept. Subsequently, the four ancient villages in southern Anhui successfully declared the World Heritage Site, and the government and the academic circles began to attach importance to the protection and development of ancient villages.

### 9.5.3. Development stage (2005-2011)

In 2005, the Fifth Plenary Session of the 16th CPC Central Committee proposed that "industrial feeding agriculture and urban supporting rural areas" and clarified the specific requirements of rural construction. Rural construction was placed in an important position for national development. The Central Rural Work Conference officially proposed the concept of "new rural construction".

In 2008, the Third Plenary Session of the 17th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China further proposed the "three major deployments" of rural construction, becoming a new opportunity for the adjustment of rural industries. Villages and towns actively develop tourism industry, protect and use villages and towns' characteristic landscape resources to promote rural construction.

### 9.5.4. Stability stage (2012-2017)

The rapid development of urbanization has promoted rural construction from the number of quality to quality. In 2013, the central government proposed the concept of "new urbanization" in order to protect the interests of farmers and achieve urban and rural coordinated and sustainable development. The industrial development, ecological environment, and cultural construction in rural construction work together. The main contents include the three major sections of beautiful villages, living environment and traditional villages.

### 9.5.5. Mature stage (2018-to this day)

The report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China regards ecological livability as an important part of the strategy of rural rejuvenation, and it is clear that the rural human settlement environment should be carried out. Under the guidance of national policy documents, further effectively implemented throughout the country, focusing on the construction of public infrastructure in rural areas, continuously improving rural production and living conditions, so that rural waste, sewage, and facial source pollution have been solved to a certain extent. In the appearance of the village, the rural living environment has been greatly improved, and the comprehensive rural governance system has been effectively improved.

"Rural Revitalization Strategy" is a national strategy proposed by Comrade Xi Jinping in the "19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China" on October 18, 2017. The report pointed out: "Agriculture, rural, farmers" is the basic problem related to the national economy and people's livelihood. We must always solve the solution of the "agricultural, rural, and farmers" as the primary task of the party's work, and implement rural revitalization strategy.

Rural rejuvenation refers to the use of rural regional resources and potential to improve the level of rural economy, social and cultural development, and achieve coordination and sustainable urban and rural development.

## 10. Benefit of Research

10.1. The development strategy of the conclusion can better provide villagers with contemporary housing with rural culture

10.2. Research results can provide theoretical support for decision makers of rural policy. Design can help rural updates and support the reconstruction of the countryside in the context of rural revitalization. It is not only conducive to the development of rural tourism, but also attracts talents to return to rural life and inherit rural civilization.

10.3. Methodism can provide people who intend to inherit rural heritage. Through cultural memory dimensions, analyze the family concepts, collective memories and farming civilization contained in the field of memory of the houses memory, and then use the symbols and significance contained in the houses space, and carry out the reconstruction of rural civilization space within the framework of the contemporary society.

10.4. Studying the history of ancient Xuzhou houses through the concept of cultural memory can reproduce the process of how human beings overcome natural barriers for spatial migration in order to live and produce, and achieve harmonious coexistence with nature, and explore the spiritual value of human rural landscape heritage.

## CHAPTER II

### The historical changes of Xuzhou and the historical development process of ancient Xuzhou houses

The first research objective is to study the geographical environment and historical changes of ancient Xuzhou houses, and sort out the origin and development process of ancient Xuzhou houses.

The socio-economic development and history of Xuzhou have profoundly affected the architectural features and forms of ancient Xuzhou houses. As an important transportation hub and military fortress in history, Xuzhou's geographical location has given it a special historical mission, which in turn has affected its socio-economic structure and development trajectory. The architectural style, layout planning and decorative art of ancient Xuzhou houses reflect the economic prosperity, social style and cultural trends of Xuzhou in different historical stages.

Xuzhou is located at the junction of the north and the south. This unique geographical location makes the ancient Xuzhou houses combine the architectural features of the north and the south in the architectural style, reflecting the blending and fusion of different cultures. The architectural style of ancient Xuzhou houses is not only the product of Xuzhou's historical changes, but also the historical witness of its socio-economic development and cultural exchanges, providing valuable empirical materials for studying the economy and culture of Xuzhou and even ancient Chinese society.

#### 1. The impact of physical space changes caused by the natural environment on ancient Xuzhou houses

Xuzhou is located in the North Jiangsu Plain area within the North China Plain (Figure 2). From the geographical unit point of view, it is the Huanghuai Plain, which is a component of the North China Plain. It is located to the north of the Huaihe River and belongs to the northern region. This area, in addition to northern Jiangsu, also includes the surrounding northern Anhui, eastern Henan, and southwestern Shandong. The combination is the Huaihai area. As the name suggests, it is the area from both sides of the Huaihe River to the sea. The flat plain terrain and rich water system network provide objective geographical conditions for the formation of human settlements in Xuzhou.

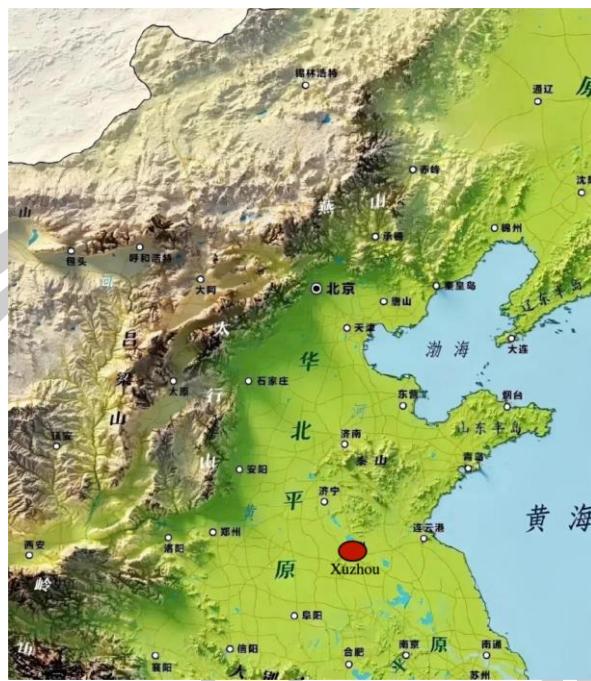


Figure 2 Xuzhou's location on the plain

Source: Annotated by Peng Bao, 2023

### 1.1 Landforms and topography are the core of the formation of ancient Xuzhou residential settlements

The plains are the most suitable treasure land for human survival. The ten largest plains in the world are the Amazon Plain of South America, the Eastern European Plain, the Siberian Plain, the Central Great Plain of North America, the La Plata Plain of South America, the Turan Plain of Central Asia, the Indo-Gangetic Plain, the Northeast China Plain and the North China Plain, and the Indus Plain. . During the primitive society, the great plains were covered with forests or grasslands. Large tigers, leopards and herds of wild beasts threatened the survival of the ancients. Therefore, the ancients chose smaller plains where it was easier to survive. When the word "China" first appeared, it only referred to the Central Plains area. Geographically speaking, it was probably the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River in today's North China Plain.

#### 1.1.1 The fertile plain terrain gave birth to the formation of ancient Xuzhou settlements

About 5,000 years ago, ancient Chinese civilization originated mainly in the Yellow River Basin, not the larger Yangtze River Basin. The ancestors of China were divided into many tribes, large and small, active in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River. Among the more famous leaders are Taihao (Fuxi), Shaohao (White Emperor), Zhuanxu (Black Emperor), Huangdi, Yandi (Red Emperor), Diku (Gaoxin clan), Zhurong, Boyi, Emperor Shun, and Yao emperor. Among them, Emperor Yan and Emperor Huang<sup>11</sup> are the co-leaders. China has left many civilization sites in the Yellow River Basin, and ancient Xuzhou is one of them.

<sup>11</sup> The Yanhuang people are considered to be the ancestors of Chinese civilization, and

According to archaeological discoveries, the earliest civilization in ancient Xuzhou was born at the Dadunzi site in Pizhou. Pizhou is located in the east of Xuzhou City. The ancient cultural site of Dadunzi excavated in Pizhou is about 6,400 years old. Like the ruins of Banpo Village in Xi'an, it is one of the earliest villages in my country. The prelude to the history of Xuzhou civilization begins here. Numerous unearthed cultural relics tell us that when most parts of the world were still lingering in the enlightenment stage of the Paleolithic Age, the ancestors of Xuzhou living in the Dadunzi area had already ushered in the dawn of human civilization and entered the age of farmers - the New Age. In the Stone Age, they were the glorious ancestors of the Xuzhou people.

The Dadunzi site is located east of Zhuyuan Village, Sihu Town, Pizhou City. From November 1963 to April 1976, three excavations were conducted here. Participating in the excavation were the Nanjing Museum, the History Department of Xiamen University and the Pizhou Cultural Bureau. The site is surrounded by mountains and rivers, surrounded by Hengshan Youlu Mountain, Chubu Mountain and Ai Mountain. There is an ancient river nearby, which is suitable for human survival in primitive society. The cultural accumulation of the ruins is divided into three layers. The upper layer is the patriarchal society, the lower layer is the matriarchal society, and the middle layer is the transitional society from the tenure system to the patriarchal system. Its age is five to six thousand years ago. This is a Neolithic village in a primitive society. The clam shells and pottery shards unearthed are relics left by the ancestors of Xuzhou. Archaeologists named this primitive village the Dadunzi Site. The cultural relics and ruins unearthed reproduce the life scenes of human beings working together in ancient times to create human civilization.

The Dadunzi people live on the Gaofu platform on the west bank of the Yi River and engage in farming, animal husbandry, fishing and hunting. The rich relics include two stages: matrilineal clan commune and patrilineal clan commune, but mainly the latter, dating back about 6,000 years, reflects the characteristics of the Neolithic culture in the Yellow River Basin. The Dawenkou culture is mainly distributed in southern Shandong and northern Jiangsu, and is directly related to the Dongyi tribe recorded in ancient history. The Dadunzi Removal Site is a typical important site of the Dawenkou culture.

Dadunzi people are the earliest cultivators of this land in Xuzhou. As a clan of the Dongyi tribe, the Dadunzi people have an agricultural economy, mainly planting millet. A large number of carbonized millet grains were found at the site. A large number of agricultural production tools were also unearthed. The ancestors of Xuzhou used various stone tools, bone tools and horn tools, which were the tools for hunting at that time. In addition to the perforation removal axes, stone shovels, large stone rusts, bone, horn, teeth, and mussel sickles that are common in general ruins, there are also advanced production tools such as antler silver, stone picks, etc. (Figure 3)

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the Han people (called the Huaxia people before the Han Dynasty) are called the descendants of the Yanhuang people.



Figure 3 Production tools unearthed from the Dadunzi site

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2022

It can be seen from the unearthed animal bones that livestock breeding was quite advanced at that time. The livestock they raised included pigs, dogs, cows, and sheep. They used dogs or pigs for burial. The custom of burying pigs is certainly a manifestation of some primitive beliefs, and it may also be a symbol of wealth. Fishing and hunting played a certain role in the social economy at that time. The fishing and hunting tools produced by the monks were not only large in quantity but also of good quality. There are bone darts, pottery net pendants, sharp hooks, daggers, stone spears, bone spears and other customary tools. Closely connected with the hunting economy is the bone making process. A string of ten bone beads was found here, all perforated and carved with patterns. In addition, there are bone carving tubes and bone combs; the bone carving craftsmanship has reached a very high level.

It can be seen from the cemetery unearthed in Dadunzi that it was already in the final stage of the matrilineal clan society at that time. In the late stage, it had entered the patrilineal clan stage. During this period, the phenomenon of individual family ownership and wealth inequality had appeared. The painted pottery unearthed from Dadunzi has beautiful shapes and brilliant colors. The unearthed painted pottery includes pots, basins, bowls and other food utensils. The patterns of the painted pottery are mainly plant patterns. These plant patterns have been deformed to make the lines stretch and smooth, and the composition is flexible and unified. In addition to painted pottery, there are pottery containers with animal images, such as gray pottery snail-shaped pots, which are vivid in shape and are both practical and works of art. These cultural relics are representative of the artistic achievements of the time, but these exquisite life works of art should be artifacts belonging to the upper class. The invention of houses is a great progress for mankind. The Dadunzi people have long since escaped from the cave-dwelling and nesting stage. They already have houses of various shapes, which shows that they have invented new production tools and house-building technologies.

The structure of the houses of the residents of Dadunzi is very similar to the old-style houses with civil structures in the rural areas of northern Jiangsu in modern

times. Experts discovered 5 burnt earth floors in the Dadunzi site. The earth mixed with clam shells turned red and hardened after being burned by the fire. It was 20 to 30 centimeters thick and had a smooth surface. Obviously, the burned soil was compacted and then burned with vegetation. There are circular post holes scattered around its edge, with a depth and diameter of about 20 to 40 centimeters. The wooden posts for building houses can be erected inside. The bottom of the post hole is lined with processed square stones and filled with burnt earth chips, which are naturally laid to prevent the wooden posts from sinking and rotting. There are collapsed remnants of walls left on the edge of the burned soil layer, which are also made of plant straw mixed with soil and burned with fire.

At this point, we can imagine the characteristics of the ancestors' houses: flat ground, dry indoors, surrounded by earth walls, supported by wooden pillars, and stone foundations under the wooden pillars. It shows that the prototype of ancient Xuzhou people's stone foundation began at the Dadunzi site. Models of pottery houses were also discovered in the tombs. This major discovery gives us the privilege to intuitively understand the houses of our ancestors more than 6,000 years later. Some facades are triangular, some are rectangular, and some are circular in cross-section. The roof is high and has a steep slope to facilitate water drainage when it rains. There is a door in front of the house and windows at the back and sides. Just like today, adequate attention is paid to indoor ventilation and lighting. The area is five to six square meters, and the larger one is 16 to 30 square meters. It is a one-bedroom "small apartment", but it is enough for a small family to live in.

This structure reflects the life wisdom of Xuzhou ancestors. From then on, they can more effectively resist the invasion of wild animals and the attacks of wind and rain. And you can also choose an area suitable for farming, fishing and hunting to settle down.

We can see from the Dadunzi site in Xuzhou more than 6,000 years ago that the ancestors of Xuzhou at that time no longer lived in caves in the wild and no longer built wooden nests. They came down from the trees and started building houses on the ground, using stones as foundations. Some houses have square spires with eaves on all sides, a door at the front and windows on both sides. Some are triangular in shape, and their roofs are pointed structures. Some construction methods have always influenced the architectural form of ancient Xuzhou houses. This may be the source of the structure of ancient Xuzhou houses (Figure 4).





*-Figure 4 The pottery house unearthed from the Dadunzi site*

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2022

#### 1.1.2 The dense water system provided necessary nutrients for the development of ancient Xuzhou settlements

When exploring the origins of civilization, no one can ignore the role of rivers. Rivers have no culture at all. When connected with human beings, they become the natural geographical environment for human existence and life, and have the functions of nurturing, producing, disseminating and exchanging culture.

This role was often decisive and even irreplaceable at the beginning of human civilization. The Chinese liken the Yellow River to the mother river. Like the Nile, Euphrates, Tigris, Ganges, etc., it has given birth to great civilizations and is an important source of civilization in the world today. In the development of ancient Chinese civilization, the Yellow River culture is the most representative and influential main culture. However, new research results show that the origin and development of Chinese civilization are diverse, and the Yellow River Basin is not the only cradle of ancient Chinese civilization; and facts also show that since the mid-Tang Dynasty, the Yellow River Basin has gradually lost its leading economic position. However, the dominant position and leading role of the Yellow River culture is undeniable. In the diversified development of ancient Chinese civilization, the Yellow River and other rivers played a decisive role in the birth and growth of the Chinese nation in different regions.

From the perspective of historical and geographical environment, the birth of Xuzhou is closely related to water. Xuzhou has been near water for a long time. Since Dayu controlled the water, he divided the world into nine states, and Xuzhou was one of the nine states. "State" was originally land in the water. In the ancient pre-Qin era, it was bounded by Zou Lu in the north, Liang and Song Dynasties in the west, the sea in the east, and Yangzhou in the south. By the Qing Dynasty, Xuzhou was surrounded by water on all sides. Xuzhou's destiny is closely tied to the river.

## 1.2 Dynamic changes in the water system are important conditions for social changes in ancient Xuzhou

According to classic records, since Sishui Yuxia was the domain of Xuzhou, Bian Qie was established in the Western Han Dynasty, and the Eastern Han Dynasty continued to use the old system of the Western Han Dynasty as it belonged to the Xuzhou State of Lu. Surabaya culture has profoundly influenced Xuzhou and laid the foundation of Xuzhou's regional history and culture. First of all, the Sishui River has nurtured a large number of historical celebrities associated with Xuzhou, such as Peng Zu, King Xu Yan, Confucius, Meng Ke, Zi Lu, Yan Hui, Zeng Shen, Liu Bang<sup>12</sup> (the chief of the Pavilion of Sishui), Zhang Liang, Xiang Yu, Han Xin, etc. Secondly, due to the convenient transportation in Surabaya, people travel to Xuzhou along Surabaya, changing the local population structure of Xuzhou. Thirdly, it affects the customs and habits of Xuzhou. The folk customs of Xuzhou are still mostly the same as those of southwestern Shandong. Emphasis on love, justice and etiquette. Finally, the Tao of Confucius and Mencius influenced Xuzhou, creating the fine qualities of Xuzhou people who admire literature and martial arts, respect teachers and Taoism, attach importance to education, respect talents, distinguish between grudges and grudges, respect truth and do good, be honest and plain-minded, and be honest and trustworthy.

There are Bianshui River and Yellow River flowing from west to east in the north of the city, Sishui River flowing from north to south and the Grand Canal flowing from north to south in the east of the city, moat flowing from north to south in the west of the city, and Kui River flowing from east to west in the south of the city. Xuzhou is surrounded by the Sishui River, Bianhe River, Yellow River and the Grand Canal. Water transportation not only completes Xuzhou's strategic position as a transportation thoroughfare of the "Five Provinces" (Shandong, Henan and Anhui plus the Grand Canal leads to Zhejiang in the south and Hebei in the north). Moreover, the river culture has influenced the history and culture of Xuzhou, formed the multi-faceted personality characteristics of Xuzhou regional culture, and created the character of Xuzhou people.

### 1.2.1 Bianshui and Sishui established Xuzhou's historical status as a strategic town

In ancient times, Xuzhou's territory was changeable, but it was always located in the core area of the Huanghuai Plain. It had four distinct seasons, abundant rainfall, rivers and lakes throughout, rich vegetation, and numerous animals. 6,000 years ago, the ancestors of Xuzhou lived and thrived here. Since ancient times, rivers such as Yishui, Sishui, Wushui, and Sishui have passed through it, with Bianshui and Sishui being the main water systems.

<sup>12</sup> Liu Bang (256 BC / 247 BC - June 1, 195 BC), courtesy name Ji, was born in Feng County, Xuzhou City, Jiangsu Province today. He was an outstanding statesman and strategist in Chinese history and the founding emperor of the Han Dynasty.

The Bian River originates in Henan and flows southeast. The river crossing Bianliang in Tokyo in "Along the River During the Qingming Festival" is the Bian River. When the Bianshui River flows through Xuzhou, the Bianshui River flows from west to east in the north of Xuzhou City and merges into the Huaihe River in the south.

After the Jin Dynasty and before the Sui Dynasty, it refers to the Bian Canal starting from Xingyang, Henan, also known as Huoshui ("Shui Jing" is written as "YA". "Hanshu Geography" and "Shui Jing Zhu"<sup>13</sup> are written as "Huo"). Therefore, the road connects the Bin River at It flows north of present-day Shangqiu City in Henan Province, flows eastward through Yucheng, Dangshan in Anhui, and the north of Xiaoxian County, and flows into the Sishui River in the north of Xuzhou City in Jiangsu Province. Since Jin Dynasty, it was considered to be the downstream of Bianshui River, so the name of the water was abandoned and it was commonly known as Bianshui River. In the second year of Yuanfeng in the Song Dynasty (AD 1079), Luo River was diverted from Luo River to Bian River. The Bian River passed through Xuzhou City, Jiangsu Province and then entered the water transport trunk road of Surabaya.

Surabaya originates from the Lunan Hills at the southern foot of Mount Tai. It goes all the way south to meet the Bianshui River in Xuzhou, and then runs hand in hand to the Huaihe River. At this time, the Yellow River did not flow through Xuzhou. Bianshui and Sishui were one of the geographical factors that most affected Xuzhou from more than 2,600 years ago to 1194 AD. Most of the feudal dynasties in ancient China had their capitals in the Yellow River Basin, and Surabaya became the lifeline of transportation between the Jianghuai River and the Central Plains, playing a very important role in cultural exchanges and economic development between the north and the south. The geographical location of the Sishui River is very important in history. As early as two thousand years ago, "Yu Gong"<sup>14</sup> recorded that it "follows the river and sea and reaches Huaisi". Two rivers meet, one connects the east and the west, and the other connects the north and the south. This makes Pengcheng an important water transportation hub. Coupled with the protection of the surrounding highlands, building a city in this place surrounded by clear water is destined to become a transportation hub and military fortress.

From the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period to the Pre-Qin Dynasty, the mainstream culture in Xuzhou was Qilu Culture, which was transmitted from Surabaya. Sishui River, also known as Sishui, Sihe, Yuxia is the domain of Xuzhou. Because it originates from the southern foot of Dongmeng Mountain in Sishui County, Shandong Province, and has four sources concurrently, it is called Sishui River. The Sishui River passes through Qufu, Yanzhou, Yutai, Peixian, Liucheng and Xuzhou, then turns southeast and flows through Luliang, Xiapi, and joins the Yi and Shu rivers to enter the Huaihe River. The river is more than 400

<sup>13</sup> "Shui Jing Zhu" is a famous ancient Chinese geography book with a total of forty volumes. The author is Li Daoyuan in the late Northern Wei Dynasty.

<sup>14</sup> "Shang Shu Yu Gong" Chinese regional geography work. It was written by Yu the Great, so it is known as "Yu Gong".

kilometers long, with a drainage area of about 70,000 square kilometers. The confluence of Sishui River and Bianshui River is in the center of Xuzhou City. Of course, the ancient Sishui River Channel was 500-800 meters wide, with a partial width of 1,400 meters. It was an ancient river flowing through the Xuhuai land. It is the largest tributary of the Huaihe River, accounting for almost one-third of the Huaihe River Basin. The Biansi River Basin has convenient transportation. While irrigating farmland benefits the people, it also often overflows. "The Bianshui River and the Si River flow to the ancient ferry in Guazhou, and Wushan is a little sad." It not only points out the flow direction of Bian and Si, but also expresses the sadness on both sides of the river.

Confucius<sup>15</sup>, an educator, thinker and writer, had an indissoluble bond with Xuzhou because of it. Confucius went south along the Surabaya River many times, and the philosopher Laozi and Confucius exchanged academic ideas many times at "Pize", eighty miles northwest of Pengcheng. While watching the tide in Luliang, Xuzhou, Confucius faced the turbulent Sishui River and taught his students, "The dead are like a man who does not give up day and night."<sup>16</sup>, leaving this famous philosophical saying through the ages. The thinker Mencius met Tengzi in Pengcheng, Song Dynasty, and proposed the theory of "good nature" for the first time. After his death, Confucius was buried on the shore of Surabaya in the north of Qufu City.(Figure 5)



Figure 5 Han portrait stone records that Laozi and Confucius met at "Peize"  
Source: Photographed by Peng Baoin Xuzhou Han Dynasty Portrait Stone Museum,

2022

<sup>15</sup> Confucius, founder of Chinese Confucianism

<sup>16</sup> From the Analects of Confucius "Zihan"

Qin Shihuang<sup>17</sup> took the tripod from Surabaya. "The First Emperor passed through Pengcheng, fasted and prayed at the temple, and wanted to get out of Zhou Ding from Surabaya. Thousands of people asked for it without water, but they couldn't get it." After Dayu controlled the flood, he collected Jiu Mu's gold and cast the Jiuding, which later became a symbol of royal power. Qin Shihuang unified the six countries and obtained eight. According to legend at the time, one of them sank in the Surabaya River. In 219 BC, Emperor Qin Shihuang visited Xuzhou during his eastward patrol. He personally fished out the tripod from the Sishui River near Hong Village in Qinliang City. The tripod was fished out, but a dragon bit off the rope that tied the tripod to Zhou and lost it again. Just as Li Daoyuan wrote, "During the time of the First Emperor of Qin, the tripod was seen in the Si River. It was tied to the tripod, but before it came out, the dragon's teeth cut off its tie." The Sishui section of Xuzhou is still called "Dingfu".(Figure 6)

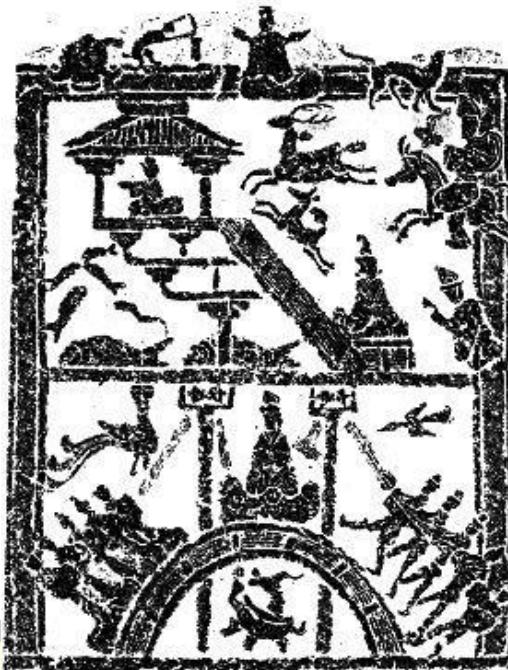


Figure 6 Han Dynasty portrait stone of Qin Shihuang fishing for cauldron from Surabaya

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao in Xuzhou Han Dynasty Portrait Stone Museum, 2022

At that time, the Yellow River had not yet changed its course. As the only large-scale natural river running north-south in northern China, the Surabaya River happened to intersect with the Bian River in Xuzhou. This unique landform created the special topography of Xuzhou City, which is surrounded by water on three sides: east, west, and north. The development of "building dam" technology during the

<sup>17</sup> Founder of the Qin Dynasty, the first Chinese monarch to be called emperor

Three Kingdoms period made water transportation more stable, and Xuzhou became the center of the Surabaya water network and the golden hub of northern water transportation.

This "water network" has played a huge role in Xuzhou's social and economic development. In terms of military affairs, you can take a boat from Xuzhou City to the north and follow the river all the way to the Yellow River. This was also the traditional marching route during the Northern Expedition in the Eastern Jin, Liu and Song Dynasties. To the west, you can reach Luoyang along the Bian River. To the south, you can enter Hangou from Huaiyin to the Yangtze River, or you can go out to the sea through the Huaihe River (the Huaihe River still has an outlet to the sea at this time). It can be said that as long as Xuzhou is captured, it is a springboard that can be reached quickly and directly from the southeast to the northwest. In terms of freight, because Xuzhou serves as the transportation center of Surabaya, the north-south transportation artery, water transportation not only promoted economic development, but also brought cultural exchanges to Xuzhou, making it one of the important social and economic centers at that time. Economic and cultural exchanges have brought ideological activity to Xuzhou, and Xuzhou's residential forms have also been influenced by the northern and southern cultures.

#### 1.2.2 The diversion of the Yellow River has maintained the rise and fall of Xuzhou settlements for thousands of years.

In the second year of Jianyan of the Southern Song Dynasty<sup>18</sup> (1128), in order to fight against the southern invasion of the Jin soldiers, the Song general Duchong blocked the water of the Yellow River to block the advance of the Jin soldiers. At Li Gudu in Hua County, people broke the embankment. The Yellow River "enters the Huaihe River from Si" and flows into the sea from the Huaihe River. The main stream of the Yellow River flows from northwest to southeast through the city of Xuzhou. However, this decision did not prevent the Jin soldiers from invading, and also caused a large number of civilian casualties. After repeated tug-of-war, the Jin Dynasty<sup>19</sup> basically established its rule over the area north of the Huaihe River. When the Mongols marched southward, the Jin Dynasty moved its capital to Kaifeng. At this time, Xuzhou became the "Gyeonggi" area east of the capital. (Figure 7 is the current flow diagram of the Huaihe River)



<sup>18</sup> The Southern Song Dynasty (June 12, 1127 - March 19, 1279) was the second period of the Song Dynasty

<sup>19</sup> The Jin Dynasty (1115-1234) was a feudal dynasty established by the Jurchen tribe in Chinese history that ruled northern and northeastern China.



Figure 7 Huaihe River Basin Water System: The red dotted line is the old course of the Yellow River

Source: Annotated by Peng Bao, 2023

The diversion of the Yellow River changed the fate of Xuzhou City and the people of Xuzhou. In the following hundreds of years, although after the Mongolian army invaded the south, Jin Aizong moved south to Henan, and General Wanyan Zhongde presided over the construction of Xuzhou City, the Xuzhou City was destroyed and rebuilt, and then destroyed again. Therefore, the ancient Xuzhou houses before the Ming Dynasty<sup>20</sup> have not been completely preserved. After the establishment of the Ming Dynasty, Xuzhou City was rebuilt on its original site, and the people began to live a relatively peaceful life. However, in the fourth year of Tianqi (1624) in the late Ming Dynasty, the Yellow River burst its banks in Xuzhou, and the city was destroyed by floods. After Emperor Chongzhen came to the throne, the floods receded and the city wall was rebuilt again. Xuzhou in the Qing Dynasty continued the pattern of the Ming Dynasty. The relative stability of the Ming and Qing regimes was a short golden period for the development of architecture. The Hubushan houses in Xuzhou have been preserved since the Ming and Qing Dynasties, leaving behind precious cultural heritage.

<sup>20</sup> The Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), a dynasty in Chinese history, was founded by Zhu Yuanzhang, Taizu of the Ming Dynasty. In the early days, Nanjing was the capital, and the capital was moved to Beijing during the reign of Emperor Chengzu of the Ming Dynasty.

From the man-made diversion of the Yellow River in the early Southern Song Dynasty in 1128 to the diversion of the Yellow River back to the north in the 19th century, the overall layout of ancient Xuzhou City revolved around the Yellow River. This period of time can be called the "Yellow River Era" of Xuzhou.

The Yellow River seizes the Huaihe River and flows into the sea. This rare turning point in a thousand years brings mixed blessings and sorrows to Xuzhou. On the one hand, the beast of the Yellow River flows southward, impacting the original Huaihe River system and bringing flood disasters to both sides. On the other hand, the Yellow River, which has abundant water, and the Bianshui and Sishui rivers that were originally considered precious, pale into insignificance in front of the Yellow River. The wider river bed of the Yellow River provides an ideal way for north-south water transportation. With the help of the Yellow River water transportation, in addition to disasters, the strategic position of ancient Xuzhou has also been restored.

In the Yuan Dynasty, Xuzhou began to become a north-south water transport hub. In the 26th year of the Yuan Dynasty (AD 1289), the Huitong River connecting Zhili and Shandong was opened, forming the prototype of today's North-South Grand Canal. As a result, Xuzhou's water transportation ushered in unprecedented development. People at the time recorded that "there was an endless stream of huge ships and huge ships." The north-south water transportation brought Xuzhou commercial prosperity that lasted for nearly 200 years. The lives of residents have also been greatly improved, and the construction of residential buildings has continued to develop.

In the Ming Dynasty, Xuzhou served as the hub of economic ties between the north and the Jiangnan region, and its urban economy made great progress. During the Hongzhi period, Choi Pu, a Korean, was shipwrecked and was rescued along the coast of Zhejiang and arrived in Beijing via the canal. He saw scenes in various places including Xuzhou along the line, and said: "To the north of the river, such as Yangzhou and Huai'an, and to the north of the Huaihe River, such as Xuzhou, Jining, and Linqing, the prosperity is no different from that in the south of the Yangtze River."

It can be seen that Xuzhou at that time was a prominent canal commercial port and an important node city in the national commercial network. The commercial and residential areas along the river have become bustling downtowns. Economic exchanges have also led to cultural exchanges, and the styles of Xuzhou's residential buildings already have southern elements.(Figure 8)



Figure 8 Ancient houses from the Ming Dynasty  
Source: Xuzhou Archives, 1941

Water transportation in the south of the city is not that developed, but it is the residence of the granary and taxation agency. All matters such as the docking and unloading of watercrafts and the payment of ship tax by merchants and citizens must be completed here. Affected by these factors, a large number of people and goods flow converge in the south of the city, making it the center of Xuzhou's urban economic life. (Figure 9 is the landmark building of shipping at that time: The Five-Province Thoroughfare Archway)

Also affected is social atmosphere. Before the Ming Dynasty, the folk customs in the Huaihe River Basin where Xuzhou was located were simple and vigorous. To exaggerate, the folk customs were fierce. For example, almost all the groups that rebelled in the Han and Ming dynasties were concentrated in the Huaihe River Basin. For example, after Sima Qian visited this area, he commented on the folk customs in Xuzhou in this way in "Historical Records"<sup>21</sup>. The husband comes from Pei, Chen, Runan and Nan counties in Huabei, which is also the Western Chu. Its customs are light, easy to get angry, thin, and less able to accumulate. This means that the folk customs here are strong, the people have bad tempers, the land is barren, and there is little accumulation. In Su Dongpo's eyes, Xuzhou's "people have grown up and are

<sup>21</sup> "Historical Records" is the first biographical general history in Chinese history written by Sima Qian (historian of the Western Han Dynasty) over a period of 14 years, and is the first of the "Twenty-Four Histories"

extremely courageous." Although more than a thousand years have passed, the folk customs have not changed much.



Figure 9 A monumental building built to celebrate the successful management of the Yellow River

Source: Xuzhou Archives, 1941

The rich social resources have made Xuzhou people more peaceful in their habits. "Xuzhou Chronicles" during the Jiajing period of the Ming Dynasty said: "However, it is well connected by boats and cars, and it is quite important. They often compete for traders and do nothing to cultivate mulberry trees. There are lazy farmers in the wild, and many scholars wander around and eat. They are fanned by the wind and are lost." It's so pure." This means that as the economy prospers, the people's character becomes gentler.

The reason comes from two aspects. On the one hand, commercial prosperity can improve people's living standards, enhance people's economic concepts, and soften social atmosphere. On the other hand, the prosperous business has attracted a large number of non-local industrial and commercial workers to Xuzhou. However, the locals are not good at doing business, and the daily necessities are operated by non-locals. The arrival and integration of business immigrants have a neutralizing effect on urban social atmosphere. However, after two hundred years of prosperity, Xuzhou's business took a sharp turn.

This change is still related to water. At the same time, the siltation of the Yellow River has brought another hidden danger. In the twenty-fifth year of the Jiajing reign of the Ming Dynasty (AD 1546), the Yellow River changed its course again, "taking Si and entering the Huaihe River", and then entered the sea again. This time, the sediment of the entire Yellow River has to pass through the winding and narrow river channel outside Xuzhou City, resulting in a large amount of sediment deposition, forming an "aerial hanging river", causing Xuzhou City to be threatened by floods at any time. Without a safe environment, business development will not be guaranteed.



Figure 10 Jiangsu Province in the Qing Dynasty, the shape of Xuzhou's territory was initially determined

Source: Tan Qixiang's "Historical Atlas of China"

In 1624, the Yellow River burst and Xuzhou was hit hard. Gui Youguang, who wrote "Xiang Jixuan Zhi", witnessed the tragic situation after the breach:

The Yellow River flows over Xu Fang, and the wilderness is rippled.

Thousands of people turned into fish, awe-inspiring in Gucheng.

After the flood, Xuzhou City was moved to Ershilipu, later referred to as "Erpu", where today's Tongshan New District of Xuzhou City is located. (Figure 10 shows the scope of ancient Xuzhou during the Qing Dynasty)



Figure 11 Lin Tanhua Mansion is located at the junction of Xuzhou and Suzhou  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

The sand content is large and the water volume is unstable. Although the Yellow River brought shipping convenience to Xuzhou, due to frequent siltation of the waterways along it, it affected the security of the economic lifeline of the government at that time. In order to completely solve these problems in the water transportation of the Yellow River in Xuzhou, in the 32nd year of Wanli, in 1604 AD, Li Hualong, the minister of the general river, presided over the excavation of the Ba River. This river channel, the Yahe River, leads from Xia Town in the north of Xuzhou, bypasses Xuzhou City, and flows into the Yellow River through Pizhou.

In this way, the Yellow River near Xuzhou City became a way for ships to return to the south in winter and spring, and a backup canal when the Jia River was shallow. In other words, Xuzhou's waterway has become a spare tire.

Although the project of moving the ancient Xuzhou city to Erpu was stopped and rebuilt on the original site. But some representative ancient houses appeared in this place (Figure 11).

The flooding of the Yellow River also had an important impact on the economic development and social structure of the Xuzhou area. Frequent floods have destroyed the originally fertile farmland and buildings in Xuzhou. Frequent floods have forced residents in the Xuzhou area to adapt to this unstable natural environment and develop a series of adaptive building technologies and strategies. People had to choose to build their houses on higher ground. At the same time, residential buildings often use higher bases and flood control facilities to reduce direct damage caused by floods.

The impact of the Yellow River on Xuzhou's residential buildings and lifestyles is multi-faceted, including direct impacts on construction technology and living habits, as well as long-term impacts on the local economy and social structure. Through an in-depth study of the impact of the Yellow River on Xuzhou's residential buildings, we can not only better understand how people in Xuzhou adapt to and coexist with the natural environment, but also see the tenacity and hard-working character contained in Xuzhou culture.

## 2. The impact of cultural changes caused by social environment on ancient Xuzhou houses

As an important regional cultural heritage, the formation and development of ancient Xuzhou houses are not only the natural evolution of architectural technology and aesthetic concepts, but also deeply affected by the social environment and cultural changes at that time. From ancient times to the present, the historical changes that Xuzhou has experienced, including political, economic, social and cultural changes, have affected the architectural features and cultural connotation of ancient Xuzhou houses to varying degrees.

Changes in the social environment have had an all-round impact on ancient Xuzhou houses. From political economy to social structure to cultural concepts, changes in every aspect have shaped the characteristics and development of Xuzhou houses to varying degrees. These changes not only reflect the social background of ancient Xuzhou houses in different historical stages, but also demonstrate the adaptability and innovation of Chinese traditional architecture and culture in the long history. By studying the development of ancient Xuzhou culture, we can have a deeper understanding of the historical changes of ancient Xuzhou houses.

### 2.1 Ancient Xuzhou settlements under the influence of Xu culture

In the Xia Dynasty in ancient times, Boyi assisted Dayu in flood control. Boyi's son Ruomu was granted the title of Xu (today's Pizhou area of Xuzhou City) and established the Xu State<sup>22</sup>. Afterwards, through the Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties, Xu was one of the vassal states. The county is located in the west of Jiangsu Province, on the lower reaches of the Huaihe River and on the west bank of Hongze Lake. The water network here is dense, warm and rainy. People first lived in nests, and later learned to build houses with stilts (Yu). The word "Xu" was based on the stilt house (Yu), adding stairs to make it easier to go up and down. This is the origin of the word "Xu". People who create this kind of building, or people who live in this kind of building, use Xu as their totem logo, and are known as the Xu family. This kind of building is also called Xu Zhai. This clan tribe established the Fang Kingdom at least at the beginning of the Xia Dynasty, called Xu Fang, also known as Xu Yi or Xu Rong. After developing and growing, it became the Xu State, one of the vassal states in the early Zhou Dynasty. It is one of the ancient nine states called Xuzhou.

Mr. Ding Shan, a famous contemporary scholar, believes: "Xuzhou got its name from Xu Fang." (Ding Shan's "Yu Gong Jiuzhou Tongkao") We think this conclusion is very correct, because Xu Fang (or Xu State) is the Xuzhou area. It is a famous ancient country in China, and it is easy for people to name subsequent places after it. Here, let's first talk about how Xu Fang evolved into Xuzhou. Xu Fang, according to legend, is a descendant of Boyi and a branch of the Dongyi tribe, known

<sup>22</sup> Xu State, a vassal state from the Xia Dynasty to the Western Zhou Dynasty. Boyi's son Ruomu was the founding monarch of Xu State.

as "Xu Yi" in history. Since ancient times, they have lived and developed in the Si River Basin. A country was established around the Shang Dynasty, named Xu Fang or Xu State. There is a record in "Zuo Zhuan" in the first year of Zhaogong: "Yu had three seedlings, Xia had Guan and Hu, Shang had Ju and Pi, and Zhou had Xu and Yan." It can be seen from this that Xu and Yan are great Eastern countries that can stand on equal footing with the Western Three Kingdoms.

In the early years of the founding of the Western Zhou Dynasty, both Xu and Yan actively participated in the war against the Western Zhou Dynasty. For example, "Yi Zhou Shu Zuo Luo Pian" says: "The third uncle and Yin Dongxu, Yan and Xiong and Ying rebelled." "Historical Records of the Lu Family" also said: "Guan, Cai, Wu Geng, etc., led the Huaiyi to rebel" (Xu, Yan, Xiong, and Ying are all Huaiyi tribes). Duke Zhou once led his troops to conquer the east for three years. "Yong Shi's Notes" in "The Rites of Zhou" said: "Bo Qin used the king's army to conquer Xu Rong." Bo Qin, the eldest son of Duke Zhou, and his father and son fought against the Eastern Yi countries for many years, but they never conquered these Yi countries. . Such as "The Book of the Later Han·Dongyi Biography" says. "Wu Yi declined, and the Eastern Yi flourished, so they moved to Huaidai and gradually settled in the middle of the country. Later, Xu Yi Qianhao led the nine barbarians to attack Zongzhou and reached the river in the west. King Mu was afraid of the blazing fire in the east, so he divided the eastern princes and ordered them to King Xu Yan is in charge of it. King Yan lives in the east of Huangchi, an area of 500 miles. He practices benevolence and righteousness and rules over thirty-six kingdoms on land."

This historical data shows that Xu State was still a huge country in the East during the era of King Mu. By the time of King Xuan of Zhou, another large-scale war broke out between the Xu State and the Zhou Dynasty. "Poetry·Daya·Changwu Pian" has specially recorded the details of this war. For example, "The king called Yin's family, and ordered Cheng Bo to divorce his father: Chen Xing left and right, warned my division to lead the Huaipu... Like thunder, Xu Fang was shocked...". Although this poem said that King Xuan of Zhou had achieved victory, it did not have a great impact on Xu Fang. Since then, Xu State has established many small satellite states.

The so-called "Qunshu" we see in "Spring and Autumn", such as Shu Liao, Shu Yong, Shu Jiu, Shu Gong, etc., are all important branches of Xu State. Shu and Xu are pseudonyms, and they are written as Xu in bronze inscriptions ("Xu·Wang Manding"), so people often mistake Xu as Shu, or use Shu as Xu. During the Spring and Autumn Period, Xu State was still quite prosperous and continued to fight with neighboring countries.

There is a poem in "Poetry·Song of Lu" called "The Boring Palace", which is a poem dedicated to praising Duke Xi of Lu for conquering Huaiyi. It once said: "Rong and Di are for punishment, Jing and Shu are for punishment." From this poem, we can see that in the eyes of the Lu people, Jing and Shu (Xu) are still equally important. In the late Spring and Autumn Period, the state of Wu became powerful and went to the Central Plains to compete for hegemony. In the 30th year of Duke Zhao of Lu, "in the twelfth month of winter, Wu defeated Xu. Xu Zi fled to Chu." Later, Wu was defeated by Yue, and the place of Xu was occupied by Qi.

"Spring and Autumn" "In the fourteenth year of Duke Ai (491 BC), "in the fourth month of summer, Qi Chen Heng took charge of his throne and placed it in

Shuzhou." "Historical Records·Qi Family": "Tian Chang (ie Chen Heng) held the official position in Xuzhou". "Historical Records Suoyin" says: "Xu Yinshu, whose courtesy name is Congren. "Zuo Zhuan" says Shu. Shu, Chen's town. "Shuowen" writes Xu. Xu, in Xuexian County."

These historical materials show that Xu has become the lower town of the Chen family of Qi State and was renamed Shuzhou. Shuzhou is Xuzhou. This is the earliest record that Xuzhou, with Xue as its capital, appears in the annals of Chinese history. "Bamboo Book Annals" says: "In the 30th year of King Hui of Liang Dynasty, Xiapi (the seat of Xu State) moved to Xue, hence the name Xuzhou." It can be seen that before the seat of Xu State was moved to Xue (Shangbi), Xue had long been renamed Xuzhou.

Several Xuzhou "Historical Records·Qi Family" found in ancient historical records. Tian Chang was in charge of Duke Jian's Xuzhou, "Tian Qi Family": "In the ninth year of King Xuan's reign, he and King Xiang of Wei met in Xuzhou, and in the tenth year, Chu besieged me in Xuzhou." "Warring States Policy Qi Ce": "King Wei of Chu was defeated in Xuzhou." The above Xuzhous are all Xuzhous with Xue as their capital. "Historical Records: Tian Qi Family" records the conversation between King Qi Wei and King Wei. "One of our officials, a Guizhou husband, was envoyed to guard Xuzhou. The Yan people came to worship at the north gate, and the Zhao people came to worship at the west gate. More than 7,000 families moved to follow them." The Xuzhou mentioned here was researched in detail by Jiang Yong, a famous scholar in the Qing Dynasty. He said: "Although Xu and Shu were connected in ancient times, Shuzhou is not the Xuzhou of Xue." "Historical Records·Zhengyi" says: "Xuzhou, the name of the place on the northwest boundary of Qi, is in Pingshu County, Dongping, Bohai County." This is the most accurate statement.

King Wei of Qi had a husband from Guizhou to guard Xuzhou, which was also Shuzhou. It was Dongpingshu, which was adjacent to Yan and close to Zhao, so Yan and Zhao were afraid of it and sacrificed their gates. If Qian Fu guards Xuzhou in Xuecheng and is far away from Yanzhao, why should he sacrifice his gate? (Jiang Yong's "Spring and Autumn Geography Facts" Volume 3, Ai Gong's Fourteenth Year) This piece of research has made it clear to King Qi Wei of Xuzhou.

"Qi Shijia": "Tian Chang held the official office in Xuzhou," and it was not this Xuzhou. This Xuzhou was located "east of Zou Lu" in ancient times. "State" was originally just a local administrative unit between cities. There are only 2,500 household registrations in a "state", but by the Warring States Period, "states" became vast administrative divisions, similar to the large administrative regions in the early days of our liberation.

"Yu Gong" and "Lu Shi Chun Qiu", which were written in the Warring States Period, refer to "zhou". The former refers to a large administrative division, and the latter refers to a country. "Yu Gong" said: "Haidai and Huai are Xuzhou." "Erya" said: "Jidong is called Xuzhou." The jurisdiction of Xuzhou starts from Mount Tai in the north, Huai River in the south, the sea in the east, and Jishui in the west. It is equivalent to an administrative division as large as the border areas of today's Jiangsu, Shandong, Henan and Anhui provinces.

"Lu's Spring and Autumn Annals: You Shi Lan" says: "Sishang is Xuzhou, Luye". Mr. Tong Shuye said: "However, according to "Lu Shi Chun Qiu You Shi Lan", we know that the division of Jiuzhou actually comes from the Zhou, Jin, Wei,

Qi, Lu, Yue, Jing, Qin, Yan and other countries in the Spring and Autumn Period." (Tong Shuye, Research on Zuo Zhuan, 2006).

From this, it can be seen that the Xuzhou mentioned in "Lu Shi Chun Qiu" refers specifically to the state of Lu. After Qin unified the six kingdoms, it established counties such as Xue, Dang, Sishui, Donghai, and Langya in the Xuzhou area of "Yu Gong". Due to their relatively advanced economy and culture, these counties became half of the eastern half of the Qin Empire. .

During the Western Han Dynasty, Xuzhou was also established in the Xuzhou area of "Yu Gong". In the early years of the Western Han Dynasty, his administration was located in Xue, and later moved to Xiapi. During the Eastern Han Dynasty, the seat of the Xuzhou Governor's Department was moved to Tancheng. Jurisdiction: Starting from Taishan and Langya in the north, to the Yangtze River in the south, the Si River Basin and the lower reaches of the Huaihe River are all owned by it. At the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty, Cao Cao moved the Xuzhou administration to the ancient Pengcheng. Since then, Xuzhou has become an administrative division centered on Pengcheng.

The historical status of ancient Xuzhou Xuzhou in the northwest of ancient Qi State had little influence on the history of our country, so we will not talk about it. Xuzhou to the east of Zou Lu was later included in the Xuzhou mentioned in "Yu Gong"; Xuzhou with Pengcheng as its capital was the continuation of Xuzhou in "Yu Gong". Therefore, we will only briefly talk about the status of Xuzhou in "Yu Gong" in the history of our country. Xuzhou mentioned in "Yu Gong" has Mount Tai in the north, Huaihe River in the south, the sea in the east and Jiji in the west. It is indeed a land with four fortresses. There are many famous mountains and rivers in the territory, and the geographical environment is very advantageous.

Xue, the capital of Xuzhou, has been the main base for manufacturing boats and vehicles since the Xia Dynasty. (Ancient boats and cars were more useful than modern trains and ships.) Xue was also located on the shore of Surabaya. It was the center of the east-west, north-south transportation route at that time, and was also the main meeting point of different clan cultures in ancient times. The residents here are easy to accept the nourishment of various cultures, so they are relatively advanced.

As the old saying goes, "the land is spiritual and the people are outstanding." Within the scope mentioned in "Yu Gong", many great historical figures have been produced. For example, the famous ancient scientists Xi Zhong and his son. Almighty craftsman Gongshu Ban. The founders of Daojia are Laozi and Zhuangzi. Confucius and Mencius, the founders of Confucianism. Mozi, the founder of Mohism. The great historian Zuo Qiuming, the great philologists Liu Xiang and Liu Xin, the great medical scientist Hua Tuo, the great politician Zhong Fei, the leaders of the peasant uprising Chen She, Wu Guang, Xiang Yu, Liu Bang and so on. They are all giants in the history of our country.

It can be seen from this that the Xuzhou area in "Yu Gong" made a huge contribution to the splendid culture of ancient my country. Not only that, ancient Xuzhou also had a very lofty strategic position in the history of our country. At that time, Xuzhou, headed by Xue, could go south through the Si River to the Yangtze River and Huaihe River to control Jingchu and Wuyue. Going upstream, it could control Qilu and Yanjin. Therefore, from the late Spring and Autumn Period, it became a "must battleground for military strategists."

During the Warring States Period, King Wei of Qi, Chu, Cao and other countries came to seize this strategic location. However, judging from the records in "Spring and Autumn", "Warring States Policy", "Historical Records" and other books, Xuzhou with Xue as the center was owned by Qi for most of the time.

Xu culture, as an important member of the ancient cultural system of Chinese civilization, its profound historical accumulation and unique regional characteristics have left an indelible mark on the architectural style, spatial layout and cultural connotation of Xuzhou houses. Xuzhou, located at the intersection of the Huaihe River Basin and the Yellow River Basin, was historically the center of Xu State and carries the essence of Xu culture. In this context, Xuzhou houses are not only a living space, but also an important carrier of the inheritance and development of Xu culture.

The character "Xu" in Xuzhou is a phonetic character, pronounced "xú". Oracle glyphs have not yet been discovered. During the Warring States Period, the left and right structure of the bamboo slips was roughly the same as modern glyphs, and the seal script was standardized. After the official change, the regular script was written slowly. Its original meaning is a stilt house with stairs. "Yu" is a type of building created by ancient people in areas with dense water networks in the south. Dry stilt houses, also known as stilt houses, evolved from nest houses. The left part of the character Xu means road. There is a road on stilts, and the road is naturally a staircase. Walking up the stairs is no better than walking down the flat ground. You must walk slowly.

The extended meaning of "Xu" is "walk slowly". "Sun Tzu: Military Struggle": It is as fast as the wind and as slow as the forest. (When the troops move quickly, they are like a strong wind blowing quickly; when they are moving slowly, they are like a forest slowly unfolding.) From walking slowly, it is extended to slowly. Such as, Xu Xu, Xu Feng, Xu Bu. "Zhuangzi: The Way of Heaven": There is no slowness or illness, what is obtained is in the hand and should be in the heart. (Neither fast nor slow, easy to use.) In the early days, all stilt houses called "Xu" had stairs. (Figure 12 )

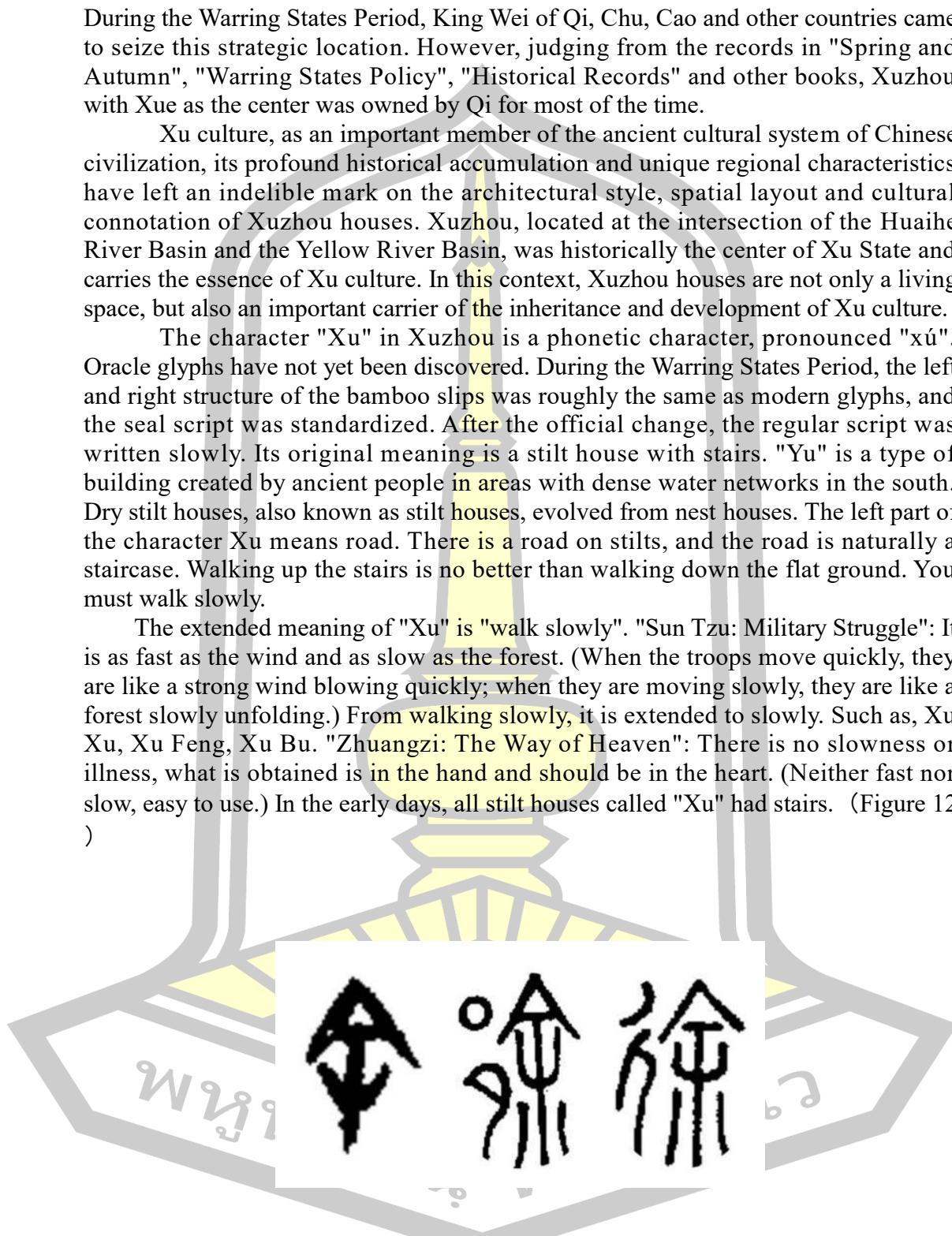


Figure 11 The word "Xu" was first used in oracle bone inscriptions as the shape of a house.

Source: Cui Xuefa: The formation of the ancient Xu tribe and the theory of the word "Xu"

From the perspective of architectural style, Xuzhou's residential buildings mostly use a combination of wooden structures and civil construction, which reflects Xu culture's wisdom in the use of natural resources and respect for the environment. Xuzhou houses are not only places to live, but also the material embodiment of Xu cultural spirit. They are of great significance to the study of traditional culture and social development in Xuzhou and even the entire Huaihai region. Through in-depth research on Xuzhou houses, we can further reveal the status and role of Xu culture in the ancient Chinese cultural system, and provide a unique perspective for understanding ancient Chinese regional culture.

## 2.2 The birthplace of Han culture and the formation of ancient Xuzhou residential forms

Ancient Xuzhou houses were influenced by many factors, but the most prominent one is Han culture. The culture of the Han Dynasty plays an important role in the development of Chinese architecture. With the continuous deepening of research on it, people's understanding of the Han culture has been deepened, and it has affected people's way of thinking and social concepts, which is reflected in all aspects of architecture and environment. Although Han culture has a long history, Xuzhou has unearthed rich resources of Han tombs, Han terracotta warriors and horses, and Han portrait stones, which can provide an in-depth analysis of the impact of Han culture on ancient Xuzhou houses.

### 2.2.1 The influence of the social background of the Han Dynasty on the ancient Xuzhou houses

The Han Dynasty<sup>23</sup> was a glorious era of economic and cultural prosperity in the history of our country. It inherited the tradition since the Shang and Zhou Dynasties, and greatly improved on the basis of the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period. The widespread application of iron smelting technology accelerated the consolidation and development of the feudal system and promoted the cultural unification of various places. Whether it is the Qilu culture in the east, the Yanzhao culture in the north, the Qin culture in the west, the Chu culture in the south, or the Wuyue culture in the southeast and the orthodox Zhou culture in the Central Plains. The traces of its culture are getting smaller and smaller, gradually integrating into a complete form of Han culture.

Due to the special historical origin of Xuzhou culture, it provides good opportunities for the intersection and integration of regional cultures, and the compatibility and adaptability of Xuzhou's Han culture with Qi culture. Xuzhou culture is also conservative and tends to be conservative. It does not advocate reform. The contradictions and mutual influences between various cultures have created rich connotations of culture, and also created the important feature of this culture, which is now the creativity-duality that overcomes everything. This gives culture a strong

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<sup>23</sup> The Han Dynasty (202 BC - 220 BC) was a unified dynasty after the Qin Dynasty. It was divided into two periods: the Western Han Dynasty and the Eastern Han Dynasty

"power" and important influence, which creates inherent conflicts in architecture. This is the most interesting quality of regional architectural culture. Because no other area of architecture has such strong internal contradictions as this one.

During the Han Dynasty, especially in the Eastern Han Dynasty, Luoyang was the prosperous imperial capital and Xuzhou was the hometown of the royal family.

Xuzhou has unique geographical conditions, and the richness of the cultural relics left behind is self-evident. Just from the pottery architectural artifacts unearthed from Han tombs in various places, we can see the breadth and depth of Han culture.

The culture of the Han Dynasty has important significance and status in the development of ancient Chinese architecture. With the continuous deepening of research on it, we can see the profound influence of Han culture on later architecture. Architecture is closely related to human material and spiritual life. The ancient architecture in Xuzhou has a long history, from the semi-crypt houses of the Neolithic Age to the pavilion buildings of the Han Dynasty, showing a long development path and reaching the first peak of ancient Chinese architecture. And had a profound impact on later generations.

None of the above-ground buildings of the Han Dynasty have survived in China today. Although no detailed physical information is available for review. What is somewhat comforting is that from the stone carvings, murals and architectural images of funerary objects excavated in Han tombs, we can roughly understand its general appearance, the stone palace of the Han Dynasty. However, a large number of Han portrait bricks, Ming vessels, etc. provide us with a lot of visual information about the architecture of the Han Dynasty. By comparing it with the literature of the Han Dynasty, we should be able to get a glimpse of a style of the Han Dynasty, which lasted for a long time. The image of architecture in the Han Dynasty should include the image of buildings in a considerable period before the Han Dynasty.

Based on this, for the architectural design of Han Dynasty residential buildings in Xuzhou, we can use Han Dynasty architecture and models as an important basis, and refer to pre-Han literature and materials as the basis for architectural design.

### 2.2.2 ancient Xuzhou houses in the Han Dynasty portrait stones

Han portrait stones<sup>24</sup> are artistic creations on stone by unknown painters or sculptors in the Han Dynasty. They are of various types and in various forms: portrait stones with veneers, painted portrait stones with surfaces, and ink lines. There are official script characters in the lower part, indicating that the Han portrait stone in the tomb contains various knowledge information. The famous historian Mr. Pian Bozan believes that "if these stone carvings are collected systematically, they can almost become an embroidered history of the Han Dynasty."<sup>25</sup>

Therefore, Han portrait stones have unparalleled historical value. Han portrait stones depict all aspects of social production and life of people in the Han Dynasty,

<sup>24</sup> Han portrait stones are actually the building blocks used to carve portraits on underground tombs, cemetery ancestral halls, tombs, temples and other buildings in the Han Dynasty.

<sup>25</sup> Jian Bozan.(1999). *History of Qin and Han*. Peking University Press .

reflecting the society, politics, life and art at that time. Many of the Han portrait stones depict architectural images.

Chinese ancient architecture is the most artistically charming architectural form. There are various decorations, from dragons and phoenixes to birds and beasts, from gods to ordinary people, from the sun, moon and stars to mountains and rivers, everything. It can be said to be all-encompassing and everything. There are rich architectural patterns in the architectural portrait stones of the Han Dynasty. It is easy to realize that the architectural images in the Han Dynasty portrait stones are quite "schematic". It is not entirely a realistic representation of buildings in real life, but a high degree of abstraction of buildings in real life. Although the authenticity of the buildings it represents is very limited, it is still an important material for us to study the architecture of the Han Dynasty. (Figure 13)



Figure 13 "Welcome and Banquet Picture" in the Han Dynasty Portrait Stone in Honglou  
Ancestral Hall, Xuzhou

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2022

Research has shown that the pictures in the Han Dynasty stone carvings are one-dimensional expressions of three-dimensional space. They are static paintings that express the changing content of time and space (Figure 14). The individual (or limited group) architectural image of the Han Dynasty that it represents must be an abstract image of the actual architectural courtyard space. Therefore, when we examine Han Dynasty stone portraits, we should follow the common rules of various arts in our country during the Han Dynasty, and start from the perspective of "one-point (or scattered-point, or multi-point) perspective", that is, from the perspective of a three-dimensional space scene.

The picture below shows the Han portrait stone in the courtyard of the Han Dynasty. We can clearly see the proportions and spatial layout of the Han Dynasty courtyards from the composition. This layout should be based on functionality and

standardization. It provides a reference for the future development of the spatial layout of ancient Xuzhou houses.

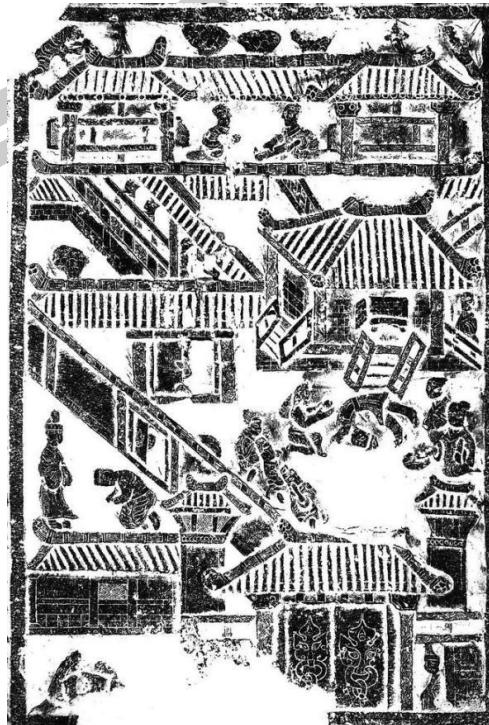


Figure 12 Spatial layout of residential buildings in Han Dynasty portrait stones

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2022

It can be seen from the ancient residences of the Han Dynasty in the Han Dynasty stone portraits that the residences of the Han Dynasty were influenced by the living customs, ideological and philosophical concepts, social and economic development, and construction technology level at that time. Although two thousand years have passed, the architectural style of ancient Xuzhou houses after that has obvious Han Dynasty architectural style.

### 2.2.3 Ancient Xuzhou houses in Ming dynasties

In addition to Han portrait stones, the architectural features of ancient Xuzhou houses of the Han Dynasty may be seen in the Ming vessels of the Han Dynasty.

ພ້ອນ ປນ ຄີໂຕ ຂ່າວ



*Figure 13 Pigsty in the Han Dynasty.*

Source: Screenshot from Xuzhou Museum website, 2023

Ming utensils (Ming, Tongming, what the ancients called the underworld and the underworld) are various items buried in ancient tombs in my country that simulate life and production. "Architectural artifacts" are widely used in burials in tombs (Figure 15). On the one hand, there is the macro background that cliff cave tombs in the Han Dynasty were gradually replaced by brick and stone chamber tombs, and on the other hand, the social and economic development of the Han Dynasty could no longer meet the relative needs of the funeral system. At that time, there was neither the ability nor the need to build a brick chamber tomb that could fully meet the tomb owner's real-life architectural requirements. Otherwise its scale would be unimaginable. After the middle of the Western Han Dynasty, the social and economic development declined relatively, so that in the tombs of the middle of the Eastern Han Dynasty, many masonry and false ear chambers, false doors, etc. appeared.

From the Ming vessels of the Han Dynasty, we can see the importance of houses to the people at that time. The architectural artifacts appearing in tombs should be the materialized expression of the architectural images depicted in early tomb paintings. Therefore, the architectural artifacts should also be the materialization of the buildings depicting architectural images in early tombs, using reduced material funerary objects-architectural models to express people's ideas. At the same time, we should also realize it. Due to limitations in the materials used, production level, tools, economic capacity, and ideas (including artistic ideas), etc. The architectural artifacts themselves are only relatively realistic imitations of actual buildings, with a certain degree of abstraction.

The ancient houses of the Han Dynasty have the characteristics of the Han Dynasty landlord's manor, which determines that they have multiple relatively independent "building units". There are a variety of productive buildings in varying

numbers to meet the requirements of self-sufficient life, as well as defensive, recreational and defensive buildings for safe living. The architectural artifacts buried with them are the symbols of these buildings.

The rich details of Han Dynasty houses are reflected in the Ming vessels. Such as stoves, basins, pots, cases, cups, cosmetic boxes, eating utensils, furniture, farm tools, hand tools, coins, treasures, paddy fields and ponds, cars, boats, various human and animal figurines, architectural models, etc. Architectural artifacts are various architectural models that are almost realistic among the artifacts buried in ancient tombs. Including warehouses, male rooms, kitchens, enclosures, pavilions, nets and even groups of courtyards.

Ming vessels display the architectural characteristics of the Han Dynasty and are the physical carriers of the architectural culture of the Han Dynasty. The houses of the Han Dynasty show that the construction technology at that time had reached a relatively high level. Residential houses are not only places to live, but also integrated with labor and breeding.

#### 2.2.4 Characteristics of residential buildings in the Han Dynasty

The residential buildings of the Han Dynasty have a rough, vigorous and vigorous temperament, forming the special style of residential buildings in northern my country. It gives people a prominent impression, which gives great inspiration to the design concept. The design can be recreated from the themes of these numerous pictures.

The architecture of the Han Dynasty also has significant features in form. Most buildings in the Han Dynasty had long and narrow planes (except for ceremonial buildings), with an odd number of bays and bright rooms that were slightly wider than others. The facade is divided into three sections, including the base, body and roof. The foundations of high-rise buildings are very high. In the early Western Han Dynasty, some were tens of meters high. Later, it gradually decreased. In the Eastern Han Dynasty, the foundations of individual high-rise buildings were generally several meters high. The platform base is mostly made of rammed earth and is covered with patterned bricks. The walls in the south are mostly made of wood-framed mud walls, which are thinner; in the north, they are mostly made of rammed earth walls, which are not only thicker but also slightly tapered upward. Xuzhou is located on the northern edge, so it should have both.

The roof forms were very complete in the Han Dynasty, including Si'a, Xieshan, Xingshan, Zanjian, flat roof, etc. In addition, there are also double eaves and stepped roofs. In terms of color, the buildings of the Han Dynasty were painted with brackets, beams, and ceilings; the walls were painted with purple or painted with murals; the official offices were painted with yellow; and the carved floor tiles and roof tiles were also colored according to the material. In addition, the shape of the brackets gradually became complete and appeared in large numbers in the architectural forms of the Han Dynasty with its unique, distinctive and diverse features. It can be judged from the records in the Han Dynasty stone portraits that the etiquette requirements for residential buildings at that time were not as strict as those in later dynasties. The forms of residential buildings were rich, which provided a foundation for the development of residential buildings in the future.

At the same time, the architectural style of ancient residential buildings in the Han Dynasty more prominently presents the local tonal tradition and the overall national spirit of China. It summarizes the experience in different architectural forms and technologies and lays the foundation for the architecture of the Han Dynasty. At the same time, society in the Han Dynasty became more prosperous, and buildings and cities began to take on all the characteristics of a mature architectural system. At the same time, the architectural thought of the Han Dynasty created a magnificent momentum, and the pursuit of majestic, grand and heroic character in architecture is also a way to embody the thought of the Han Dynasty.

The residential buildings found in Han tombs retain the characteristics of harmonious layout, broad shapes, high-rise buildings with multiple floors, and elegant decoration in form. In terms of connotation, one aspect reflects the national customs of the past Han people who were restrained and focused on spiritual totems. The architectural style and spiritual connotation of ancient houses in the Han Dynasty have guiding significance for the future development of houses.

### 2.3 Xuzhou residential settlements under the canal economy

The community form of residential buildings is deeply influenced by the canal. The emergence of canal residential settlements is the result of the long-term construction of the Grand Canal. It interacts significantly with the canal and is obviously related to water transportation, hydrological environment, regional economy, social culture, etc. along the canal, showing the characteristics of symbiotic evolution. Research on residential settlements focuses on the formation and development of urban agglomerations, individual towns, canal commercial streets, etc. along the Yunchun River.

Research shows that residential buildings are affected by internal and external factors such as the natural environment, social culture, canal functions, and national policies, and then evolve into traffic gathering types, wharf gathering types, granary guarding types, river engineering-generated types, etc. However, previous studies have mostly focused on practical development and protection research. They have not paid enough attention to the value of the Grand Canal, which is an important consideration in the formation and evolution of the residential pattern along the canal. They have not yet clarified and revealed the deep logic between the residential pattern and the changes of the canal. These are all problems. As a result, theoretical research on canal development and residential development lags behind practical development.



Figure 14 Yaowan Ancient Town  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2022

The Grand Canal is an important cultural heritage corridor in my country, and the study of the spatiotemporal pattern of linear residential communities is of great significance to the construction of the Grand Canal Cultural Belt. The Xuzhou section of the Grand Canal is located in the middle of the canal. It has historically been an important water transport route, a military center, and a gathering place for merchants. There are many types of residential buildings along the canal in Xuzhou City, Peicheng, Yaowan, Gupi and other places along the line.(Figure 16)

### 2.3.1 The evolution process of the spatial pattern of Xuzhou Canal town

(1) A discrete urban spatial pattern with Biansi as the main axis (from Pre-Qin to Song Dynasty). During the Pre-Qin period, Hangou and Honggou were opened one after another. Connecting the Si, Sui, Ji, Ru, Ying, Wu and other rivers between the Yangtze and Huaihe Rivers, the Xuzhou Biansi water system was embedded in the early national transportation network, and canal houses began to flourish along Biansi and its tributaries. Among them, Pengcheng at the intersection of Bian and Si became the water transport hub of the Jianghuai region and gradually developed into a commercial city. Xiapi, where Yisiwu meets, and Peicheng, where Fengsi meets, have become regional towns.

The Grand Canal was opened in the Sui and Tang Dynasties<sup>26</sup>, and Biansi entered the national water transportation system with canal auxiliary channels. Moreover, Xuzhou was located in "the key point between the north and the south, where the safety of the cities in Kyoto lies." Towns such as Pengcheng, Xiapi, Dangshan, Xiaoxian, Guangqi, Cicheng, Huling, Liuxian, Luxian, Sishuiting and other towns competed for development. In addition, it is affected by the prosperous Biansi

<sup>26</sup> The Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal is an extension of the Sui Grand Canal, rerouted and straightened. It is the longest and largest ancient canal in the world.

Channel logistics, passenger flow and information flow. Small towns such as Qishui, Liguojian, Wuyuan, and Fengxian have also appeared along the tributaries of Qishui, Wushui, and Fengshui. As a result, a discrete canal residential spatial pattern is formed with Biansi as the main axis and supplemented by tributaries such as Fengshui, Wushui and Yishui. Because of the canal, Xuzhou's residential buildings have taken on new forms. The economic function of the canal also directly affects the social function of the residences along the coast. In some important canal nodes, due to frequent trade and numerous ships, some houses not only have residential functions, but also have multiple functions such as commerce and storage.



Figure 15 The combination of soy sauce garden and residential houses in Yaowan Ancient Town

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2022

The design of these residential buildings often pays more attention to the flexible use of space, such as halls that can be used for business negotiations, warehouses that can be directly entered by ships, etc.(Figure 17)

Dual-axis urban spatial pattern with Huang Siyun Road and Zhongyun Road as the main axes (Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties)

In the Yuan Dynasty, the Grand Canal was cut and straightened, and the Beijing-Hangzhou Canal passed directly through Xuzhou. The status of the Xuzhou Transport Road was unprecedentedly elevated and included in the China Grand Canal system, becoming the golden section of the canal. Xuzhou, which straddles the north-south hub of the Grand Canal, has once again gained momentum for development. With the development of the economy, residential buildings have also exchanged styles with those from the north and the south.

During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, Xuzhou "made ships come and go all the time, and there were countless civilian ships and merchant ships. There was no way to lead them, and this was the most important place." Cui Pu praised the towns on both sides of the Xuzhou Grand Canal in "Piaohailu". "The richness and abundance of Fu are comparable to those in the south of the Yangtze River." Xia

Town, Xin'an (today's Xin'an Village, Suining), Tushan Town, Fangcun Station, Luliang Station, Shouxian Station, Jiucheng and other towns and water and land stations along the Huangsi Yun Road have become important distribution centers for materials.

After the opening of the Central Canal, small towns on the east line such as Yaowan, Dakou, Tushan Town, and Maoerzhuang, whose main functions were industrial and commercial trade and cargo distribution, rapidly emerged. As a result, a dual-axis urban spatial pattern is formed with Huang Siyun Road and Zhongyun Road as the main axes. Xuzhou is the center of the north and south. Businessmen from all over the area conduct business activities and buy land to build houses in the Xuzhou area. Take Yaowan Ancient Town as an example. Due to the canal water transport economy, a large number of merchants operate water transport business here. It not only brings economic development, but also integrates culture here. On the basis of combining the local residential characteristics of Xuzhou, businessmen also integrate the architectural characteristics of their hometown, enriching the architectural style of ancient Xuzhou residential buildings.(Figure 18)



Figure 16 Shanxi Guild Hall in Yaowan Ancient Town

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2022

(3) Axial urban spatial pattern with the Central Canal as the main axis and the original Huangsi Yun Road as the auxiliary line (1855-1949)

In 1855, the Yellow River migrated northward<sup>27</sup>, and many sections of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal were short of water and silted up. In 1901, water transportation was abolished, and the national water transportation system suffered

<sup>27</sup> In the fifth year of Xianfeng in the Qing Dynasty (1855), the Yellow River changed its course at the Tongwaxiang breach in Lanyang, Henan (today's Lankao County), swung back to the north again, passed through the current river course, and flowed north into the Bohai Sea.

heavy losses. The old Yellow River and Surabaya waterways in Xuzhou were blocked and difficult to navigate. However, the navigable Middle Canal is still used for inland passenger and inland river transportation. Playing an important role in freight transportation, the development of canal residential buildings varies significantly. "Little Shanghai in the North" canal residential areas such as Yaowan, Dakou, and Maoerzhuang have maintained their development vitality, while other canal residential areas such as Peicheng, Gutou City, Fangcun, Xin'an, and Liangzhai have fallen into the "yellow sand and hopeless, imprisoned" state. It is a situation where there is no bounds and few boats and cars can pass through it.

The Jinpu Railway in 1911 and the Longhai Railway in 1925 were completed successively. Liguo Town along the Jinpu Railway, Dayushu Village (today's Yunhe Town in Pizhou) adjacent to the Pixian Station of the Longhai Railway, and Xuzhou City at the intersection of Longhai and Jinpu were acquired. Rapid development. At this time, railways replaced canals as the main mode of economic transportation. The economy around the canal has been severely affected, and the development of surrounding residential buildings has also stagnated or even regressed.

(4) A network-like urban spatial pattern with the Beijing-Hangzhou Canal as the main axis and the old Yellow River as the auxiliary axis (1949-2011)

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, in order to develop north-south waterway transportation and promote the transportation of coal from the north to the south, the state adopted the strategy of "simultaneous efforts to control water and improve transportation", dredging the Beijing-Hangzhou Canal, regulating the abandoned Yellow River, opening up weak sections of the Beijing-Hangzhou Canal, the Huxi Channel, and building ports. At the wharf, the ancient Xuzhou Grand Canal has been reborn, becoming an important hub for national secondary comprehensive waterways and inland water transportation, and integrating into the national canal system; at the same time, excavation and treatment of Xuhong River, Minbian River, Xupei Canal, Zhengji River, Fangting River, Pi Cangfen flood channel and other regional waterways, Xuzhou's waterway network is becoming increasingly perfect, and canal towns are gradually recovering.

Peicheng, Tashan Town, Maocun Town, Liuxin Town, Longgu Town and other towns along the weak reaches of the Beijing-Hangzhou Canal and the Huxi Channel are rapidly rising. Xuzhou City, Fangcun Town, Gupi Town, Liangzhai Town, etc. rely on the comprehensive management of the old Yellow River. Once again developing together, Wanzhai Port, Mengjiagou Port, Pizhou Port, etc. have injected new momentum into canal towns. As a result, a network-like urban spatial pattern is formed with the Beijing-Hangzhou Canal as the main axis and the old Yellow River as the auxiliary axis. The ancient houses along the canal have also received attention and been protected during the joint construction and layout of the town.

### 2.3.2 Characteristics of canal residential forms

Early towns were often built near rivers. Xuzhou has many water systems, developed shipping, and canal towns are born from water. Specifically, before the Song Dynasty, the Biansi River system was an important water transportation channel connecting the north and the south. Xuzhou canal towns such as Pengcheng, Xiapi, Peicheng, Lvxian, Cicheng, Guangqi, and Dapeng Town prospered through the Biansi

River. After the opening of the Beijing-Hangzhou Canal in the Yuan Dynasty, canal towns such as Fangcun and Xiazhen began to rise. After the opening of the Zhonghe River, canal towns on the east line such as Yaowan, Dakou, and Maoerzhuang appeared.

After the emergence of railways, canal towns such as Xuzhou, Dayushu Village in Pi County (today's Yunhe Town), and Liguo Town were reborn relying on the development of multimodal transport at river ports. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, with the opening and management of the fragile reaches of the Grand Canal and the Huxi Channel, canal towns such as Tashan Town, Liuxin Town, and Maocun Town emerged rapidly. From the perspective of the origin of towns, Xuzhou canal towns mostly developed and grew from small settlements such as ports and docks. They have an indissoluble bond with water and show the spatial rootedness of distribution along the transportation. The impact of different economic development models on residential forms is also reflected in residents' daily lifestyles. The lives of people living along the canal are closely related to the canal, and they are engaged in water-related occupations such as fishing, shipping, and aquatic product processing. Therefore, the design and layout of residential buildings will also take these special living needs into consideration, and the volumes are much larger than ordinary residential buildings.

As an important water conservancy project, the canal had a huge impact on the economic and social development of ancient Xuzhou, and the form and style of ancient Xuzhou houses also changed accordingly. Xuzhou is located in the center of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal. The canal promotes the exchange and integration of cultures between the north and the south in the Xuzhou area. The residential style of Xuzhou has both the strength of the north and the elegance of the south.

The existence of the canal has an all-round impact on the form of residential buildings in the areas along the line. From layout to architectural style, to social functions and lifestyles, they all deeply reflect the canal's shaping power of human living environment and cultural life. By studying these residential houses along the canal, we can not only understand the social and economic development of ancient China, but also deeply understand the important position and influence of canal culture in Chinese history.



### 3. Changes in ancient Xuzhou houses before and after the founding of New China

After the founding of New China, major changes have taken place in the social system and environment. Starting from the Opium War in 1840, China was invaded for nearly a hundred years. Finally, we won national independence through hard struggle. From a semi-feudal and semi-colonial society to a socialist country. The national political system, land property rights policy and economic form have all undergone fundamental changes. The historical and cultural changes in modern China can be fully witnessed in the changes in ancient houses and the social culture behind them. During this period, with changes in national policies, economic development, and updates in social concepts, ancient Xuzhou folk houses also experienced a process from being marginalized to being valued and utilized again. It not only reflects the profound changes in Xuzhou society, but also highlights the contradiction between China's urban development and cultural inheritance.

#### 3.1 Historical status and functional changes of ancient houses

Although ancient houses are representatives of traditional residential forms, their status and functions have been changing under different social backgrounds. Years of war have damaged many buildings, resulting in a shortage of government offices and residential buildings in Xuzhou. Therefore, many well-preserved ancient houses were expropriated and became government agencies and workers' dormitories.

The Ming and Qing architectural complex in Hubu Mountain is the most representative architectural complex among ancient Xuzhou folk houses, and its identity has also changed under this social background.

Hubu Mountain Labor Lane is not the east and west road, but a winding road surrounding the southern slope of Hubu Mountain. Enter Labor Lane, first go south, then turn west. The hillside at the turn is the Dongting Guild Hall. After the Cultural Revolution, it was once changed to the Yunlong District Cultural and Educational Bureau, and later an air-raid shelter was dug. (Li Shiming, Vice President of Xuzhou Municipal Historical Records Association, Xuzhou, 2022)

In fact, Laodong Alley is in the shape of an irregular "T". The alley on the west side of Jiefang Road Primary School at the turning point is also called Laodong Alley. It is about 100 meters long and extends to Lianhuajing Alley. Going west from the turning point is the famous Hubu Mountain Old Salt Store in Xuzhou.

The Old Salt Store is not only a place for selling salt, but also a salt management agency in Xuzhou. During the Guangxu period, the "old salt shop" was called "Shandong Province Salt Industry South Transportation Bureau"; after the Revolution of 1911, it was renamed "Shandong Province Xuzhou Salt Transportation Bureau Embassy and Tongshan Five Salt Office". If we count from 1912, the history of the old salt shop has been nearly a hundred years; if the Tongshan Salt Service was taken over by the government in the 19th year of Guangxu, it has been more than a hundred years. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, an ancient residence has been used as an office location.

Further west from the old salt store is the famous Zhuangyuan Mansion. Zhuangyuan Mansion faces south and has four courtyards with a construction area of more than 6,000 square meters. Labor Lane was formerly known as Zhuangyuan Mansion, which was named after Li Zhuangyuan lived here. But in the later period, because there was no one to manage it, many poor people lived in this place. Therefore, this Zhuangyuan Mansion was later called Pingmin Alley. In 1971, Civilian Alley was changed to Labor Alley. (Chen Daye, resident of ancient houses, Hubushan, 2022)

There are two alleys on the T-shaped vertical axis of Labor Lane extending to the north, that is, to Hubu Mountain, also called Labor Lane. The alley on the east side of the old salt shop is one of them, and the entire alley is called No. 13 Labor Lane. Because every house in the entire alley is called No. 13 Labor Lane, the courier guy has to call to confirm when he delivers the courier. Further to the west is the Zhuangyuan Mansion opposite Xinshahou Community. It looks dilapidated now. But the solemnity of the No. 1 Scholar's Mansion can still be felt. We have been to the Zhuangyuan Mansion before. The house is very high and very cool. (Chen Juan, Secretary of the Party Committee of Hubushan Community, Pengcheng Subdistrict Office, Yunlong District, 2022)

At the end of the last century, around 2000. Because of the rise of the real estate industry, these dilapidated old houses were considered worthless. The local government sold the land to developers for economic benefits. Many valuable ancient houses have been forcibly demolished. Although China has already enacted a cultural relics protection law and the society has already become aware of cultural relics protection, local governments still vacillate between immediate economic benefits and cultural protection with no short-term benefits.

Liu Family Courtyard, located on the eastern slope of Hubu Mountain in Xuzhou, was the property of Liu Qixun<sup>28</sup>, a senior Kuomintang general during the Republic of China period, in Hubu Mountain in Xuzhou. Jiang Jingguo<sup>29</sup> and Liu Qixun were good friends and used this room to work for three years. During this period, Jiang Jingguo's wife, Jiang Fangliang, returned from the Soviet Union and lived here for a period of time accompanied by Mrs. Liu Qixun. The Chinese Civil War began in 1945. After the Battle of Huaihai, the Kuomintang was defeated and left Taiwan. Liu Qixun also went to Taiwan. Therefore, after the founding of New China, this place has been used as a dormitory for teachers of Hubushan Primary School. (Figure 19)

<sup>28</sup> Liu Qixun, native of Tongshan, Xuzhou, Lieutenant General of the Kuomintang

<sup>29</sup> Chiang Ching-kuo, the eldest son of Chiang Kai-shek. In May 1978, he was elected as the sixth "President" of Taiwan's "National Government". In 1984, he was re-elected as the seventh "President". He died of illness in Taipei on January 13, 1988.



Figure 17 Liu Family Courtyard.  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2022

In 1999, this land in Hubu Mountain was sold to developers for demolition and reconstruction, and the original residents have moved away. For developers, demolition pressure in such locations is high. Therefore, the plan was to move quickly and demolish the Liu Family Courtyard and the adjacent Yan Family Courtyard overnight. After local cultural relic protection volunteers in Xuzhou learned about it, they took the initiative to carry out protection actions.

After I heard about it, I immediately went to the local cultural bureau and reported the matter to the leader in charge of cultural relics protection: please ask the cultural relics protection unit to provide a certificate, and I will move in to stop their vandalism. The leader agreed and wrote the materials immediately. Because we were afraid that if our couple moved into the Liu Family Courtyard, it would affect the progress of the demolition. The developer became so angry that he burned two century-old pomegranate trees in the courtyard with sulfuric acid to demonstrate to me. The Pengcheng Evening News reported the incident the next day, attracting public attention. Under the pressure of public opinion, this important historical building was spared. It was only recently that the conservation plan for the building came out. I have lived here for 13 years. (Sun Tongyi, cultural relics protection expert, Xuzhou, 2022)

Although ancient Xuzhou folk houses carry culture and history, their value is different in different periods and to different groups. For the government, there is pressure on urban planning and economic development. Maybe after demolition, it can create jobs and promote business development. For developers, it's just business. For cultural protectors, ancient Xuzhou folk houses are the epitome of Xuzhou's history and culture. Protecting ancient folk houses will leave a cultural context for the city.

However, as some seemingly worthless ancient houses are rediscovered and repositioned, the cultural protection awareness of local governments and ordinary people is also constantly increasing. These ancient houses still use their own historical and cultural value to fulfill their educational functions.

Cui Tao's former residence is one of the few relatively intact residential buildings in Xuzhou, and it once faced the risk of being demolished. However, due to the confrontation between civil protection groups and developers and the legal effect of the national cultural relics protection law, it was finally protected and revitalized.

The developer originally planned to demolish this precious historical heritage overnight. In order to protect Cui Tao's former residence, experts, scholars and citizens in Xuzhou sent materials signed by more than a thousand people to leaders at all levels including the Xuzhou Municipal Party Committee, Municipal Government, Municipal People's Congress and CPPCC, and confronted the developer on site to prevent the demolition. And contacted the Chinese state media CCTV to invite them for interviews and reports. The Xuzhou Municipal Party Committee and Municipal Government pledged to resolutely protect these two cultural relics. In 2006, Cui Tao's former residence was announced by the State Council as a national key cultural relic protection unit.

### 3.2 The identity transformation and contemporary value of ancient residences



Figure 18 Cui Tao's former residence  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2022

Cui Tao's<sup>30</sup> former residence is the first ancient residence in Xuzhou to become a national-level cultural relic protection unit. This turning point made the Xuzhou Municipal Government realize the social value of ancient houses. In this way,

<sup>30</sup> Cui Tao (?-1854), courtesy name Hongqiao, was a Jinshi in the 9th year of Daoguang reign of the Qing Dynasty (1829), and became the prefect of Huaiqing, Anhui Province. Cui Tao's residence was built during the Jiajing period of the Ming Dynasty (1522-1566).

relevant plans for the protection of ancient houses were formulated and repaired.(Figure 20)



Figure 19 In the Li Family Courtyard, the gate incorporates elements of Roman columns.

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2022

With the further development of social economy and the rise of tourism, the use of ancient houses has also begun to change. On the one hand, ancient houses and ancient villages have become important resources for attracting tourists. The development of ancient dwelling tourism not only revitalizes ancient buildings, but also provides new impetus for local economic development. On the other hand, more and more ancient houses are being transformed into B&Bs, restaurants, art studios, etc. in accordance with the requirements of cultural relic protection (The Li Family Courtyard in Figure 21 has now become a coffee shop.). These emerging functions give ancient residences new vitality and allow traditional architecture and modern lifestyles to coexist harmoniously. The successful case of protecting ancient houses in Xuzhou City also provides a model for the protection of ancient houses in surrounding cities. The protection of ancient Xuzhou folk houses has achieved a tripartite balance between cultural relics protection, historical education and inheritance, and economic development.

Although the protection and utilization of ancient houses has achieved certain results, it still faces many challenges. For example, how to unearth the cultural memories and traditions carried by ancient houses and continue to pass them on in the contemporary era. How to find a balance between protection and development, and how to deal with the relationship between the protection of ancient houses and the living needs of local residents. How to effectively use modern scientific and technological means to repair and protect ancient houses is an issue that needs to be solved urgently.

First of all, the value of ancient folk houses cannot be viewed only as a whole. An ancient dwelling is a physical space. The various architectural decorations, spatial layouts, and cultural connotations in this space are symbols that record the scenes of that time by different people under different cultural backgrounds. How to convey this history to contemporary people through translation is of great significance to the inheritance of local culture and the continuation of the context.

Secondly, the balance between protection and development is one of the most difficult issues in the protection of ancient houses. In some areas, in order to pursue economic benefits, the over-development of ancient residence tourism not only destroys the original style of ancient residences, but also affects the normal life of local residents. Therefore, how to protect ancient houses while rationally developing and utilizing them and maintaining the harmony between ancient houses and their surrounding environment is an issue that needs to be seriously considered.

Then, the contradiction between ancient houses and the living needs of contemporary residents is also a difficult problem. With the improvement of living standards, people's requirements for the living environment are getting higher and higher, and many traditional ancient houses can no longer meet the needs of modern life. How to find a balance between improving living conditions and protecting traditional architectural features, so as to meet the living needs of residents without destroying the historical and cultural value of ancient houses, is a problem that needs to be solved.

Finally, the application of modern technology in the protection of ancient houses is also an area worth exploring. With the development of science and technology, many new technologies and new materials are widely used in the protection and restoration of ancient buildings. How to effectively use these technical means to ensure the structural safety and functionality of ancient houses while retaining their historical and cultural characteristics requires in-depth research and practice by professionals.

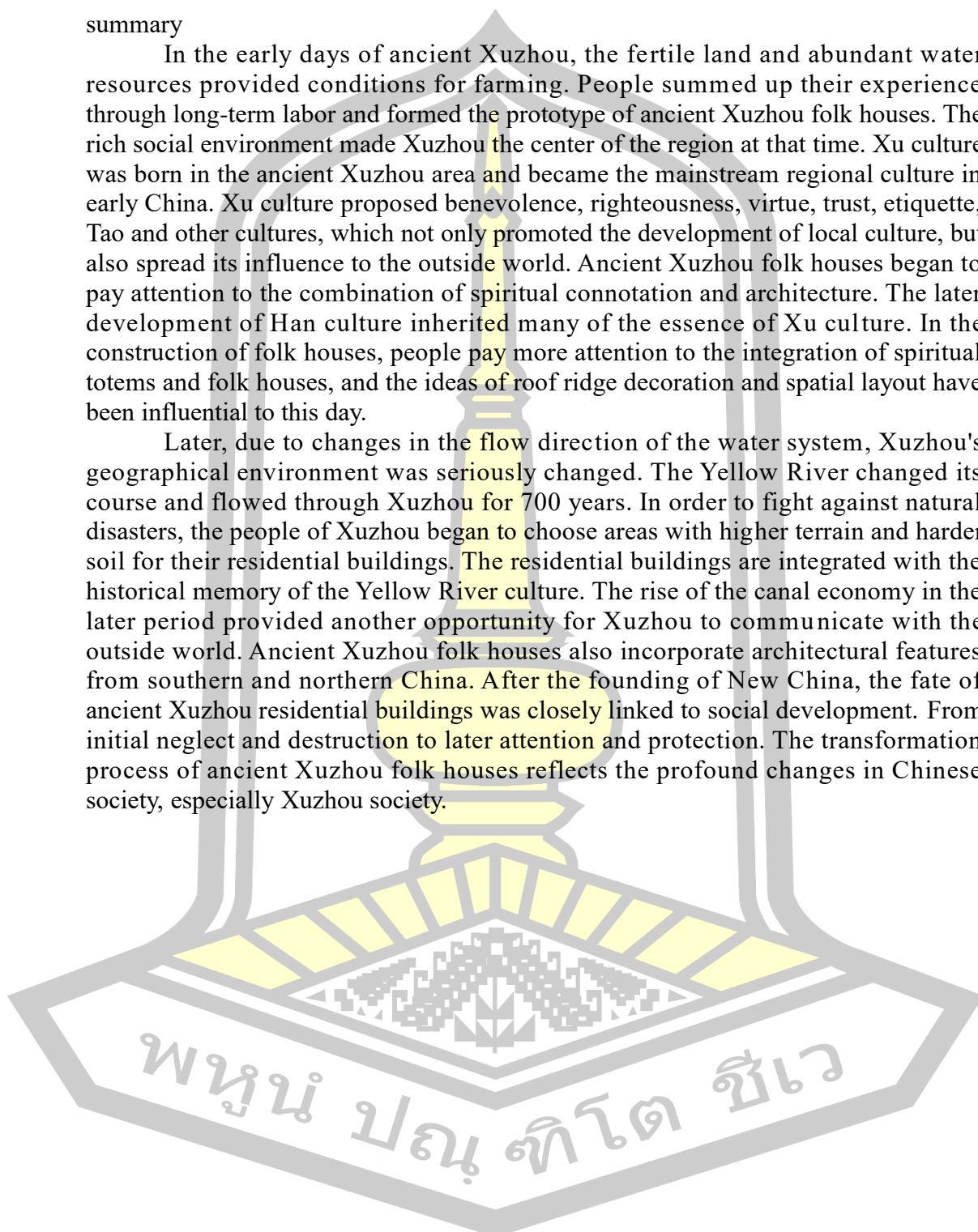
After the founding of New China, the transformation process of ancient Xuzhou folk houses reflects the profound changes in Chinese society, especially Xuzhou society. From initial neglect and destruction to later attention and protection, the fate of ancient houses is closely related to the development of China. China is vigorously developing its rural revitalization strategy during this historical period. How to explore the cultural value of ancient Xuzhou houses and contribute to rural revitalization is a very meaningful social issue.



## summary

In the early days of ancient Xuzhou, the fertile land and abundant water resources provided conditions for farming. People summed up their experience through long-term labor and formed the prototype of ancient Xuzhou folk houses. The rich social environment made Xuzhou the center of the region at that time. Xu culture was born in the ancient Xuzhou area and became the mainstream regional culture in early China. Xu culture proposed benevolence, righteousness, virtue, trust, etiquette, Tao and other cultures, which not only promoted the development of local culture, but also spread its influence to the outside world. Ancient Xuzhou folk houses began to pay attention to the combination of spiritual connotation and architecture. The later development of Han culture inherited many of the essence of Xu culture. In the construction of folk houses, people pay more attention to the integration of spiritual totems and folk houses, and the ideas of roof ridge decoration and spatial layout have been influential to this day.

Later, due to changes in the flow direction of the water system, Xuzhou's geographical environment was seriously changed. The Yellow River changed its course and flowed through Xuzhou for 700 years. In order to fight against natural disasters, the people of Xuzhou began to choose areas with higher terrain and harder soil for their residential buildings. The residential buildings are integrated with the historical memory of the Yellow River culture. The rise of the canal economy in the later period provided another opportunity for Xuzhou to communicate with the outside world. Ancient Xuzhou folk houses also incorporate architectural features from southern and northern China. After the founding of New China, the fate of ancient Xuzhou residential buildings was closely linked to social development. From initial neglect and destruction to later attention and protection. The transformation process of ancient Xuzhou folk houses reflects the profound changes in Chinese society, especially Xuzhou society.



## CHAPTER III

### Cultural memory and the construction of the space memory field of ancient Xuzhou houses

The second research Objective is that through the study and analysis of cultural memory, we can better understand the formation of individuals and social groups' sense of identity and belonging to their own culture. Discuss methods of transmitting spatial memory in residential buildings.

After entering the 20th century, ethnic diversity and cultural diversity encountered a tendency of homogenization, and the pursuit of lost traditional culture formed nostalgia among social groups. Nostalgic memory is a special group's common presentation of past cultural memories. On the surface, "nostalgia" seems to be an individual's emotion and act of remembering one's hometown. When it rises to a collective unconscious behavior, it condenses into a fixed and lasting cultural memory, which has the inherent power of typical social responsibility and collective identity. Therefore, nostalgia is a manifestation of a high sense of identity, belonging, responsibility and mission to one's own culture. It is of great value to study how nostalgia can be transformed into cultural memory with important social normative significance.

#### 1. Nostalgia is cultural identity from the perspective of cultural memory

The philosophical expression of nostalgia is mainly reflected in the subject, object and root of nostalgia. Although different scholars have different interpretations or expressions of nostalgia, it is mainly reflected in tradition and modernity, past and present, restoration and reconstruction, etc. The underlying logic of nostalgia at the cultural level is an expression closer to cultural identity. Nostalgia is a kind of speculation and exploration of deep cultural psychological codes, which involves understanding where one comes from and where one goes. For example, ancient Xuzhou houses are spaces that trigger nostalgia, and people who have lived there will miss this space.

Chinese people seem to have a culture of nostalgia in their genes. The purpose of nostalgia is to condense this "nostalgia" into a special emotion that continues to recall the five thousand years of excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation and is universally accepted by society. This emotion in turn inspires people's cultural identification with our country's traditional civilization and harmonious lifestyle. In the Xuzhou area, the cultural memory that has lasted for thousands of years can be brought back to the present day. Ultimately condensed into an internally driven spiritual core and a cultural force pointing to the future, it can activate strong social cohesion and action in society, and transform it into creative energy for rural revitalization. Its essence can provide a cultural source for the entire society to explore sustainable development and new urbanization paths from the past, present and future. Therefore, how to excavate the cultural memory under the ancient Xuzhou residential space and continue it is particularly urgent and far-reaching to promote the

rural landscape heritage of sustainable rural development.(Figure 22 is a traditional temple fair performance in Xuzhou and surrounding areas)



Figure 20 Northern Jiangsu Temple Fair  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2021

1.1 The psychological expression of Chinese cultural identity—nostalgia  
Nostalgic memory originates from people's voluntary choices and emotional expectations for the memory of their past hometown. It forms a diachronic identity at the individual level and is then transformed into the social consciousness behavior of the entire nation. It has convergence and is a kind of cultural collective unconsciousness.

#### 1.1.1 The generation of nostalgic memory

Memory is one of the most important functions of our brain. From a biochemical perspective, memory is closely related to the structure and function of our brains, and is affected by our consciousness, attention, emotions, etc. The basic physiological mechanism of memory is: when objective things act on the analyzer in a certain relationship, temporary neural connections will be formed on the cerebral cortex. These temporary neural connections remain in the mind in some trace form after the stimulus has ceased, and they become active again under certain conditions.

Before the 1950s, scientists had not found out which parts of the brain functioned in memory, so they believed that memory was a function incidental to sensory, language or motor activities. Until the 1950s, Penfield, a famous brain scientist and Canadian neurosurgeon, discovered in the process of studying epilepsy that using electricity to stimulate a certain part of the brain can make people recall vivid memories that are absolutely impossible to recall. So he discovered a special part of the human brain used for memory.

In later scientific research, it was discovered that memory does not simply store things or knowledge, but is a highly active system. Our brain is like a computer. The memory process is divided into three systems: sensory memory, short-term memory and long-term memory in order.

In its most general sense, homesickness means the sad feeling of missing one's hometown. In different disciplinary discourses and real-life contexts such as medicine, anthropology, sociology, etc., nostalgia has a complex meaning.

In the English expression, "nostalgia" is a compound of the Greek words *nostos* (homecoming) and *algos* (pain). In 1688, Swiss doctor Johannes Hofer published a medical paper. The word "nostalgia" is used to describe the extreme homesickness displayed by Swiss mercenaries on the battlefield far away from their homeland. The symptoms of patients are depression, melancholy, emotional instability, including repeated crying, anorexia, general weight loss, and often suicidal tendencies. For about 200 years, homesickness was used as a medical term.

The German poet Novalis once said: "Philosophy is looking for home everywhere with eternal nostalgia." It is not difficult to find that when nostalgia shifts from clinical connotation to symbolic meaning, the interpretation of nostalgia in different disciplines has different perspectives and discourses, but it has already shown obvious philosophical expression and ethical implications.

Specifically, the philosophical expression of nostalgia is mainly reflected in three aspects. The first is the subject of nostalgia, the so-called "who is worried". As Davis proposed collective nostalgia and individual nostalgia. The subject of nostalgia may be "millions of people", or even a larger group of people, or it may be a specific individual. Both are essentially human subjective experiences. Collective nostalgia has an open, shared character. Personal nostalgia has a more personal quality. The two will be connected and influence each other through certain overlap and interweaving. The second is the object of nostalgia. That is the so-called "what to worry about". As Heidegger said, "The most mysterious and beautiful thing about hometown lies precisely in this closeness to the origin." "Those who are forced to give up their proximity to the origin and leave their hometown always feel so melancholy and regretful." It is also in this sense that Heidegger proposed that "to be close to one's hometown is to be close to the source of all happiness." It is not difficult to see from this that nostalgia philosophically gives the form of homelessness the content of alienation and alienation. Although the object of nostalgia has changed from the exact "hometown" in the initial clinical connotation to the symbolic meaning of "hometown, home, past, tradition" and other meanings. However, we can still find a certain common value orientation of the objects of nostalgia, that is, identification, nostalgia, and longing for a certain "loss" that we do not currently have. This is a "longing for what is missing in the changed present, a longing for what is now unattainable simply because of the irreversibility of time." The third is the root of nostalgia. That is the so-called "why worry".

Tourner, who is based on the German philosophical tradition, believes that "for those who are nostalgic, the world is alien." Therefore, he advocates discussing nostalgia as "a basic condition of human alienation" from a philosophical and sociological perspective. Tönnies believes that community (*gemeinschaft*) is an ideal type of human beings living together. Its formation requires members' common and binding ideological beliefs. This is the special social strength and sympathy that unites people as members of a whole. He clearly expressed his deep affection for the warm interpersonal relationships among people in the community. Bauman puts it more directly: community "becomes a lost paradise—but a paradise to which we fervently wish to return."

It can be seen that in the interpretations or related expressions of nostalgia by different scholars, the past and present, tradition and modernity, recovery and reconstruction, desire and criticism, etc., all show the conflicting characteristics of the roots of nostalgia and the tense relationship between it and the subject of nostalgia.

Since the 20th century, the increasingly accelerating process of modernization and globalization has triggered more discussions about "cultural nostalgia". The so-called cultural nostalgia is simply a sense of loss and reminiscence of cultural traditions that arises with the leveling movement of modern globalization. It is a by-product of 'modernity' civilization and culture. For modern society and modern humans, it has the nature of 'the ideology of home'. "Cultural nostalgia" emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, an era of great social change accompanied by growing media culture and the commercialization of nostalgia through popular culture.

#### 1.1.2 The role of cultural identity in nostalgic memory

The definition of cultural identity varies in different disciplines, but it is generally believed that it expresses a psychological activity of emotional belonging of a subject (including an individual or a group), and is an object culture that focuses on spiritual culture. Acceptance, recognition, belonging and practice in terms of customs, language, values, etc. It can be seen that cultural identity is mainly the identity of spiritual culture. It is not only the identity of ideology, but also the identity of the conceptual system that reflects a certain economic foundation, political logic and social existence.



Figure 21 When the author of this article was 5 years old, a family photo was taken in the ancestral home after a wedding  
Source: Photographed by Peng Zhaojun, 1993

Cultural identity in nostalgic memory mainly includes identification with cultural symbols, identification with historical narratives and identification with values.

First of all, the essence of cultural symbols is the ideographic symbols of material forms, language, life matters, etc. in a culture. Generally include language, cultural celebrities, cultural images, cultural buildings, historical relics, festivals, daily necessities, ritual customs. such as wedding customs (Figure 23), funeral customs, etc.

In nostalgic memory, cultural symbols are more of the collective memory of architectural spaces, daily necessities, rituals and customs. In 1994, Professor Jing Jun<sup>31</sup>'s book "Memory of the Temple" was completed. This is an anthropological book using architectural space as a clue, recording the cultural identity under the collective memory of the Confucius Temple in Dachuan Village. First of all, Dachuan Village is a society of acquaintances. The social relationship between people is a "differential pattern." Personal judgment standards can determine the closeness and distance of social relationships. The Confucius Temple is the core of the identity and social relations of Dachuan villagers. The author uses the Confucius Temple as a clue and uses a small to see the big expression technique to tell us that memory is never isolated, but collective. Through this plot, he emphasizes the national cultural identity under collective memory.

Historical narrative is an important form of expression of humanistic knowledge. It mainly uses historical memory as the basic resource and expresses it with established spiritual pursuits, values and life imagination. This mainly includes both official and unofficial historical narratives. There are mainly various modes of speech such as audio, video, text, and oral. The specific forms include classics, myths and legends, etc., and include macro narratives and micro narratives. Obviously, this is a kind of cultural recognition. For example, the Han people call themselves "descendants of Yan and Huang", but China's ethnic minorities also call themselves "descendants of Yan and Huang". This reflects the recognition of Chinese ethnic minorities' historical and cultural recognition of "same ancestors and the same origin", and also represents the ideology of the concept of "one world, one family" in Confucian culture.



Figure 22 In Xuzhou area, people have to kowtow to their elders on the first day of the new year.

Source: Photographed by Peng Zhu, 2002

<sup>31</sup> Professor, Department of Sociology, Tsinghua University

Finally, there is the recognition of values. As the center and soul of culture, values mainly include ideas, ethics, ideals and beliefs, village rules and regulations, customs and habits, national spirit, etc. For example, in ancient Chinese society, some scholars found in their research that the government's jurisdiction over villages below the county level was basically limited to collecting taxes and maintaining public security, and did not interfere too much in other rural affairs. There are patriarchs or squires in the villages for internal management, and the villages basically practice autonomy. This kind of autonomous society is also a self-disciplined society. This rural value concept is not only recorded through written records, but also reflected in local residences. For example, ancestral halls are built in many places to pass on family beliefs, or the number of rafters on the roofs of residences also reflects this value concept. In fact, this is the cultural identity formed by emphasizing Confucian patriarchal ethics and moral values. (Figure 24)

### 1.1.3 Cultural attributes in nostalgia memory

Nostalgia is not only a feeling of homesickness, nostalgia for ancestors and roots that has been shared by everyone throughout the ages, but also a kind of national culture and local feelings that are in the blood of the Chinese people. It is a kind of recognition of national identity and culture, and it is also the most sincere recollection, nostalgia and remembrance of the culture and lifestyle in memory.

Chinese people have used literary works to express nostalgia since ancient times. From the Book of Songs and Songs of Chu to Yu Guangzhong's poem "Nostalgia", from the top ten famous guqin songs to the Pingtan singing of Mao Zedong's poem "Butterflies in Love with Flowers", it can be said that the culture of nostalgia has never been interrupted in the history of China. This nostalgia culture that entrusts the feelings of home and country has natural cultural attributes.

The word nostalgia is more reflected in literary expressions in Chinese discourse. "The term 'nostalgia' – 'nostalgia' – has been a prominent theme in Chinese literature since at least the time of Confucius in the 6th century BC." This theme runs through many works that directly express homesickness and nostalgia, and is presented in the form of "Li Sao", "Farewell Poems" and "Pastoral Poems". Therefore, nostalgia is often associated with emotions such as "sentimentality", "loss", "loneliness" and "melancholy". "Nostalgia" as a word appeared earlier in Tang Dynasty poetry. Cen Shen expressed his homesickness in "Staying in a Guest House in Guanxi and sending it to Dongshan Yan and Xu Ershan from Shi Tianbao on the third day of the seventh month of the seventh lunar month and seeing a noble achievement in internal studies".

In modern and contemporary literature, "native literature" is the most representative way of expressing nostalgia. Rural literature emerged in the 1920s, represented by Lu Xun's "Hometown" and "Blessings". It takes rural life as its main content and has a distinctive local flavor, and has become a trend in the history of modern literature. Since the 1970s and 1980s, along with the trends of modernization and globalization, nostalgia writing has become the most prominent theme in contemporary literature. The poem "Nostalgia" by Taiwanese poet Yu Guangzhong<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Yu Guangzhong (October 21, 1928 - December 14, 2017), a famous contemporary

uses four specific objects: "stamps", "ship tickets", "graves" and "straits" to give nostalgia a rich connotation, and has become the most representative literary work of nostalgia. (Figure 25)



Figure 23 Yu Guangzhong, the famous poet and author of "Nostalgia"

Source: <http://news.china.com.cn>, 2017

Since then, the expression forms of nostalgia literature such as "native novels", "root-seeking literature" and "returning literature" have been continuously enriched, and more romantic literary imagination and pastoral feelings have been injected into nostalgia. It is precisely because the Chinese expression of nostalgia is different from Western discourse and has its own unique cultural heritage that some domestic scholars use "xiangchou" as the English translation of the keyword "nostalgia" in academic research.

In the context of implementing the rural revitalization strategy, the expression "see the mountains, see the water, and remember the nostalgia"<sup>33</sup> further expands the discussion on nostalgia at the theoretical and practical levels. Nostalgia has become a hot issue of concern in many different disciplines in domestic academic circles, and it has also become an indispensable and important content when discussing many issues such as rural revitalization and rural development, the relationship between rural and urban areas, and farmers' concepts and psychology.

#### 1.1.4 Nostalgic memories in ancient Xuzhou houses

The Huaihai area where ancient Xuzhou was located has had close exchanges and similar cultures since ancient times. For the older generation, the goal of rural China for thousands of years is to solve the problem of farmers' feeding. Therefore,

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writer, poet, scholar, and translator

<sup>33</sup> In 2013, CPC General Secretary Xi Jinping clearly stated at the Central Urbanization Work Conference that urban residents should be able to "see mountains, see water, and remember homesickness."

family dinners are the most profound memories many people have of the word "home". The most memorable meal for many Xuzhou people is the lunch on New Year's Eve, the night before Chinese New Year.

This is the most solemn and sumptuous meal that families treat themselves to during the year, far better than eating dumplings on the first day of the new year. According to Peng Hao (a farmer, Jiawang, 2022): Usually on this day, her mother would be busy early in the morning. In the 1970s and 1980s, there was relatively little meat. My mother can steam rice cakes, croquettes, and pancakes (Figure 26)... As the eldest son in the family, he sits in the kitchen in the southeast corner of the house. In Xuzhou, this room is called a pot house, which means kitchen. He pulled the bellows and added firewood to the stove. Speaking of blowing bellows, his mother still believes that Peng Hao was sensible and capable when he was a child. At that time, when his family was building a house, he had to borrow bricks from relatives. He also asked more than a dozen people in and outside the village to help. The family was responsible for providing food for the workers. So her mother had to prepare hundreds of pancakes the night before. Peng Hao was not old enough to study at that time, so he stayed with her and helped his mother blow the bellows until dawn.

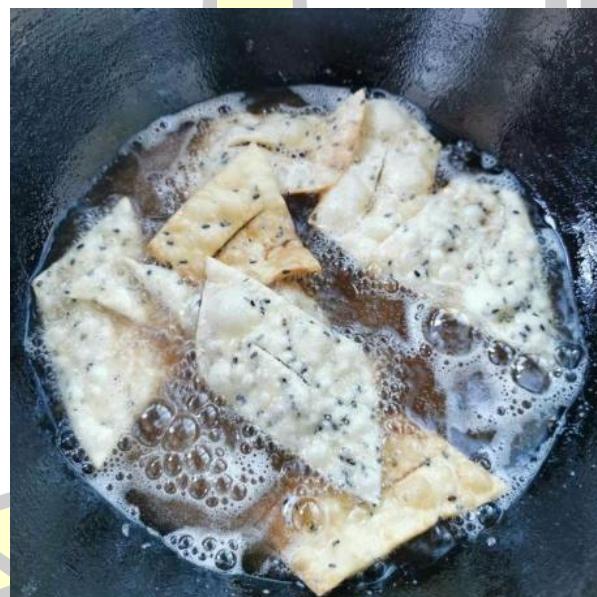


Figure 24 Fried biscuits, a kind of food cooked during the New Year in Xuzhou area

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

There are also many symbols decorated in houses, which are also nostalgic memories in the hearts of many people. Generally, there will be a few people in a village who are good at calligraphy, and they will be invited by their neighbors to help write couplets (Spring Festival couplets). This is a custom. Not only will it be used during the Chinese New Year, but it will also be pasted on the building when there are weddings and funerals at home.

There were no supermarkets in rural areas at that time, so people usually went to the market regularly to replenish supplies. The so-called market means that some vendors will bring different products and set up stalls at a predetermined location and according to a certain time pattern. This form has always existed in the farming era or in modern times before urbanization. If you look at this market from a modern perspective, this is a place where intangible cultural heritage is displayed, and all kinds of handicrafts that can be used in daily life can be seen here. For most ordinary families, handicrafts such as brick carvings, stone carvings, and wood carvings are relatively expensive and cannot be used in large quantities. Therefore, couplets made of bamboo, straw, and paper siding are cultural symbols that are more commonly seen in most residential buildings.(Figure 27)



Figure 25 People in a village who are good at calligraphy usually write Spring Festival couplets for others.

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2022

Peng Hao said: He can no longer remember the characters of Spring Festival couplets that are usually written in his hometown. In the main room of his home (the main room refers to the largest room in the house, generally located in the middle of a house, similar to a contemporary living room, and has the functions of a dining room and a reception room). His family's annual posters basically read, "Blessings are as long as flowing water in the East China Sea, life is as long as the ageless pine trees in Nanshan", "Spring is always there in Xiangyangmen, people who have accumulated good deeds will have more than enough time to celebrate", "Loyalty is passed down to the family far away, and poems and books help the world for a long time" and so on.(Peng Hao , a farmer ,Jiawang, 2022)(Figure 28)



Figure 26 Most of the time in China, red Spring Festival couplets are posted  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao in Ma Village, 2022

There is a custom in the ancient Xuzhou countryside that continues to this day: pairs are generally festive red. But whenever there is a deceased elderly person in the family or family, the pairs must be strictly corresponding in different colors of white, blue and yellow according to the relationship and the age of the elderly person. If a close relative of the family has died less than three years ago, red pairs must not be posted. But red is generally used at weddings, because red can ward off some bad luck in Chinese culture.(Figure 29)

In people's memory, in addition to Spring Festival couplets, colorful "door hangers" are indispensable to be posted on the lintel of each house, also known as hanging corridor, hanging thousand, door money and door passing notes. It has a history of more than 1,000 years since the Southern Song Dynasty and has now become a national intangible cultural heritage. The form and effect of door hangings are somewhat like paper-cutting, but they are more colorful than paper-cutting. Nowadays, a door hanger can be inlaid with paper of several colors. There are auspicious and festive words engraved on it, coupled with delicate and exquisite patterns such as flowers, birds, fish and insects. Most of them are composed of five or seven frames to form a complete meaning, expressing people's wishes for a better life. This form of folk art not only has patterns but also text. It is a relatively rare art piece and decoration for ordinary people in the era of lack of culture. It also constitutes the nostalgic memory of many people.



Figure 27 The author has a relative who died in his family, so he can only post it in yellow

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2022

## 1.2 The rise and research perspective of cultural memory theory

Nostalgic memory can be used as the starting point for the regeneration of the value of ancient Xuzhou houses. In the integrated development of urban and rural areas, people see the hope of the regeneration of rural culture and the continuation of local cultural roots. Nostalgia is not only the root of Chinese culture, but also the spiritual form derived from cultural memory. Studying the cultural memory in ancient Xuzhou houses can observe the roots of local culture and remember the origin of the soul.(Figure28)



Figure 28 Cultural Memory: Writing, Memory, and Political Identity in Early High Culture

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

### 1.2.1 The rise of cultural memory theory

Cultural memory theory is based on the concept of collective memory. In the 1920s, sociologist Maurice Halbwachs<sup>34</sup> proposed the concept of "collective memory." Halbwachs studied under Bergson and Durkheim. He has mainly used three books to explain the concept of "collective memory": "The Social Framework of Memory", "The Legendary Topography of the Holy Land in the Gospels: A Study of Collective Memory" and "On Collective Memory". Halbwachs' core point of view: memory is restricted by social factors (constrained by "framework"). Moreover, Halbwachs particularly emphasized the social frame of reference and believed that without this social frame of reference, personal memory cannot be formed and preserved. Moreover, when talking about collective memory, we have to mention personal memory. In summary, Halbwachs made three points:

(1) Although it is the individual who "owns" the memory and the collective does not "own" the memory, it determines the memory of its members. Even the most personal memories are generated from the communication and interaction within the social group.

(2) Halbwachs believes: Our experiences are also based on others as a reference, and are obtained within an established social framework about what is important and what is not important. "Without perception, there is no memory."

(3) Later, Halbwachs regarded the collective as the subject of memory and recollection, and further analyzed concepts such as "group memory" or "national memory".

The German Egyptologist Assmann agrees with most of Halbwach's views. But he also questioned some of Halbwach's ideas in the concept of collective memory. He believed that individuals still need to be viewed as the subject of memory and recollection. However, Assmann believes that individuals are also affected by the "frame" of society, which is a continuation of Halbwach's concept of social "frame".

Assmann believes that Halbwach's proposal of social "framework" reasonably explains memory and forgetting. "Framework" tells people what is important, what is worth recalling and being remembered. The "frame" is the present, what is forgotten is not applicable to the current "frame", and what is recalled is what can be reconstructed into the past within the reference of the "frame". The "framework" will change, so the cultural memory will also change. (Figure29)

<sup>34</sup> Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945), French historian and sociologist. Durkheim's disciple and young colleague who pioneered the theory of collective memory



Figure 29 Jan Assmann

Source: <https://www.colchestercollection.com/authors/A/jan-assmann.html>

The question of cultural memory began to be raised in the late 1970s. A number of cultural researchers in different fields, such as Egyptology scholars, Assyriology scholars, classical philology scholars, etc., formed a working circle. Under the slogan "Long Time and Distant Civilization", some abstract and highly theoretical questions were raised. Later, they raised the issue of "orality and writing", and the concept of "cultural memory" took shape. But at this time, this concept is limited to the textual level. Konrad Ehlich then builds on this by defining text as "information re-received"<sup>35</sup> within the framework of an "overinflated situation". The original image of the text is the institution of information. Finally, based on the phenomenon of "over-expansion" and their study of cultural theory researchers such as Yuri Lotman, the Assmanns specifically proposed the concept of "cultural memory".

### 1.2.2 Research perspective of cultural memory theory

The research focus of cultural memory theory has changed from the collective to the individual. He recognized mimetic memory, which refers to the way people behave. And the memory of objects: the memory of external objects, these objects can reflect people themselves. The objects here can be understood as media that carry memories and are the path to memories.

<sup>35</sup> Ehlich, K. (2007). Sprache und sprachliches Handeln. Germany: De Gruyter.

Halbwah's collective memory can be refined into communication memory and cultural memory. Communication memory refers to the memory formed by the communication subject during communication activities. It includes the memory of communication objects, communication relationships, communication situations, etc. Communicative memory involves not only the individual level, but also the group level. Communication memory at the individual level includes personal memories of communication objects, relationships and situations, while communication memory at the group level involves interactions and exchanges between group members. Memories related to self-confirmation, identity recognition, meaning inheritance, etc. are classified as cultural memory, in which the study of cultural memory rises to the level of value and purpose. At the same time, cultural memory is more or less related to the memory of the above three dimensions.

The revolutionary change in cultural memory occurred with the invention of writing. Before the invention of writing, cultural memory was more internalized and within a community. Its mobility was weak and its preservation was low. After the invention of writing, the externalization of memory became possible, improving the efficiency of storage (preservation), retrieval (retrieval), inheritance, and flow (communication).

The connection between memory, identity and cultural continuity. A more detailed description should be: through historical research on specific cases, Assmann went deep into the formation of tradition and the inheritance of culture and some of the actual results. For example, it is true that a certain group has developed an identity, the group has merged and differentiated, some are canon and some are not, etc. From the above-mentioned real realities, we explore the utility of recollection and memory, or to be clear, how cultural memory plays a role in this complicated historical evolution, as well as what cultural memory is, and the relationship between cultural memory and some related issues. (Assmann,2015,Cultural memory,C1)

With the development of the influence of the concept of cultural memory, the concept of cultural memory serves as a multidisciplinary theoretical framework for studying and understanding the formation, storage and transmission process of social collective memory. It emphasizes the social and historical nature of memory and believes that individual memories are shaped and transmitted in social and cultural environments.

Therefore, this concept is also widely used in the direction of cultural heritage. For example, in the study of houses, the concept of cultural memory can provide a new perspective and method to analyze and explain the meaning and value of houses. By studying houses, we can learn information about social history, cultural traditions, group identity, etc.

At present, residential research has become a broad and active field, and researchers have used different methods and concepts to study residential buildings. Some researchers use the concept of cultural memory to analyze and interpret the historical and cultural value of houses, and try to convey these values to the public and the next generation. In addition, some research teams use modern technological means such as digital technology and virtual reality to use houses as carriers of cultural memory, and protect and inherit the history and culture of houses through virtual reconstruction and digital display. They use advanced technological means to

allow the public to visit and learn online through Internet platforms and other channels.

Overall, cultural memory provides new ideas and methods for the study of houses, and social history and cultural heritage can be better understood through the study of houses. Combined with the continuous development of science and technology, the results achieved by using the concept of cultural memory can also be displayed and disseminated using more advanced scientific and technological means.

### 1.3 Interaction between cultural identity and cultural memory

We believe that nostalgia is an emotional expression of cultural identity. When studying ancient Xuzhou houses, we need to explore more deeply the relationship between cultural memory and cultural identity. As a specific rural landscape heritage, ancient Xuzhou houses are both cultural heritage and symbolic carriers, carrying rich historical memories and cultural connotations. Through the study and analysis of these cultural memories, we can better understand the formation of individuals and social groups' sense of identity and belonging to the culture to which they belong. (Figure 32)

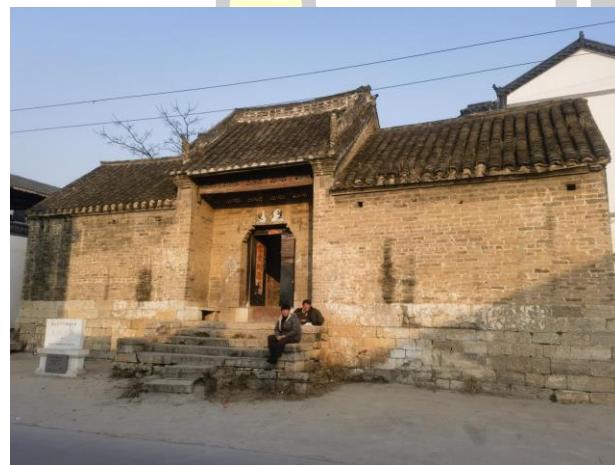


Figure 30 Ancient Xuzhou houses located in Zhakou Village  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2022

When studying the relationship between cultural memory and cultural identity, we must understand this complex interactive process from an interdisciplinary perspective. Cultural memory is a social collective's shared memory of historical events, experiences and values. It is not only an important source of individuals' own cultural identity, but also an important component of social collective cohesion and identity. From a sociological perspective, the inheritance and reconstruction of cultural memory is achieved through social mechanisms and media, such as family, school, media, etc. From a psychological perspective, an individual's acceptance and internalization of cultural memory is achieved through socialization and cognitive processes, which has an important impact on an individual's identity, emotional experience, and behavioral patterns.

Cultural identity is an individual's sense of identity and belonging to the culture to which he or she belongs. It is constructed through the understanding and

acceptance of cultural memories and cultural symbols. When studying cultural identity, cultural memory is an important resource. It provides individuals with cognitive and emotional experiences of the past, which in turn affects the degree to which individuals identify with the culture to which they belong. Cultural identity is constructed and consolidated through interactions and social interactions with others, and is a link between individuals and social groups.



Figure 31 Ancient Xuzhou houses located in Zhakou Village  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2022

Research shows that behind the ancient Xuzhou houses, there is rich historical memory and traditional culture. These cultural memories are deeply rooted in the consciousness and emotions of local residents through interaction and inheritance. As an expression of cultural identity, nostalgia has also been concretely reflected in ancient Xuzhou houses. Through their perceptions and memories of ancient Xuzhou houses and their cultural memories, residents have deepened their identity and pride in their own culture.(Figure 33)

There is a mutually influencing relationship between cultural memory and cultural identity. On the one hand, an individual's sense of identity with their own culture will affect the acceptance and inheritance of cultural memory. The higher the individual's identity with their own culture, the more likely they are to participate in and inherit activities related to cultural memory. On the other hand, the inheritance and reconstruction of cultural memory will also affect the cultural identity of individuals. Through the inheritance and expression of cultural memory, individuals can have a deeper understanding of the uniqueness of their own culture, and then deepen their sense of identity with their own culture.

It can be seen that the study of the relationship between cultural memory and cultural identity is of great significance. It helps us deeply understand the interaction process between individuals and society, and reveals the basis for people's formation and identification of their own cultural belonging. Through further academic research,

we can better carry out cultural inheritance and protection work and promote the stability of cultural identity and the development of diversity.

In addition, we should also realize that the relationship between cultural memory and cultural identity is not a one-way relationship. An individual's sense of identity and emotional experience with the culture to which he or she belongs will in turn affect the understanding and inheritance of cultural memory. Contemporary people miss their hometown, culture, architecture, and traditional lifestyle because of nostalgia. People participate in activities related to traditional houses, which strengthens the recognition and spread of culture (Figure34). This also makes a positive contribution to the inheritance and protection of cultural memory.



Figure 32 National intangible cultural heritage-Xuzhou sachet  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao in Ma Village, 2022

From the above, we believe that in the specific research text of ancient Xuzhou houses, there is a subtle interrelationship between cultural memory and cultural identity. Individuals' perception and experience of cultural memory deepens their sense of identity and ideological precipitation of their culture; and the strengthening of cultural identity further promotes the inheritance and inheritance of cultural memory. By deeply studying the cultural memory of ancient Xuzhou houses and their impact on residents, we can better understand and explain the relationship between individuals and culture. And by protecting and inheriting the cultural memory of ancient Xuzhou houses, we can further strengthen residents' identification and cohesion with their own culture.

To sum up, taking ancient Xuzhou houses as a research text, the mutual influence between cultural memory and cultural identity cannot be ignored. Through the research and analysis of ancient Xuzhou houses, we can better understand how cultural memory shapes and affects individual identity, and at the same time, we can better grasp the important role that cultural identity plays in the inheritance and reconstruction of cultural memory. In-depth research on ancient Xuzhou houses and

the relationship between cultural memory and cultural identity is of great significance in promoting the development of cultural diversity and social harmony.

## 2. The influence of cultural memory on the form of ancient Xuzhou houses

Regional residential forms are architectural forms with local characteristics formed by residents in a specific geographical area during the long-term historical development process. These residential forms are often closely related to local climate, topography, resources, economy, society and other factors. Cultural memory plays an important role in the formation and development of these regional residential forms. Cultural memory is a complex and diverse concept that covers many aspects such as history, tradition, belief, and art of human society. In the study of residential forms, the influence of cultural memory cannot be ignored. Different cultural backgrounds have shaped different residential forms, and at the same time, the residential forms also reflect the uniqueness of the culture in which they are located. The influence of cultural memory on the form of ancient Xuzhou houses requires exploring the spatial memory of ancient Xuzhou houses, and exploring the construction process and mutual influence of cultural memory on the spatial memory of ancient Xuzhou houses.

### 2.1 The construction of cultural memory in the spatial memory of ancient Xuzhou houses

Ancient Xuzhou houses are representatives of traditional houses in the Xuzhou area. Their spatial layout, architectural style, decorative details and other aspects reflect the historical culture, geographical environment, socio-economic and other factors of the Xuzhou area. Cultural memory plays an important role in the construction of spatial memory of ancient Xuzhou houses.(As can be seen from Figure 35, more than 2,000 years ago, ancient Xuzhou people already had symbolic totems on the roofs of buildings.)



Figure 33 Xuzhou houses recorded on 2,000-year-old Han Dynasty stone carvings  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao , 2022

Xuzhou has a cultural history of more than 6,000 years and a city-building history of more than 2,600 years. As early as in ancient times, it is said that Xuzhou was the territory of the Dapeng clan granted by Yao. It was an important country in the east during the Xia and Shang dynasties of China. It had assisted the Xia and Shang dynasties in suppressing rebellions many times. Of course, these records with long history are of some mythical and legendary nature. The first mention of Dapeng's kingdom in the document "Bamboo Chronicles" was in the "Fifteenth Year of Qi". The ancient book "Guoyu·Zhengyu" records that in the 43rd year of Wu Ding, King Shang attacked Dapeng State on the grounds that he would no longer pay tribute. After that, the place was directly ruled by the Shang Dynasty. (Figure 36 shows the scene of ancient people receiving guests in their houses)

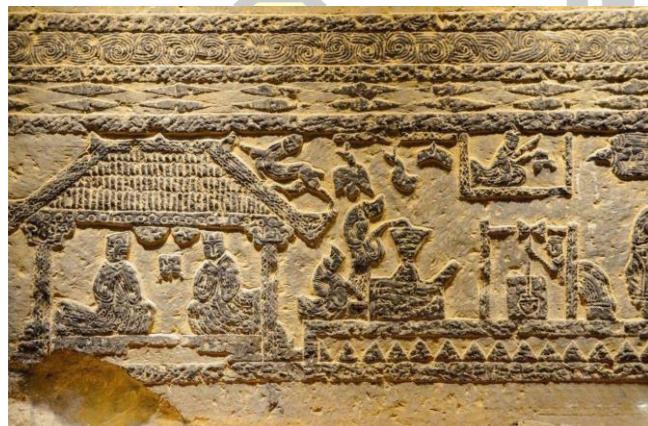


Figure 34 Xuzhou houses recorded on 2,000-year-old Han Dynasty stone carvings  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao , 2022

Assmann mentioned in "Cultural Memory" that "we call stories with founding significance 'myths'." He believes that the role of myth is to allow the narrator to find direction. It is the truth of a higher order. It represents normativeness and is stereotyped. Myth can also be considered as a projection of memory, and Assmann's theory eliminates the original fundamental difference between myth and history.

In the history of ancient Xuzhou, people think that what is important to cultural memory is not the objectively existing history but the history in people's memories. We can even say that by using the concept of cultural memory, we can transform objective history into history in memory, and thus turn it into a so-called myth. For civilization, myth has the most basic role. Myth can be a way to clarify the present from the perspective of the origin of civilization, and then turn it into a foundational history that can be told. For example, it is said that Peng Zu, the monarch of ancient Xuzhou at that time, lived for 160 years and was the originator of Chinese cuisine and created many dishes (Figure 37). This story has been deeply ingrained in the memory of Xuzhou people, and even every Chinese. It not only established the Chinese food culture that puts food first, but also made the Chinese believe that the kitchen is an extremely important place in the house and will affect the fortune of the entire family.



Figure 35 The statue of Peng Zu in the park in the southern suburbs of Xuzhou  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao , 2023

So through memory, history can become myth, and myth can also be history. This does not make history unreal; on the contrary, it is what makes history real in the sense that it becomes an enduring, normative, and shaping force. Therefore, Assmann said: The absolute past and the relative past reveal two paths for "founding history" to become "myth". The former has always maintained an unadjustable distance from the present and is in the memory. The latter constantly shifts forward while revisiting that era through rituals and festivals, making it present. On the one hand, memory is a channel connected to myth, so memory has a kind of myth power. Without memory, when no one still remembers myth, the power of myth will be eclipsed. On the other hand, cultural memory contains some sacred elements, which can give history a mythical quality and then retrieve it through memories. Those histories with founding or origin significance become myths. We can even understand myths as part of the cultural memory in the spatial memory of ancient Xuzhou.(Figure 38 is a museum built according to the Han Dynasty style)



Figure 36 Xuzhou Terracotta Warriors and Horses Museum with Han Dynasty architectural style  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao , 2023

The architectural space of the ancient Xuzhou is the carrier of cultural memory. The architectural style of ancient Xuzhou is most prominently influenced by Han culture. Han culture emphasizes the cohesion and authority of the family. The influence of this traditional culture on ancient Xuzhou residences is mainly reflected in architectural style, spatial layout, decorative details, etc. For example, most residential buildings in Xuzhou adopt a closed courtyard layout to emphasize the independence and integrity of the family. This layout not only conforms to the values of Han culture, but also reflects the Xuzhou area residents' cherishment of family history and traditions.

Historical events in the Xuzhou area also have an impact on the construction of residential spatial memory. For example, the history of wars and disasters in the Xuzhou area may have led to the destruction and reconstruction of residential buildings, thus forming the methods and methods of residential construction with ancient Xuzhou characteristics. In terms of location, materials, decoration, symbols and other special forms of residential buildings, these special-shaped residential buildings not only reflect the traces of historical events, but also reflect the residents' emphasis on safety, comfort and other aspects.

### 2.1.1 Methods of constructing cultural memory in spatial memory of ancient Xuzhou houses

Assmann mentioned in "Cultural Memory" that cultural memory can be transmitted not only through words, but also through records such as images, dances, rituals, and buildings. Therefore, if we want to study the cultural memory of ancient Xuzhou residential space, it is particularly important to study the memory construction methods of ancient Xuzhou residential space.

The ancient Xuzhou residential space is a physical space, and the space itself consists of the building itself, architectural decoration, natural environment and other aspects. Whether it is architectural style and elements, or the layout and sequence of space, or the surrounding environmental landscape and symbolic images used in architectural decoration, they are all carriers of the spatial memory of ancient Xuzhou residential buildings.

(1) The construction of spatial memory of ancient Xuzhou houses should focus on inheriting and retaining traditional architectural styles and elements.

During the long-term historical development process, the ancient houses in Xuzhou area have inherited and retained traditional architectural styles and elements, such as roof forms, door and window designs, wall decorations, etc. These traditional architectural styles and elements are not only beautiful, but also convey historical and cultural information of the Xuzhou area, becoming an important carrier of cultural memory.(Figure 39)



Figure 37 Details of ancient Xuzhou houses located in Zhakou Village  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2022

Because Xuzhou has relatively cold winters and lacks wood, the wood in the building walls is smaller and the walls are thicker, about fifty to sixty centimeters. (Figure 40) After the Yellow River flooded, due to the lack of wood, a large number of walls were built inside and outside. Moreover, because of flooding, people in Xuzhou were unwilling to build luxurious houses, so they used very thin wood to make beams, called "cross-hand beams" or "heavy beams." Different from the four-corner carvings of screen walls designed by Suzhou literati, they mostly use patterns such as plum, orchid, bamboo, and chrysanthemum. In Xuzhou's traditional architecture, the screen wall usually only has two corner flowers, and often uses grass dragons and grass phoenixes to express simple wishes such as hoping that the son will become a dragon or the daughter will become a phoenix. (Sun Tongyi, the inheritor of Xuzhou house skills, was awarded the title of Folk Arts and Crafts Artist by UNESCO and the Chinese Artists Association, 2022)



Figure 38 Old photo of Hubushan folk houses

Source: [www.xiangshu.com/683603.html](http://www.xiangshu.com/683603.html)

(2) The construction of spatial memory of ancient Xuzhou houses should focus on spatial layout and sequence

The ancient residences in Xuzhou area pay attention to spatial layout and sequence to reflect the cohesion and authority of the family. The closed courtyard layout, central axis symmetry, and functional partitioning of halls and bedrooms are all characteristics of traditional space layout. These layout methods not only conform to the traditional cultural values of the Xuzhou area, but also reflect the residents' cherishment of family history and traditions. (Figure 41 is a house built in the 1980s, but it still maintains the architectural layout of ancient folk houses.)



Figure 39 The main room of the author's old country house

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

The layout of ancient Xuzhou houses was generally facing south. The center of the north side was usually a building composed of three rooms, which was the core of the house. The room in the center of this building is called the main room in Xuzhou, which is the entrance area of the building. The main room is generally a place for reception and dining. There are two rooms on the east and west sides of the main room that are bedrooms or studies. A separate hut will be built in the southeast as a kitchen. Because it contains pots, pans and other cooking tools, Xuzhou people call it a "pot house". The toilet is generally located in the north, northeast or northwest corner of ancient Xuzhou houses, which is the most hidden corner. Every layout in the home needs to be followed by the elderly. In their memory, these have both traditional meanings and cultural customs, and everyone silently abides by them. If someone's home does not follow this layout, they will be considered ignorant of the rules and will be laughed at by their neighbors behind their backs. " (Zhang Daye, a farmer, Liyushan Village, 2023)

The layout of Xuzhou's residential buildings follows the underlying logic, which is also the local cultural memory. In the cultural memory of Xuzhou houses, Feng Shui culture is the basic principle of construction. Feng Shui is a mystical art with a long history in China. It is a theory that studies the microscopic substances (air, water and soil) and the macroscopic environment (heaven and earth) on which human beings survive and develop. Generally speaking, if you live in a place with good feng shui, it symbolizes prosperity and prosperity for future generations. Strictly speaking, it means a geographical location or environment that conforms to the principles and standards of "rich" and "noble" in Feng Shui (the so-called "good Feng Shui").

(3) The construction of spatial memory of ancient Xuzhou houses should focus on designing in conjunction with the natural environment.

The ancient residences in Xuzhou area pay attention to the integration with the natural environment in design to make full use of natural light and ventilation. This also follows the water culture of ancient Xuzhou residences. "Feng Shui" is just a name, not wind and water. Feng Shui is also called Kanyu, or the art of divination, phase house, picture house, Qingwu, Qingnang, form, geography, yin and yang, and landscape. In the literary meaning of ancient China, "Kan" means the way of heaven, the high place, and "Yu" means the earth, the low place. "Kanyu" refers to the study of the relationship between heaven and earth, especially the relationship between high and low terrain. Therefore, ancient Xuzhou houses liked to be built on the south side of the mountain, with higher terrain. There are usually temples on the mountain where you can pray(Figure 42).



Figure 40 Temples near Zhakou Village enrich people's spiritual needs  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2022

Feng Shui is based on the ancient organic view of nature, and introduces ancient astronomy, climate, earth, hydrology, ecological environment and other contents into the art of selecting locations and building the environment step by step. Designs such as open courtyards and terraces can echo the surrounding natural environment and create a harmonious and symbiotic atmosphere. It not only allows residents to get more sunlight, but also allows better air circulation between the house and nature, and eliminates indoor dirty air. In the Chinese world view, it is believed that nature can provide energy. This energy is generated by the cooperation between heaven, earth, and all things. Therefore, we need to have more contact with nature to absorb this natural energy. This is why the construction of residential space should pay attention to the design combined with the natural environment, which further strengthens the cultural memory of ancient Xuzhou in the construction of residential space memory.

(4) The construction of spatial memory of ancient Xuzhou houses should focus on conveying meaning through signs and symbols.

Facts have proved that every civilization in the world may not produce its own writing in the process of evolution. Civilizations with writing are advanced forms of civilization. However, in order to express emotions and thoughts, every civilization will use patterns, symbols, symbols and other techniques. Symbols in ancient Xuzhou houses are visual, verbal or written forms used to express a certain concept or meaning. It can include various forms such as images, text, sounds, music, videos, etc. Symbols play an important role in the spread of civilization. They are not only tools for the inheritance and exchange of cultural memory of ancient Xuzhou houses, but also an important element in shaping and identifying civilization.



Figure 41 Brick carving symbols in ancient Xuzhou houses

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

Ancient houses in the Xuzhou area use symbols and symbols to convey meaning in decorative details, such as using traditional patterns such as dragons, phoenixes, and lions, or using specific colors and materials to reflect the authority and sanctity of the family (Figure 43). In addition, the roof forms, door and window designs, wall decorations, etc. of ancient Xuzhou houses are also important expressions of cultural memory. For example, residential buildings in Xuzhou mostly adopt the form of roofs with raised eaves and flying corners. This form is both beautiful and symbolic, and can symbolize the authority and sanctity of the family. For another example, the doors and windows of residential houses in Xuzhou are mostly made of wooden materials and beautifully carved. These decorative details are not only beautiful, but also convey the family's historical and cultural information.(Figure 42)



Figure 42 Brick carving symbols in ancient Xuzhou houses

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

These decorative elements are not only beautiful, but also become important expressions of cultural memory, and these symbols also play a key role in shaping culture, transmitting information, promoting communication, and in the development of civilization. An in-depth understanding and study of the symbols of ancient Xuzhou houses will help us better understand the development process of ancient Xuzhou houses and understand how ancient Xuzhou houses were influenced by different regional cultures.

In summary, cultural memory adopts the inheritance and preservation of traditional architectural styles in the construction of spatial memory of ancient Xuzhou houses. And elements, focus on spatial layout and sequence, design combined with the natural environment, use symbols and symbols to convey meaning and other methods. These methods not only reflect the history and culture of the Xuzhou area, but also reflect the residents' cherishment of family history and traditions, further strengthening the inheritance and continuation of cultural memory.

## 2.2 The interactive relationship between cultural memory and spatial memory of ancient Xuzhou houses

There is a close interactive relationship between cultural memory and spatial memory of ancient Xuzhou houses. On the one hand, the spatial form of residential buildings is the material carrier of cultural memory, which reflects the historical, cultural, socioeconomic and other factors of the Xuzhou area. It is also an important means for the inheritance and continuation of cultural memory. On the other hand, cultural memory is expressed and spread through the spatial form of residential buildings, which affects the architectural style, spatial layout, decorative details and other aspects of residential buildings, making the residential buildings in Xuzhou area unique and traditional. (Figures 45 and 46 show the residential buildings in the two regions investigated by the author. You can see their obvious differences.)

### 2.2.1 The significance of constructing spatial memory of ancient Xuzhou houses

There are few research perspectives on the construction of spatial memory of ancient Xuzhou houses, so our research from the perspective of cultural memory theory has important guiding significance. Cultural memory is a sublimation of collective memory theory. Through the study of shared memories, we can then make overall thinking about memory construction and inheritance from a cultural perspective. This kind of thinking is not isolated. It is closely connected with the value norms and commonly recognized values that are collectively observed. It can support people's overall perception of their own region and has a clear direction for the future.

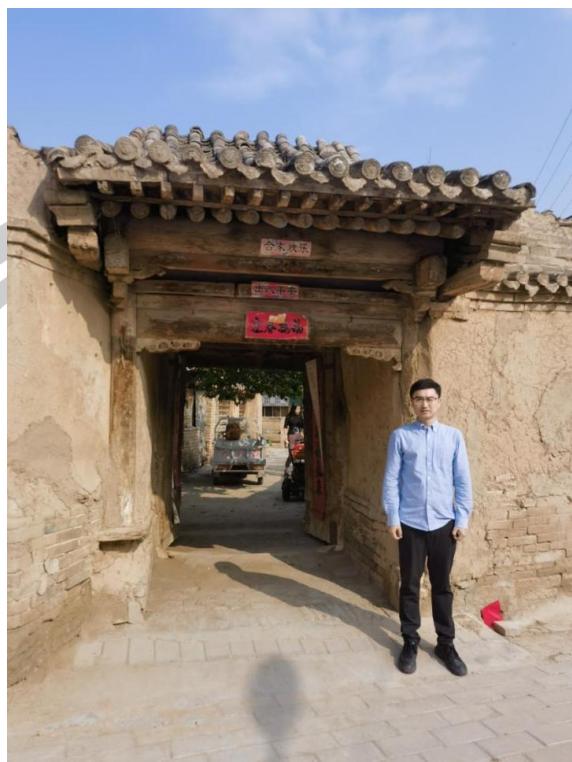


Figure 43 the residential buildings in Yuxian, Hebei

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

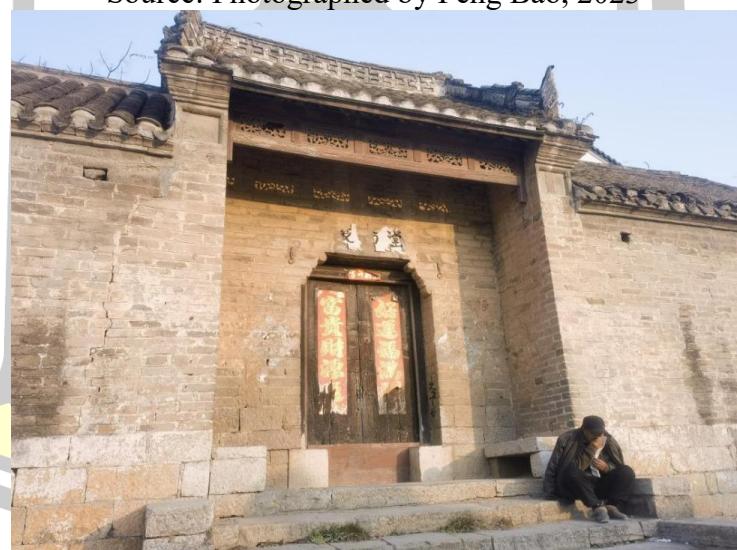


Figure 44 the residential buildings in Xuzhou

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2022

### a. Ancient Xuzhou houses can inspire people's sense of cultural identity

The residential space in ancient Xuzhou is not only a physical architectural structure, but also a symbol of profound cultural traditions and people's strong nostalgia. This space integrates historical events, special places, collective memory, social relations, emotional identification and other elements, becoming a symbolic space integrated with consciousness. In traditional Chinese rural life, from ancient tribes to the formation of modern settlements, people always rely on some common rituals to maintain the order of daily life. These rituals not only serve memory in detail and knowledge, but also become important places for storing knowledge. With the invention and popularization of writing, the form of cultural memory also changed. In this process, the mnemonic techniques of "repetition and interpretation," "repetition and recall," and "text and documentation" come into play. The gap between unchanging text and changing reality makes interpretation an important means of connecting the two. When divisions occur within a culture and traditions are broken, members of society need to make decisions and choose what order to embody the best and most authentic traditions. In this process, it is crucial to strengthen the value component and identity of the memory content.

In ancient times, mnemonics enhanced memory through imagined spaces, and its earliest medium was spatialization. Nowadays, creating residential space through landscape design is also a manifestation of memory technology. The overall space of ancient Xuzhou houses has become an activator of cultural memories. Judging from the content. The cultural memory of ancient Xuzhou residential spaces includes material culture, myths and legends, major events in the history of villages and towns that are closely related to people's daily lives, as well as intangible cultural heritage such as various skills, stories, folk arts, and local dramas. Formally, the presentation of this cultural memory has changed from informal, naturally developed interpersonal interactions and daily life to more ritualistic social interactions. Through transcending ordinary celebrations, festivals and standardized and shaped memories, people's perception and identification with a place are deepened.

In terms of media, the robustness of ancient architectural remains plays an important role. The roof trusses, beams, column foundations, foundation stones, etc. in the building all carry the function of solidifying memory. The external forms of houses, such as the tiles in front of the eaves, the wood carvings on the doors and windows, and the decoration of the capitals in front of the corridors, etc., behind what seems to be just plastic art, actually contains rich folk cultural characteristics. These characteristics are closely related to long-term ecological concepts and require designers to explore and understand them through in-depth fieldwork and research.

The carrier of cultural memory is not limited to material forms, but also includes various symbols and expressions such as texts, images, buildings, and dramas. The subjects involved in this inheritance process include government officials, scholars, artists, poets, teachers, community residents and local people, forming a diverse cultural community.

In the residential space of ancient Xuzhou, cultural memory, as an abstract concept, is interpreted and reconstructed by historians as official memory. Some groups that got rich first used history as a kind of cultural taste to "memory". Artists advocate the creation of "anti-landscape" art, hoping to express their artistic concepts through minimal intervention in the landscape. Environmental historians start from

"intensive agriculture" and explore the cyclical model of "from land excavation to technological innovation to the depletion of natural resources" in Western history.

As the book "Landscape and Memory" states, we need to show the most noble thing we have lost - the close connection between culture and nature. As a new form of expressing the past, writing not only records things that are no longer used, but also broadens the horizons of social consensus. In the process of initial communication memory and oral transmission, the emergence of phonetic characters transformed pure symbols into words. Reading text involves not only the work of the visual senses, but also thinking and imagination. The purpose of intensive reading is to emphasize the significance of media in the process of mediation, transfer, and translation on the basis of interpreting the encoding of abstract text symbols. Through such reading, words realize the transfer of cultural memory to material carriers. Text appears as a new form of material existence. Cultural memory reappears in new communication situations in the form of text and as a vivid carrier. The information stored in text can be accumulated, criticized, rewritten, disseminated and reinterpreted.

The cultural memory of ancient Xuzhou residential space is a kind of group memory, which is reflected in a single text. Local chronicles and other historical materials, as well as corresponding existing village and town buildings, landscapes, humanistic activities, and images, usually become the support point of memory. The landscape within the residential community space is an important medium for cultural memory. For example, a village's most important public buildings such as temples, holy places and ancestral halls, as well as other memorable places such as memorial sites, festival sites, and places with regional characteristics. Such as lanes, old streets, courtyards, old houses, teahouses, etc., all constitute the elements of the ancient Xuzhou residential landscape and show the richness and variety of daily life in the city.

The process of memory symbolization is the process of memory from storage to reconstruction, or the process in which "a certain form" is presented, expressed and demonstrated. As an outstanding art of memory, literature creates vivid worlds of images. These image worlds will inevitably be integrated into the construction of spatial memory.

Xuzhou has rich cultural works, from "The Song of the Wind" by Liu Bang, the founder of the Han Dynasty (Figure 47), to "The Story of the Crane Pavilion" by the great writer Su Shi. These works describe different historical scenes and cultural atmospheres, such as the elegant gathering of literati at Fanghe Pavilion, the melancholy emotion of Yanzi Tower, the hustle and bustle of Confucian Temple Street, the perseverance of the archway of the thoroughfare of the five provinces, the grandeur of Pengzu Tower, and the joy of Kuaizai Pavilion. In the process of large-scale urbanization, more and more towns are packaged by various "memory imagination" arts, resulting in the transformation of many valuable historical places, the alienation of rural space, and the erosion of natural texture. Rural memories are gradually degrading, and the memory gap between urban and rural areas is rapidly widening.



Figure 45 Liu Bang, the founder of the Han Dynasty, and his work "Song of the Wind"

Source: <https://www.nipic.com/show/8966075.html>

The construction of contemporary cultural memory is urgent. In order to protect and maintain the cultural landscape of ancient Xuzhou residential memory media, it is necessary to realize the two major functions of memory storage and reconstruction in the process of restoration, repetition, interpretation and reproduction, so that excellent traditional culture can be continued. This is not only the protection of ancient Xuzhou residential space, but also the cherishment of our common cultural memory.

#### 2.2.2 The value of constructing spatial memory of ancient Xuzhou houses

Memory is not just a repository of the individual mind, it plays a key role in shaping personality and preparing for the future. The importance of memory lies in the display of its active role, which is significantly affected by the social environment. This influence is most evident in the degree to which subjects of memory—whether individuals or groups—pay attention to questions such as "What is unforgettable?" The "memory community" Nora refers to is exactly the product of this social influence.



Figure 46 Elderly people in joy of harvest

Source: <http://www.ahjjjc.gov.cn/sheying/p/58559.html>

Rural culture, with its strong and natural characteristics, has long been an important part of people's spiritual life (Figure 48). The core values of rural areas, such as the spirit of virtue, unity and cooperation, as well as the folk customs of self-improvement, diligence, studiousness, simplicity and honesty, are all indispensable components of it. However, in today's market environment where consumerism prevails, the spatial memory and inherent aesthetic value of ancient Xuzhou residences are gradually being diluted. This change is not only at the material level, but also at the cultural and moral level. Traditional ethical concepts that have been formed over a long period of time, such as "loyalty and trustworthiness, justice for husbands and tenderness for wives", are facing unprecedented challenges.

The reality of "leaving home and leaving home" prompts people to conduct profound moral reflections on values. This is no longer just a practical issue, but has risen to the level of moral value orientation. In the face of this situation, the only way to actively explore the diverse values of rural culture is through cultural integration and innovation. Only by adhering to the people-centered value orientation and practical principles can we effectively and steadily promote the integration of rural culture and modernization. The value of ancient Xuzhou residential culture plays a vital role in this process.

(1) "Unity of man and nature" is an important value of the spatial memory of ancient Xuzhou houses

Observing the evolutionary history of human civilization, we can see that the formation of values is a process of gradual refinement and development. It gradually takes shape from blood, kinship, race to the broad recognition of the country and even all mankind. In China, the formation of environmental ethics particularly highlights the harmonious coexistence between man and nature.

The idea of "the unity of nature and man"<sup>36</sup> in ancient Chinese philosophy not only had important practical significance at that time, but also has far-reaching

<sup>36</sup> "Unity of man and nature" is a classic Taoist thought

reference value today (Figure 49). As the core of traditional Chinese rural culture, farming culture has always maintained a stable and vital state. It is an important resource supporting the integrated development of urban and rural areas.



Figure 47 Zhang Daoling, founder of Taoism, native of Feng County, Xuzhou  
Source: <http://www.ahjjc.gov.cn/sheying/p/58559.html>

The idea of "unity of man and nature" occupies a core position in Chinese culture and even the entire Eastern culture. The core of this idea is the integrity and interconnection between all things in the universe and between heaven, earth and man. It is the foundation of ancient Chinese philosophy and the embodiment of the dialectics of nature. In Confucianism, the "unity of man and nature" emphasizes human-centeredness and the pursuit of human moral beauty; while in Taoism, it emphasizes nature-centeredness and advocates ecological balance and harmonious symbiosis. Both schools of thought emphasize that the universe is an integrated and symbiotic whole, and promote the concept of respecting and complying with nature.

In this way, this idea has become the value orientation for the construction of spatial memory of contemporary Xuzhou houses, the ideological basis for reshaping the values and methodology of the complex human settlement environment system of contemporary Xuzhou houses, and plays an important role in maintaining the cultural and ecological balance of Xuzhou's rural areas. Concepts such as "loving all things universally" and "taking time to restrain growth and using time to nourish growth" in Confucianism reflect Confucian respect and reverence for nature. Confucianism pays more attention to the humanistic aspect of "benevolence, justice, etiquette, wisdom and trust". By extending family ethical relationships to the entire country's political and ethical order, it reflects an idea that pursues humanistic virtues.

In Xuzhou, the water and soil have nurtured its unique cultural spirit. Xuzhou people have been deeply influenced by Taoism, and the Taoist philosophy's emphasis on the blending of mind and matter and the harmonious coexistence of man and nature has been deeply integrated into the daily life and cultural practices of Xuzhou people.

Chinese landscape painting art integrates the ideas of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism in terms of imagery, color, and music, and shows the beauty of nature. The painter takes nature as his teacher, integrates his emotions and thoughts with nature, and creates many masterpieces handed down from generation to generation. These works are not only a praise of natural beauty, but also the embodiment of philosophical thoughts. By watching and appreciating these works of art, people can better understand and feel the charm of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. The philosophical thoughts of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism have deeply influenced the form and development of Xuzhou's rural culture. They are deeply reflected in the daily life, values and behaviors of Xuzhou people. This cultural diversity and philosophical integrity provide lasting and far-reaching impetus for the cultural development of Xuzhou.

The design concept of "integration and symbiosis" can be clearly seen in the rural houses in Xuzhou. This philosophy emphasizes finding a balance between diversity and overall unity, that is, the harmonious coexistence of different things. "Integration and symbiosis" is not only an ecological concept, but also a profound understanding of life and culture. This concept has been fully reflected in Xuzhou's residential architecture and environmental design. It is a sublimation of the concept of "harmony between man and nature". Architects regard architecture, environment and people as an organic whole, and pay attention to the integration of time and space and the interplay of virtuality and reality. This design concept is not only a pursuit of architecture and art, but also a profound reflection on life and culture.

All in all, the concept of "harmony between man and nature" is the core of Xuzhou's rural culture. It is not only a value concept, but also a way of life. Through an in-depth understanding and practice of this concept, we can better understand and appreciate the unique charm of Xuzhou's rural culture, and at the same time make our own contribution to the maintenance and development of this culture. The spatial memory and landscape design of Xuzhou's residential buildings are not only a review of the past, but also an expectation for the future. Through the inheritance and development of this culture, we can better understand the relationship between man and nature, man and society, and man and himself, thereby building a more harmonious and sustainable society.

## (2) Cultural identity is an important value in the spatial memory of ancient Xuzhou houses

Agricultural civilization is the source of Chinese civilization. With the disintegration of traditional rural lifestyles, people are eagerly seeking to identify themselves. In the 1990s, the economy of China's eastern coastal areas developed rapidly, while Xuzhou, located in the Huaihai Economic Zone, lagged behind. Therefore, many migrant workers in the Xuzhou area have flocked to eastern cities to seek development in urban life through unremitting labor. Decades later, some of the first migrant workers to move to the city bought properties in the city, while others

chose to return to the countryside and rebuild their homes. As the countryside gradually faces the challenge of being forgotten and hollowed out, Xuzhou residents have an increasingly urgent need for identity, and the countryside has become the key to seeking consensus and reliance.

Rural culture is human behavior produced in the process of relying on and transforming nature. It includes traditional memories and the characteristics of rural nature and culture. Re-understanding these cultural essences is the key to the sustainable development of rural culture and helps to form a united social force. In the three mutually independent and mutually supporting fields of market economy, government role and civil society, the reconstruction and innovation of rural culture can be carried out in an orderly manner at a more complete level.

In recent years, surrounding the dialogue between tradition and modernity, traditional villages have attracted more and more attention from modern society. Both the government and social forces are paying attention to the discovery and protection of traditional villages. People's willingness to return to the countryside is unprecedentedly high. This nostalgia for their hometown stems from the emotional connection and active choice of past memories. In order to achieve cultural identity, we need scientific verification of individual memories and correction of historical materials to connect the memories of current and past generations. Within this memory framework, people create language, norms, and customs through communication, and individual memories gradually merge into collective memories to form a common social consensus. These social consensuses can therefore determine how and what we recall.



Figure 48 Chinese students and Thai teachers celebrate the New Year together  
Source: Photographed by Suo chao, 2024

In Jan Assmann's view, the primary characteristic of cultural memory is its social nature, which helps consolidate identity or coordinate group relations. Nostalgic memory is not only an excellent starting point for understanding the issue of "identity", but also one of the basic paths for exploring the development of rural space in contemporary China. From the Dragon Boat Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival to the Spring Festival that touches the hearts of hundreds of millions of Chinese people, these traditional festivals passed down from generation to generation are full of human warmth and emotion. These festivals and traditions make people in foreign countries feel spiritual comfort and peace (Figure 50). The cultural memory in ancient Xuzhou houses plays a role in connection and continuity at the social and temporal levels, forming a representative "symbolic meaning system", and this system is generally formed throughout China.

### 2.3 The influence of cultural memory on the form of ancient Xuzhou houses

The shape of ancient Xuzhou houses can be understood in terms of the whole and parts, and can also be divided into indoor and outdoor parts. On the whole, the location, layout, and external environment of residential buildings are all part of the form. If divided into parts, the main room, pot room, bedrooms, entrance hall, architectural structure, and architectural decoration of the residence are all integral parts of the whole. Ancient Xuzhou houses serve as a memory carrier of cultural memory. The mythical stories, humanistic history, values, and family ideals produced during the thousands of years of ancient Xuzhou's history are all recorded in the architectural space. Later, through the transformation of architects, the cultural foundation and artistic connotation of cultural memory were reflected in the spatial layout, ethical culture and lifestyle of houses, which indirectly shaped the special form of ancient Xuzhou houses.

As the cultural foundation of ancient Xuzhou houses, cultural memory has profoundly affected the concepts and styles of architectural design. These houses not only reflect local construction techniques, but also integrate historical traditions and regional characteristics. For example, details such as the shape of the roofs of the houses, carved eaves and painted buildings are all representations and inheritance of Xuzhou's history and culture. The integration of this kind of cultural memory makes ancient Xuzhou houses unique in form, distinguishing them from the architectural styles in other regions. (Figure 51)

The artistic connotation of ancient Xuzhou houses, especially the decorative art, use of colors, and spatial layout, are also deeply affected by cultural memory. The paintings on the walls, the carved patterns and the layout of the courtyard not only display the local artistic style, but also reflect the respect and inheritance of traditional culture. The embodiment of this artistic connotation enables the houses to display a profound cultural heritage and aesthetic value in form.

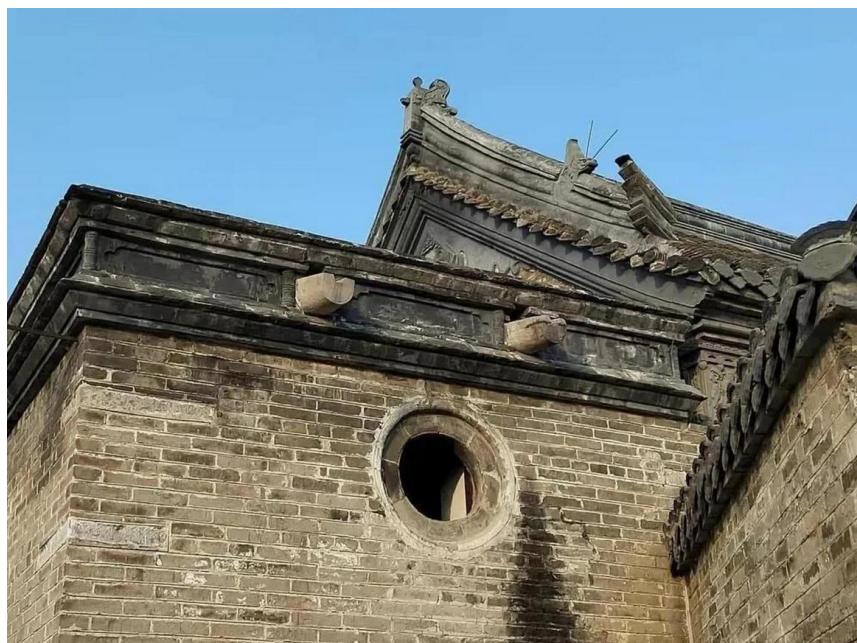


Figure 49 Decoration in Tanhua Mansion  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

Cultural memory also affects the community culture of residential houses and the lifestyle of residents. Residential houses are not only living spaces, but also places for community interactions and cultural activities. This kind of community culture with residential buildings as the core has prompted residential buildings to pay more attention to the design of public spaces in terms of form, and strengthened the interaction and connections between community members.

Cultural memory has an important impact on residents' identity. As a material carrier of identity and cultural inheritance, houses' morphological design reflects respect for ancestors, history and tradition. This respect and inheritance of cultural memory makes ancient Xuzhou houses a bridge connecting the past and the present.

### 3. Spatial memory transmission of ancient Xuzhou houses

Before delving into the transmission of spatial memory in ancient Xuzhou houses, it is necessary to point out that this concept is still new in the academic world. Searching for the phrase "Spatial Memory Transmission" in Google Scholar only found 8 relevant articles, 7 of which were from the medical field and 1 was about dance performance.

For example, in the medical field, the medical paper "Reticular adhesions are a distinct class of cell-matrix adhesions that mediate attachment during mitosis" (Lock, J. G., et al., 2018). Reticular adhesions, a specific type of cell adhesion complex, are being studied throughout the medical field. Adhesion mechanisms during cell division: Both papers focus on how cells maintain adhesion to the ECM during mitosis. The importance of spatial memory transfer in cell division and cell-ECM adhesion Spatial memory transfer is often related to how cells maintain spatial orientation to their external environment during division.

There is only one article in the field of dance performance titled "Moving Together: Building a spirit of solidarity through site-specific performance in post-Katrina New Orleans" (Twardowski, W., 2022) that uses this phrase. This article

provides observations on how the performing arts function within specific social and cultural contexts. It focuses on community rebuilding and the preservation of cultural identity in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Here, "spatial memory transfer" is used as a way to describe how shared memories are shared and reproduced among community members through artistic and performance activities. It is worth noting that this phrase does not appear as a keyword in the academic results examined so far, which implies that this may be the first time that we have systematically proposed and applied this concept in the academic field.

In this context, the concept of "spatial memory transfer" is introduced into the study of ancient Xuzhou houses. We have not only opened up new research directions in the fields of art design and cultural heritage. It also provides a new perspective for an in-depth understanding of how these historical buildings transmit culture and historical memory between different generations, and captures the importance of spatial positioning and environmental interaction in the transmission of cultural memory.

### 3.1 Concept of spatial memory transfer

Spatial memory transfer is a process of maintaining and spreading social and cultural values through the design, use and evolution of architecture and space in the passage of time. This process involves not only the preservation and restoration of physical space, but more importantly, the understanding and representation of those spaces that have been given specific meaning through historical events, characters, or social changes. In the disciplines of cultural heritage and art design, spatial memory transfer can be understood as capturing and expressing the historical and cultural spirit of a place through design. This involves how to use the layout, style and function of a space, as well as the symbolism and emotional value associated with it, to tell the story of an area and inspire people's cultural identity.

In art design, especially in the field of environmental design, the practice of spatial memory transfer includes modern interpretations of historical buildings and cultural sites. For example, in the design and renovation of ancient Xuzhou houses, designers not only focused on restoring the physical space of the building, but also focused on how to retain and express the historical value and cultural significance of these buildings in modern life.

Although contemporary people have paid more and more attention to the restoration of tradition in the contemporary era, it cannot be escaped that the focus of most designers' work is often just the application of traditional elements on the surface. For example, Huizhou architecture is a style of Chinese residential buildings. Because it is listed as a world cultural heritage and the minimalist contrasting form of black and white is very consistent with modern aesthetics. Therefore, Huizhou architecture, as a cultural hotspot, has been adopted and used as reference by designers from all over China. Huizhou architecture was originally just an architectural style of houses in southern Anhui, but it has appeared in large numbers in areas with different cultural backgrounds in China, using it as a traditional element. (Figures 52 and 53 show the prototype of Huizhou architecture and its imitation in Xuzhou)



Figure 50 Huizhou architecture  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2021



Figure 51 Imitation of Huizhou architecture in Xuzhou  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2021

For designers, insight into culture is often the most basic. Only by tapping into the local culture can we avoid the rise of appropriationism in the design industry. Restoring ancient architectural forms can only complete traditional physical restoration, and mining local cultural memories can spread the historical value and cultural significance of architecture to local people in modern life.

In this process, the designers strive to capture and reproduce the emotions and memories associated with the architecture. This may take the form of incorporating specific historical elements into the design, or creating spatial layouts that evoke memories of a specific period or event. Of course, the basis of all this is to find the channel connecting cultural memory with personal or collective memory. For example, ancient Xuzhou houses are storage containers that store a large amount of cultural memory in Xuzhou, and the process of spatial memory transmission is the channel that connects the memories sealed in the ancient house space. Spatial memory transfer may be reflected in the architectural style, spatial layout, and traditional

customs and community activities associated with these spaces. These elements not only constitute the daily life environment of residents, but also become an important medium for transmitting and maintaining regional culture, history and social identity. By maintaining, using and telling stories about these spaces, spatial memories are passed on and preserved between generations.

### 3.2 The process of transmitting spatial memory of ancient Xuzhou houses

Although memories are stored in the space of ancient houses, from a macro perspective, this memory is chaotic and borderless. In the space of ancient houses, the structural principles that promote the formation of memory forms and boundaries are uncertain, because the existence of these structural principles stems from the group's own needs for identity, norms, and positioning. This is not to say that the contents of stored memories are essentially valid, valuable, or touching; they may or may not be entirely so. It depends on the readers of the information, their identities, experiences, emotions and cultural values.

Assmann believes that the interaction between symbols and memory is an ongoing process that occurs at all levels, and this applies especially to the "memory of the will." Whenever we think of things we don't want to forget, we always create various tools to help us remember. For example, the famous knotted rope notes, national monuments, etc. are all tools of this type. These auxiliary tools are also called "memory fields" (lieux de memoire). They condense the memory of an entire country or religious group, such as monuments, rituals, festivals, customs, etc.

There is no doubt that the houses that people live in daily are not tools with commemorative significance as their primary purpose, but the ancient Xuzhou houses do now carry this function. Ancient residential buildings with a certain history have been listed in the catalog of government protection. For example, the Ming and Qing residential buildings in Xuzhou's Hubu Mountain are now listed as China's national-level historical protection units. From the perspective of the goal of protection, the focus is definitely not on the residential properties of the ancient residential buildings, but on their cultural properties. The cultural attribute of residential architectural space is a kind of "memory field" (lieux de memoire). They condense the memory of the entire region, such as family ethics, rituals, customs, intangible cultural heritage, etc. This "memory field" is a system of symbols that enables individuals living in this tradition to find a sense of belonging. That is to realize one's potential to become a member of a social group and learn, remember and share a culture in this group.

The Legendary Topography of the Holy Land in the Gospels (1941) was the last book published by Halbwachs during his lifetime. In this work, he applied the concept of memory to the analysis of various symbols and monuments, showing that memory and various symbols are inextricably entangled. Among their complex entangled relationships, we believe that one of them involves the transfer process of spatial memory. Symbols are containers for storing memories, just like a mobile hard drive that records relevant memory information. Houses and people are like two devices that convey information and communicate through symbols. This process involves the encoding and decoding of information, that is, the inheritance and acceptance of cultural memory, and the continued existence of what is accepted.

### 3.3 Spatial transmission media of ancient Xuzhou houses

The study of the spatial transmission media of ancient Xuzhou houses requires the help of semiotic theory, mainly the semiotic interpretation method. The medium of spatial delivery emphasizes the efficiency of conveying information to the viewer of the symbol and tracks how the symbol operates within a larger meaning.

Symbols are meaningful perceptions that can be recognized by the human body's senses. There are many schools of thought in history, such as the Saussurean school, the Peircean school, etc. This article can refer to the symbol classification standards of the American scholar Peirce. Peirce divided symbols into three types: icons, indexes, and symbols.<sup>37</sup> These three types of symbols respectively correspond to three ways of meaning reference - explicit, implicit and metaphorical. Therefore, the process of symbolic reference is the process of transmitting information. Similar symbols and their referents are formed by simplifying things in real life, and people can project the images inside into real life. Xie Yanjun believes that this kind of symbol has no inherent causal connection and no social traditional agreement, so it means more uncertainty and trial and error.<sup>38</sup> I don't agree with Xie Yanjun's statement. This method of similarity is actually the simplest way to transmit signals. If the similarity of the symbol itself is not enough and the interpreter cannot recognize it, it means that the design of this symbol does not meet the requirements of similar symbols.

According to Peirce's definition, there is a causal connection between a signifier as a signifier and its referent. The signifier is the representation of the signified, such as the road sign before the car turns, the wind flag indicating the wind direction, the mercury column of the thermometer indicating the temperature, etc. The signifieds of symbols are the result of conventions. For example, in Chinese culture, "plum, orchid, chrysanthemum and bamboo" are used to symbolize the four gentlemen, which falls into this category. The relationship formed between the signifier and the signified is the result of human cultural construction. An accurate grasp of the relationship between the signifier and the signified requires a culturally embedded understanding. Therefore, China not only uses "plum, orchid, chrysanthemum and bamboo" in calligraphy and painting works (Figure 54), but also often uses it in architecture to express emotions and as a medium to convey information to the outside world.



<sup>37</sup> Peirce, C. S. (1991). *Peirce on signs: Writings on semiotic*. UNC Press Books.P37

<sup>38</sup> Xie Yanjun. *Nostalgia as landscape - the image and representation of nostalgia in tourism experience*



Figure 52 Stone carving with plant patterns used in ancient Xuzhou houses  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

Similar signs, deictic signs, and symbolic signs refer to meanings in ways that correspond to explicit, suggestive, and metaphorical signs. Express is simpler. It refers to clearly giving objective information from a cognitive perspective. This information does not contain individual emotions, emotions or other constructible components, and has a more prominent nature of public information. Suggestive symbols have indirect, implicit, and causal expressive power. They can remind each other and allow the recipient to think of their objects. They usually use some specific signifiers, such as color, texture, texture, etc., to achieve a certain suggestive meaning. Metaphor is a process of comparing A to B based on the auxiliary association of emotions and the relationship between socially agreed symbols and meanings.

However, when exploring the meaning of symbols conveyed by spatial memory, using Peirce's symbol classification framework faces a challenge. Cultural memory represented by symbols is a selective, intentional and constructed emotion. This emotion is based on cultural identity and makes the viewer psychologically attached. It is the emotional identification evoked by certain symbolic forms in a certain situation and background. It is not just a simple process of deciphering the symbols and determining the information. It is when the subject and the situation reach a certain state of fusion of mind and body, making the emotional identification in the situation dynamic. Therefore, if used as a medium for spatial memory transmission, the application of symbols needs to be expanded and discussed.

As mentioned above, the discussion in this article is to construct a framework of spatial memory transmission media based on Peirce's classification of symbols. This analysis framework applies Peirce's original concept of semiotics, and at the same time further expands the viewer's interpretation of symbols into "situation" or "space". It reflects the importance of social and cultural interpretation of symbolic media in residential spaces.

It can be seen that if all landscape symbols are used as a medium for transmitting spatial memory, then the interpretation of the symbols will be complex or intertwined, and may stimulate different spatial reactions. Chinese scholar Xie Yanjun put forward a point of view. Aiming at the explicit, implicit and metaphorical functions of similar

signs, deictic signs and symbolic signs proposed by Peirce. It is necessary to fully consider the impact of social interactions and cultural interactions that occur in situations on the symbolic interpretation behavior of actors, and then the concept of translation is introduced. Therefore, different symbol types and the different meanings they generate will greatly affect the uncertainty of information transmission due to the widespread existence of transfer phenomena before the viewer's behavior occurs.

But I offer a different perspective on the symbolic swivel chair process. Among the three meaning reference modes corresponding to the three types of symbols, there is no doubt that explicit expressions produce the least translation, inspire the most certain behaviors, and require the lowest cultural background. Relatively speaking, the certainty of suggestion is in the middle, and the requirements for cultural background are also in the middle; metaphor produces the most translations, and the certainty of the behavior inspired by the crowd is the lowest, so the requirements for the cultural background of the viewer are the highest. The uncertainty of this transfer precisely forms the threshold of cultural identity. This threshold has a filtering effect. It can easily make it easier for people with local cultural memory to understand the content of symbolic translation. It not only achieves the function of transmitting information, but also turns memory into a bond and forms a bonded memory.

According to the above analysis, the medium used to transmit information in the spatial context of ancient houses actually faces an extremely complex symbol system. Various cultural symbols are regarded as architectural decorations. Their symbolic meanings are embedded in certain situations due to the cultural attributes given by cultural memory, and the main symbols and background symbols jointly achieve the role of transmitting information.

Therefore, the information transmission of each symbol needs to be completed at the corresponding level or stage. In Peirce's classification, a symbol generally can only belong to one of similar symbols, indicator symbols or symbolic symbols, which reflects the mutual exclusivity and extension of symbol classification. Similar symbols are an intuitive expression and do not require cultural background; indicator symbols are an implicit expression of cause-and-effect relationships and are relatively intuitive. Symbols are symbols that have no legitimate connection with the object, which are what Saussure calls "arbitrary/arbitrary" symbols. They are social and cultural conventions, and the nature of normative conventions is social.

Therefore, the nature of norms and conventions in different societies is different, so symbols cannot be universal, but similar symbols and indicators are possible or capable of being understood by each society. As Nietzsche said: People need the help of memory to form bonds. Therefore, when discussing the choice of symbols for the transmission of spatial memory, in the dimension of cultural memory, symbols are more social and cultural, and are more suitable to become a medium for the transmission of spatial memory under cultural identity.

### summary

Nostalgia is an emotional expression of cultural identity. As a specific rural landscape heritage, ancient Xuzhou folk houses are both cultural heritage and symbolic carriers, carrying rich historical memories and cultural connotations. In constructing the spatial memory of ancient Xuzhou folk houses, cultural memory adopts various methods such as inheriting and retaining traditional architectural styles and elements, focusing on spatial layout and sequence, designing in conjunction with the natural environment, and using symbols and symbols to convey meaning. The symbolic elements of folk houses not only constitute the daily life environment of residents, but also become an important medium for transmitting and maintaining regional culture, history and social identity. This can ultimately be passed on and preserved between generations through spatial memory transmission.



## CHAPTER IV

### The artistic characteristics and artistic value of ancient residential buildings in the dimension of symbols

The Third research objective is to analyze the meaning of residential symbols. We can deeply understand not only the visual and aesthetic value of ancient houses, but also their profound impact on culture and society.

Art should say that the meaning it expresses is what we call "artistic". "Artistic" includes the characteristics and value of art. This itself requires us to pursue and master it, because it is human nature to find the meaning behind things.

Studying and analyzing the symbolic meaning of ancient Xuzhou houses can not only reveal the artistic characteristics of ancient Xuzhou architecture, but also decipher the symbolic system containing profound cultural significance and social value. Our article aims to deepen our understanding of the artistic value and artistic characteristics of ancient Xuzhou houses through the perspective of semiotics, and to reveal the cultural logic and symbolic expression behind them.

#### 1. Artistic characteristics of ancient Xuzhou residential architectural decoration

The composition of residential architectural decoration is based on people's perception and experience of the landscape environment, and is developed from two aspects: formal composition and physical construction. Decorative symbols are divided into two levels: surface information and deep place spirit, that is, "external physical appearance and internal meaning expression." The surface information corresponds to the form of the residential space, such as space, shape, color, light, material, texture, form and style, etc., showing the artistic beauty. The deep structure corresponds to the meaning and spirit of the place, the organizational order, and the close connection between people, culture, society and the environment.

##### 1.1 Architectural decoration attributes of ancient Xuzhou houses

The combination of various elements of ancient Xuzhou residential decoration to form a specific logical order is a "significant form"<sup>39</sup>. This is a profound knowledge in the study of aesthetics. The sense of order and formal beauty come from life and are higher than life. Shape, color, and five-sense experience are all components of formal beauty. However, aesthetics in the perceptual field has not yet entered the deep structure of landscape language through the transformation of emotions and concepts. The ancient Xuzhou houses and the medium of spatial memory transmission itself cannot carry any meaning. Only through the psychological process of people's emotional images and imagination can we realize the symbolic meaning, value orientation, aesthetic ideals and social concepts behind it, and then complete the deep expression of spatial symbol language.

<sup>39</sup> "Significant form" was proposed by the British formalist esthetician Clive Bell in his book "Art". It means a special, noble "aesthetic emotion" that is different from daily emotional experience and excludes all considerations about real life.

### 1.1.1 Cultural attributes in the architectural decoration attributes of ancient Xuzhou houses

In China's thousands-year feudal social system, traditional feudal ideas not only influenced people's production and lifestyle, but were also embodied in traditional residential buildings and decorations. Ancient craftsmen often expressed widely spread symbolic images in the form of art in residential decoration, thereby achieving the purpose of spreading moral and ethical values. It can be said that the traditional houses in a region are the carrier of regional culture, and the cultural connotations contained in them can be unearthed from the decoration of the houses. As one of the areas with the longest history and culture in China, Xuzhou area, coupled with its special geographical location, has endowed ancient Xuzhou traditional houses with rich cultural connotations.

Traditional Chinese architecture has continued the overall characteristics of the courtyard-style distribution of the wooden structure system for thousands of years. Taking the Qinling Mountains and the Huaihe River as the boundary, it is divided into two major systems, the north and the south, with obvious differences in style. The Xuzhou area has a special geographical location, with climatic characteristics from both the north and the south. The temperature is moderate and the overall natural conditions are superior. Culturally, it also integrates the cultural characteristics of the north and the south, forming a unique cultural connotation of the traditional houses in Xuzhou area.

Judging from the basic structure and shape, the courtyard form of Xuzhou houses is closed and introverted. It adopts the traditional Chinese central axis layout, reflecting the Chinese philosophy of "unity of man and nature"<sup>40</sup> and Confucian moral ethics. Due to the special climate environment, the temperature is low in winter and the need to keep warm, coupled with the long-term introverted character, the ancient Xuzhou houses adopted a closed system similar to the traditional courtyard houses in the north. However, influenced by the high temperature and strong light in summer as well as the more open social thinking in southern China, the layout of ancient Xuzhou residences also had the "saddle-shaped" triple courtyard form commonly used in Jiangnan residences.

In terms of the overall structure, the roofs and exterior walls of ancient Xuzhou houses should have both the thickness of northern houses and the lightness of southern houses to withstand the cold in winter and the sultry heat and humidity in summer. Therefore, ancient Xuzhou houses usually had a column-and-beam structure. The beam frame is larger in size, either with brackets or pillars supporting beams and purlins, or with horizontal, vertical and vertical columns, beams and pavilions interlaced to form a whole space. From the outline, it looks like the Chinese character "JIN"<sup>41</sup>, also known as

<sup>40</sup> "Unity of man and nature" is a Chinese philosophical thought. The heaven mentioned in Taoism mostly refers to nature and the way of heaven. It refers to the harmony between heaven and man.

<sup>41</sup> The Chinese character for JIN is “金”

"JIN-shaped beam". The effect gives people a sense of moderation and solemnity, which is unique to traditional houses in Xuzhou area.

Its exterior styling also reflects its flexibility and versatility. Like the shape of the roof ridge, the roof ridge in Xuzhou is between the warped ridge in the south and the flat ridge in the north. It has a slight curvature and looks very natural. This is also a manifestation of the "moderate peace" in Xuzhou culture. Most of the exterior walls are made of blue bricks and stones, using its special construction techniques, which are called "Raw inside and cooked outside"<sup>42</sup>. The wall is built in two layers. The outer layer is made of bricks to form a plain wall, and the inner layer is made of earthen rafters. This not only saves the cost of construction, but also has a thermal insulation effect to keep the house warm in winter and cool in summer.

Although the Xuzhou area is located in a plain area, there are many hills. The special geographical environment makes Xuzhou rich in stone and grass resources. Commonly used building materials include bricks, stones, rammed earth, wooden boards and even fences. From the color point of view, the residential colors in Xuzhou area are relatively simple and natural, with blue bricks or white powder walls, gray or black roofs, and the wooden parts are made of natural wood or painted with tung oil, and the overall tone is elegant and pure. This is because Xu culture and Han culture are prevalent in Xuzhou area. In addition, the concept of seeking disaster and avoiding good luck can also be seen everywhere in the houses in Xuzhou area. For example, there is a folk saying in Xuzhou that no mulberry trees should be planted in front of the courtyard, no willow trees should be planted behind the courtyard, and no locust trees should be planted in the courtyard. This is because the pronunciation or usage scenarios of these trees are very unlucky. People in Xuzhou like to plant trees such as pomegranates, osmanthus trees and jujube trees. For example, there are many fruits in pomegranates, which can mean that the family will have many children and good fortune. Xuzhou people hope that the characteristics of these trees will also bring good luck to the family. Another example is that in traditional houses in Xuzhou, the number of rafters cannot be an odd number, because this symbolizes that the family can only give birth to one son. In the traditional culture of ancient China that favored sons over daughters, this represented misfortune.

### 1.1.2 Material attributes in the architectural decoration attributes of ancient Xuzhou houses

The material attributes of ancient Xuzhou houses follow the characteristics of local materials and flexible structure. Chinese people often say: "If you rely on mountains, you can eat mountains; if you rely on water, you can eat water." This means adapting measures to local conditions. There are many material materials in ancient Xuzhou houses, which vary greatly according to different regions and different identities. For ordinary people, the courtyard walls and house walls of traditional houses are generally built with natural plants, soil or stones, while high-ranking officials and dignitaries use more expensive materials. The methods are

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<sup>42</sup> Raw on the inside and cooked on the outside because the bricks are fired, so they are cooked, and the materials inside are unprocessed, so they are raw.

adapted to local conditions, and the construction methods also have regional differences.

### (1) Plant materials used in ancient Xuzhou houses

Fence material refers to a material used as a barrier in construction or life. Wood is generally used as a roof structure and is generally widely used in agricultural areas.

In ancient times, ordinary houses in Xuzhou mostly used materials such as straw, reeds, and braided fences (Figure 55). The most common materials were straw and reeds. The handle of the fence material is about 8 centimeters thick, and the length should be the length of the fan of the house. And it is folded in the middle of the spine rod, commonly known as Tongshaozi. The braided fence is mostly made of acacia and wicker, and is laid out piece by piece on the purlins. House timbers are mostly made of locust, elm and poplar, including beam heads, fork heads, ridge sticks, ridge sticks, lintel sticks, etc. Traditional small tile-roofed houses also have wood such as citrons and purlins. The wood materials are mostly nanmu, cypress, willow, etc. Until the 1970s, cement rods, etc. were mostly used to build houses.



Figure 53 Fence material rooftops of ancient houses in Zhakou Village

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2022

After the 1990s, the cement poured roof type appeared, which is leak-proof and strong. The diameter of building materials such as purlins and reed fences has been completely eliminated.

## (2) Soil is a natural building material

Xuzhou is located in the Northern Jiangsu Plain<sup>43</sup>. The large amount of plain land makes Xuzhou rich in agricultural materials. As a necessary element for the survival of crops, soil is also the cheapest building material in Xuzhou. People in some areas use soil to build walls and build houses



Figure 54 Soil-material houses in Liyushan Village

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

The gated mud wall is the oldest simple construction method in Xuzhou, commonly known as the Lu Bu Zhan House. This kind of house is very narrow, mostly with one or two rooms. About 4 meters wide. The method is: first build a soil trench around the house, about 30 centimeters wide and more than 10 centimeters deep, and plant wooden stakes at the four corners, the center of the gable wall and both sides of the door as support frames. If the house is wider, plant two more columns on both sides of the spine. Finally, the roots of the straw (sorghum trees) are buried downward in the soil trench, and 3-4 rows are clamped on top and then clamped to make them into one body. This is the straw wall. Finally, ridge sticks are tied to the upright posts, straw or wooden strips are spread on the sticks to make a roof fence, and mud fan grass is covered on top. Then use mud to mud the inside and outside of the wall to form a house wall. Some courtyard walls also use this method, but without mud.

Building walls with boards is also a traditional house building method in Xuzhou. Use two wooden boards to sandwich a space of about 60 cm, fill it with wet soil, and use a wooden tamper and stone pestle to compact it, commonly known as "beating the wall with boards." After laying one layer, take off the wooden boards and wait until they are almost dry before filling the plywood with soil and building the wall until the required height is reached. Another way is to step on the wall.

<sup>43</sup> It is rich in rice, peanuts, cotton, corn and other crops. It is one of China's commercial grain bases

To step on the wall is to mix soil with water and mud, and mix wheat straw and the like into the mud to make mud bones and bones, commonly known as foreign ribs. Use a two-tooth or three-tooth iron hairpin to turn over the soil two or three times, and then you can build a wall with one hairpin and one hairpin, which is also called stacking the wall or stepping on the wall. The wall is about 1 meter high and 60-80 centimeters thick. After stepping on the wall, you need to paint the wall. Use the small iron hairpin legs to brush downward little by little along the edge of the wall to make the wall steep and smooth. When building a house, the earthen wall is usually built in three steps, one step at a time, and the wall can be stepped on again after each step.

Adobe walls are a mass-produced wall-building method. Use soil, grass and mud, and place the mud in a wooden billet, commonly known as a block mold. The general block mold is 50 × 40 cm. First, hammer the four corners with both hands, then smooth the surface, and then lift the mold of the adobe block to form an adobe block. Then, the adobe block is repeatedly placed in mud to remove the adobe block. About 300 blocks can be removed in a day. The process of removing adobe bricks usually involves the cooperation of 2-3 people, with two people holding shovels and one person removing the adobe bricks. When it is almost dry in the sun, stand the bricks piece by piece to dry, and then you can use this to build a wall, which is called an adobe wall. This standardized method of building walls can improve work efficiency.

### (3) Stone materials are the basis for the construction of ancient Xuzhou houses

The mountains in Xuzhou are not high, but there are many hard rocks, so stone resources are abundant.<sup>44</sup> Stones are widely used in traditional Xuzhou houses for three main reasons (Figure 57).



<sup>44</sup> There are a few hilly and mountainous areas in central and eastern Xuzhou. The altitude of hills is generally around 100-200 meters, and the hilly and mountainous area accounts for about 9.4% of the city.



Figure 55 Stone-material houses in Zhakou Village  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2022

One is to build houses on mountains, where stone resources are abundant. It is necessary to dig out mountains and quarry stones, and level a part of the ground. The quarried stones can be used to build walls. In the houses of ordinary people, because it is easy to obtain stone for the houses that live close to the mountains, they can quarry stone for the walls. In addition, except for the roof, all materials are generally made of stone. For example, villages such as Jushan, Chefushan, and Youshan in Pizhou City use bluestone blocks from the mountains to build walls. Villagers in Daizhuang, Chahe and Lianfang areas built walls with red stones. Some villages in Xinglou use local materials and use sandstone to build walls.

Before and after the founding of New China, the stone wall was a "dry-cha tile wall". That is to say, the stone is built up stone by stone without filling the gaps with soil and mortar. After the 1970s, lime sand or cement sand was often used to fill the gaps, which is called "grey wall". In the early 1980s, there was a "waist wall" that combined earth and stone. Houses were built with stone foundation walls more than 1 meter high, with slabs or stepped walls on top. Brick walls were built under the eaves, and adobe walls were built at the top of the house. In the mid-1990s, these wall-building methods were rarely used, and old house walls were gradually phased out and demolished.

Second, building a house on flat land requires stones as a building foundation and moisture-proofing. Because Xuzhou is located on a plain, the soil is relatively soft. Therefore, in traditional house building methods, foundations are excavated according to the direction of the walls. Generally, the depth of excavation shall be subject to hard soil. At this time, large stones will be piled into the pit in a spliced manner and bonded with a material called stone powder. Generally, it will be built to about 50 centimeters above the ground. The width of the stone foundation is also slightly wider than the wall above. This construction method provides strength and moisture resistance.

#### (4) Upgrading of building materials – blue bricks

The origin of blue bricks can be traced back to the Warring States Period in ancient China, when people had begun to make and use blue bricks to build city walls and houses. Over time, green bricks gradually became one of the main materials in oriental architecture. In traditional Chinese architecture, blue bricks are widely used in gardens, temples, palaces, residential buildings and other buildings. The historical and cultural value they carry is self-evident.

The production of green bricks requires the selection of suitable clay as raw material. After a long period of soaking, stirring, filtration and precipitation, the impurities in the clay are removed and the texture is more uniform. Then the clay is poured into the brick mold, and after a series of processes such as pressing, demoulding, drying and high-temperature firing, a strong and durable green brick is finally obtained. There are more than ten kinds of green bricks, and their usage is also different, including city bricks, square bricks, auxiliary bricks, coupon bricks, line bricks, flat bricks, fence bricks, ground bricks and flower tiles. Because of its strong and durable properties, it is widely used by wealthy people



Figure 56 blue bricks-material houses in Hubu Mountain houses

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

Many of the ancient Xuzhou houses that still exist are built with blue bricks and green tiles, and the floors are paved with square tiles. Generally, blue bricks will be built on a bluestone foundation. Many ancient Xuzhou residences have high bluestone foundations. In order to keep warm, the walls are generally thicker, and the inside and outside are coated in the construction of the walls, that is, the outer walls are made of blue bricks and the inner walls are made of adobe. Among the traditional houses in Hubu Mountain, Xuzhou, the walls of the Yu Family Courtyard and the Zheng Family Courtyard are the most typical. This kind of wall treatment is very rare.

Except for the doors, windows and stairs using wood, ancient Xuzhou houses used masonry for other parts. Due to the lack of understanding of the mechanics of stone, ordinary craftsmen usually chisel the stone into tenons and tenons to make the structure resemble wood, which is often caused by the pressure between them. But like the rich people's residences on Hubu Mountain, they cleverly made use of the characteristics of strong pressure and weak elasticity of stone, and adopted the

construction method of laying stones on top of bricks. Until the mid-1980s, the Xuzhou area mostly used all-green brick walls and cement tile roofs. It was not until the 1990s that residential buildings began to use red brick materials for walls.

### 1.2 Decoration techniques of ancient Xuzhou houses

The construction techniques of ancient Xuzhou houses (Xuzhou houses) are traditional skills projects listed in the fourth batch of provincial intangible cultural heritage representative projects in Jiangsu Province.<sup>45</sup> Ancient Xuzhou houses can be said to be a museum of various intangible cultural heritages in Xuzhou area. In the construction of residential houses, decorative techniques such as wood carving, stone carving, brick carving, and clay sculpture were used.

#### 1.2.1 Stone carving is the strongest architectural decoration

Stone carving is a carving made of stone, generally using natural stones such as granite, marble, and pyrophyllite.

Stone is one of the common materials in traditional Chinese houses, and its main feature is its durability. For traditional Chinese residential buildings, stone is firstly a building material and can be used as wall foundation stone. Secondly, stone is also an important decorative material for traditional residential buildings. Stone carving, like brick carving, is an important form of artistic expression in China. It mainly uses grinding, cutting and other methods to create works of art on stone (Figure 59).



Figure 57 Stone carving in Tanhua Mansion

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

China's stone carving craft has a long history. Carving with stone as material has already appeared in the Stone Age. Stone carvings integrated with buildings also have rich types, reasonable construction, ingenious structure and strong artistry. Compared with wood, stone has the advantages of not being afraid of fire, water, and being strong and durable; compared with bricks, stone has the advantage of being corrosion-resistant and more solid.

<sup>45</sup> The protection of representative items of China's intangible cultural heritage is divided into national, provincial, municipal and district levels.



Figure 58 Stone carving in Hubu Mountain houses  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

In ancient Xuzhou, stone was abundant and easy to obtain locally. Therefore, stone was widely used as building and decorative materials in traditional houses. Stone carving decoration is one of the common ways of decorating residential buildings in Xuzhou area. It is commonly found in drum stones, horse bolts, column foundations, etc. Generally speaking, there are two types of carving techniques: relief and round carving. Relief can be divided into multi-level relief, reduced shallow relief, recessed plane carving, etc. Most of the decorations such as stone pillars and standing stone animals are made of round carvings, while most of the decorations such as pillow stones and threshold stones are made of relief carvings. The content of the carvings is basically the same as that of brick carvings and wood carvings. Most of them are auspicious bird and animal patterns or plant and flower patterns that are artificially endowed with beautiful meanings, such as plum blossoms, orchids, bamboos and chrysanthemums (Figure 60).

#### 1.2.2 Scenes of wood carvings in ancient houses

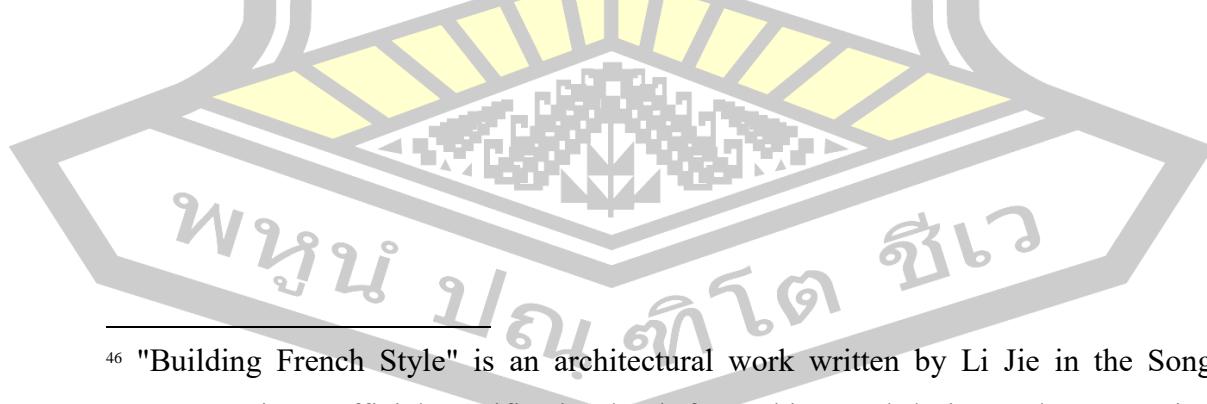
Wood carving is also an art with a long history in China. The archaeological data currently available show that wood carving decoration appeared as early as the Yin and Shang Dynasties more than 3,000 years ago (Figure 61).



Figure 59 Wood carving in Hubu Mountain houses

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

The oldest and best-preserved wooden buildings discovered in China are the Nanchan Temple and Foguang Temple in Wutai Mountain, Shanxi Province. It can be seen from the decorations in the temples that the art of wood carving was quite mature in the Tang Dynasty. The book "Building French Style" of the Song Dynasty<sup>46</sup> recorded in detail the specific practices of wood carving techniques at that time, and also distinguished the main forms of carving techniques such as mixed carving, pick carving, and openwork carving. Most of the wood carving decorations that have been preserved are from the Ming and Qing Dynasties. The art of wood carving developed into the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Compared with before, the themes and patterns were richer and the craftsmanship was more exquisite. In terms of techniques, more complex carvings and inlay carvings also appeared. Compared with materials such as masonry, wood can be said to be quite soft, easy to obtain, and easy to process.



<sup>46</sup> "Building French Style" is an architectural work written by Li Jie in the Song Dynasty. It is an official specification book for architectural design and construction issued by the Northern Song Dynasty. It is the most complete architectural technology book in ancient China, marking that ancient Chinese architecture has developed to a higher stage.



Figure 60 Wood carving decoration in Tanhua Mansion  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

Residential buildings in Xuzhou area are mainly made of brick and wood structures, and the decoration of wood carvings is mainly concentrated on brackets, doors, windows, railings and other parts (Figure 62). The wood carving art in Xuzhou does not have high requirements for wood. It does not deliberately pursue whether the wood is valuable, tough, and delicate. Almost all woods can be used in the wood carving decoration of Xuzhou residences. Craftsmen skillfully use the different colors, textures, hardness and other characteristics of different woods to present unique artistic features.



Figure 61 Wood carving decoration in Tanhua Mansion  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

The wood carvings of ancient Xuzhou houses are generally divided into two categories: large wood carvings and small wood carvings (Figure 63). Large carvings mainly refer to the carvings of roof trusses, beams, columns, forehead beams, brackets, bird stands, and Xumi pedestals. Small wood carvings are carvings such as doors, windows, partitions, hangings, skirt boards, tables, chairs, beds, and stools that fill the space within the roof trusses. The characteristics of large wood carvings are simplicity and clarity, while small wood carvings are meticulous and thoughtful. The combination of the two can enrich the virtual and solid space of the building facade, giving the building a light and transparent visual effect.

Suzhou's traditional residential wood carvings are rarely colored, and most are painted with plain colors, making the carvings more delicate. The architectural components of traditional houses in the Xuzhou area have the characteristics of northern houses. Most of them are simple, generous and general. Their themes are not much different from brick carvings and stone carvings. Most of them incorporate natural and allusive animal and plant patterns (Figure 64).



Figure 62 Wood carving decoration in Suzhou Diaohua building  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2021

The wood carving decorations on the beams are mainly concentrated in the middle and both ends of the beams. Most of them use line carving and relief techniques. Usually, they are simply carving one or two curved patterns along the curves of the two ends, such as simple plants, flowers or wavy patterns. For more complex ones, you need to carve some more complex patterns in the center of the beam, such as flowers, grass, insects, fish, etc. Column carvings are usually concentrated on the capitals. Because the main function of columns in the structure is to weigh, there is usually no carving on the columns. In terms of shape, the upper end of the column is usually gradually reduced and the top is raspberry-shaped, so that it visually looks thinner at the top and thicker at the bottom, and has a stable feeling. The stigma is usually carved into a lotus shape.

Hanging is the focus of wood carving decoration. Hanging, also known as flower hanging square or flower board, is a carved wooden board. It usually refers to the decorative components hung on the door lintel, and it can also play a certain role in protecting the beam. The commonly used carving techniques for hanging hanging are relief carving, openwork carving, etc. The carving content is mostly continuous

geometric patterns or vines, which represent the continuous meaning. Some complex hangings are also equipped with hanging flower carvings.

The brace is a component located outside the eaves column. It is a building component. Its function is to support the eaves and squares. It is also an important decorative component. There are two types of bracket decoration: wooden and brick. The production process of wooden brackets is relatively simple, so they are more widely used in residential decoration. The carving technique for supporting teeth is mainly openwork, which is characterized by roundness and lightness, and the patterns are mostly based on animal and plant patterns.

As mentioned earlier, partition doors were commonly used in ancient Xuzhou houses, and the tapered ring panels, lattice fan cores and skirt boards were usually decorated with carvings. The main function of the grid center is lighting, so it is usually made of dense grid strips spliced into a hollow shape. Patterns of different shapes can be carved according to the different arrangements and combinations of the grid strips. There are mainly several types such as swastika pattern and rhombus pattern. The tape ring board is the focus of the entire partition door decoration, because it is an independent wooden board and is also the visual center of the partition door. Usually, various carving methods such as line carving, relief carving and hollow carving are used, and the carvings are fine. The contents are mainly figures, animals, plants, treasures, etc. The decoration of the skirt board is relatively simple, mostly simple bas-relief carvings, and the carving content is mainly simple plant patterns or words such as "Fu Lu Shou".

### 1.2.3 The application of brick carvings in ancient Xuzhou houses



Figure 63 Brick carving decoration in Tanhua Mansion  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

Brick carving art has a long history in China. It originated in the late Warring States Period and has a history of more than 2,000 years (Figure 65). It has been widely used in the decoration of traditional Chinese houses. Brick carving adopts different methods such as relief, hollow carving, and line carving. Different patterns are carved on the fired plain bricks. Compared with wood carvings, brick carvings are not easy to corrode and can better adapt to changes in various weather environments. Compared with stone carving, bricks are softer and more suitable for carving. On the other hand, compared to wood and stone, bricks are more convenient to source locally, their size is controllable, and they are not restricted by geographical factors and resource conditions. They are usually carved as a whole and then installed on the building. Therefore, it has been widely used in Chinese residential construction and decoration.

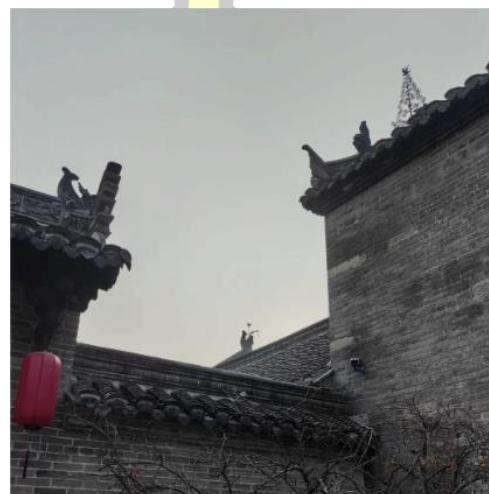


Figure 64 Brick carving in Hubu Mountain houses

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

The Xuzhou area is located on the North China Plain and has fertile soil. Clay bricks have always been the most common building material, which has created the skillful brick carving technology of Xuzhou craftsmen. Residential buildings in Xuzhou usually use cyan bricks, which are solemn and simple in color (Figure 66). They are often seen on screen walls, door heads, walls, roof ridges and other building components. The brick carvings on the roof ridge are basically concentrated on the main ridge, vertical ridge and tile heads, using the method of pre-carving in sections and then assembling them. Most people's decorative themes are mainly plants and flowers, and some brick carvings that combine animals and plants will also appear on higher-level buildings. For example, in the Cui Family Courtyard in Hubu Mountain District<sup>47</sup>, there are representative local brick carvings in Xuzhou such as "Five Spine and Six Beasts" and "Flower Arranging Cloud Swallow".

<sup>47</sup> The Cui Family Courtyard in Hubu Mountain, the former residence of Cui Tao, is a national key cultural relic protection unit. Cui Hai, the Imperial Academy during the

### 1.3 Artistic characteristics of ancient Xuzhou houses

The artistic features of ancient Xuzhou houses profoundly reflect the combination of traditional architectural styles and local culture in eastern China, revealing the regional characteristics and cultural connotation of Xuzhou, a historic city. These buildings not only carry the daily lives of residents, but also serve as material carriers of Xuzhou's rich history and cultural traditions.

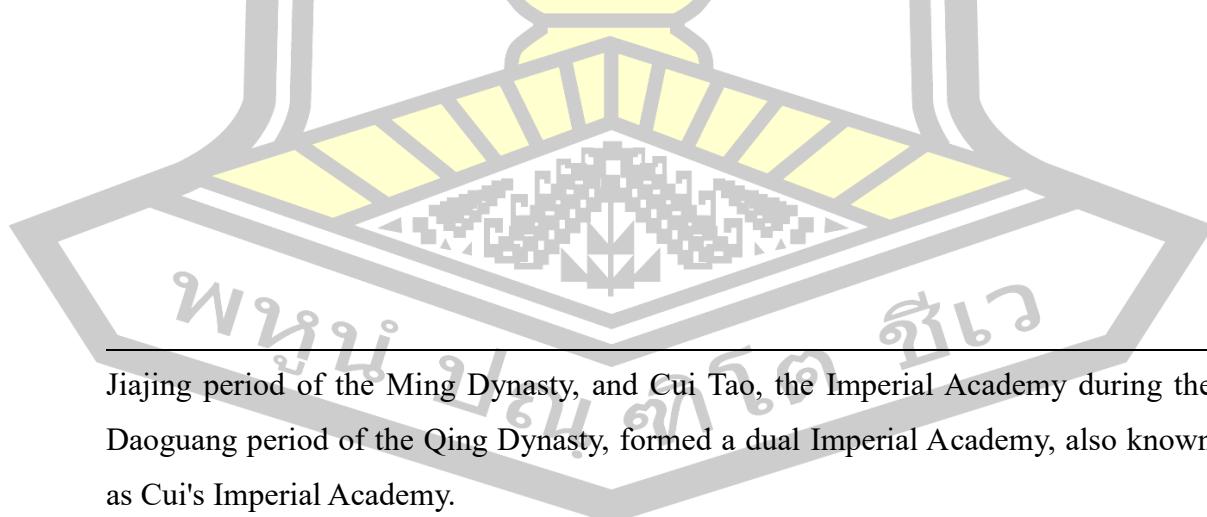
#### 1.3.1 Architectural construction of ancient Xuzhou houses

##### (1) Decoration of doors and windows

Most of the existing ancient Xuzhou houses are mainly Siheyuan in layout.<sup>48</sup> The rooms usually face north and south, and the architectural style is more mellow than the northern buildings. The roof is generally thicker, the walls are made of bricks and are also thicker, and the windows are usually smaller and taller. But in the overall decoration style, it can reflect the taste of southern residential decoration. Most of the doors and windows of traditional houses in Xuzhou are made of wood. In addition to their inherent functions, doors and windows can also play a role in separation and enclosure.

##### (2) Door decoration techniques

The gate is the entrance and exit of the entire residence. In traditional residences, the scale, form and decoration of the gate can tell the scale of the residence and the status of the occupants. It is called the "front" or "facade". Some official families or families with better economic conditions are so-called "high-ranking families". The gate is usually set on the central axis of the entire house, with symmetry on both sides, and the gate opens in the middle. At the same time, there is usually a screen in front of the gate and the front hall, which serves to separate the space and block it. The front door of ordinary people's homes usually has a simple gatehouse. There are two wooden doors with a simple door knocker on the outside and a padlockable door bolt on the inside. If possible, two carved drum stones will be set on both sides of the door (Figure 67).



Jiajing period of the Ming Dynasty, and Cui Tao, the Imperial Academy during the Daoguang period of the Qing Dynasty, formed a dual Imperial Academy, also known as Cui's Imperial Academy.

<sup>48</sup> Siheyuan, also known as Sihefang, is a traditional courtyard style architecture in China. Its layout is a courtyard with houses built on all four sides, enclosing the courtyard in the middle from all four sides, hence the name Siheyuan.



Figure 65 carved drum stone in Hubu Mountain houses  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

The door styles of ancient Xuzhou houses were simpler than those in other areas, mainly Ruyi doors. The overall shape of the Ruyi Gate is exquisite and the proportions are very strict. The width of the door is between 1 meter and 1.5 meters, and the height is between 2 meters and 2.4 meters. The main parts are the gate tower, the hanging square and the main body of the gate. The main function of the gatehouse is to prevent rainwater from splashing on the door. It has gradually developed into a symbol of residential buildings, symbolizing the social status, rights, wealth, etc. of the owner inside the door.



Figure 66 The quanjin archway in the Hubu Mountain folk residence  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

Brick carving is the main decoration method of the gatehouse, and the decorative patterns are usually patterns with auspicious meanings, such as the words "Fu Lu, Shou Xi"<sup>49</sup> or plum blossoms, orchids, bamboos and chrysanthemums. The hanging square is a decorative component on the door beam, and it also plays a certain protective role on the beam. Hanging squares are usually made of wood carvings, and the content is mainly based on continuous geometric patterns, implying continuity. Some complicated hanging arrangements will also include some hanging flower carvings (Figure 68).

In addition, for some families with good financial status, the door pillow stone is also one of the important components of the door in the complete sense. The door corbels are two stone piers placed next to the wall and under the door frame. They are building components and have the function of reinforcing the door frame. They are also a type of decorative component. Some wealthy families in ancient Xuzhou usually carved it into a drum shape, which we call Baogu Stone. The drum-holding stones are usually carved with animal patterns, or two standing lions, or auspicious patterns such as unicorns and bats.



Figure 67 Doors and windows in Hubu Mountain Folk Residence

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

(3) Doors and windows are the focus of residential decoration  
 Doors and windows are an important part of traditional house decoration. Their functions are not only in entrance and exit, ventilation and lighting, but also their shape, size, color, shape, proportion, etc. are also important components of the entire building's shape(Figure 69).

<sup>49</sup> “Fu, Lu, Shou, Xi”(福、禄、寿、喜) refers to blessing, wealth, longevity and happiness.

The doors and windows of traditional houses in Xuzhou are mainly made of wooden structures, and are mainly square in shape. The wooden doors and windows are embedded in the sill frame, which is called the frame vertically and the sill horizontally. According to the position, it can be divided into "upper threshold", "middle threshold" and "lower threshold". The "lower sill" is the part close to the ground. The main function of the sill frame is to install doors and windows. Most of the doors and windows in Xuzhou are multi-functional partitions that integrate walls, doors and windows. This form is beneficial to the lighting and ventilation of the room. The number of partition doors is determined according to the width of the building bay. They are all even numbers, mostly six or eight, and they all open inward. The two doors in the middle are usually open. Partition fans are composed of an outer frame, a partition core, a skirt board and a polyester ring board. They are the most basic form of doors and windows in Xuzhou and can also be called floor-to-ceiling windows. Partition fans are usually decorated with geometric patterns. The wooden strips or carvings that make up these decorative patterns are called "window lattice". The arrangement patterns can be divided into "diamond pattern", "straight lattice pattern", etc. The decorative carvings on the doors of Xuzhou houses are relatively single in color, basically plain, but the carvings have a wide variety of patterns, such as plums, orchids, bamboos and chrysanthemums, dragons, phoenixes, unicorns, Ruyi, auspicious clouds, etc.

In terms of shapes, the windows in traditional houses in Xuzhou include half windows, long windows, branch windows, leaky windows, and horizontal draped windows (Figure 70). The half window, also known as the sill window, is located on the upper part of the sill wall. From a morphological point of view, the half window is slender and consists of an upper plywood, a lower plywood and an inner core. The long window has one more middle plywood and one more skirt than the half window structure.



Figure 68 Half windows in Hubu Mountain Folk Residence  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

In addition, the branch window is also one of the common forms in traditional houses. The branch window is mainly composed of a frame and a grid center. The upper part is the branch window and the lower part is the lift window. The branch window opens from bottom to top. The lift window is usually fixed and can be removed if necessary. Since the climate in the Xuzhou area has characteristics of both the north and the south, and the winter is relatively cold, in order to adapt to the weather in the Xuzhou area, the branch windows and the hanging windows are usually divided into two layers. The outer layer will be pasted with a layer of paper on the lattice bars or installed with glass, and the inner layer will be made of gauze, which not only has the function of thermal insulation but also facilitates ventilation.

The decoration of windows is much simpler than that of doors, and its functional requirements for ventilation and lighting also prevent it from having too complicated decorations. Most of them are decorated with patterns composed of wooden strips arranged horizontally and vertically. Another common type of window is the assorted windows that appear on some traditional garden courtyard partition walls. The main function of assorted windows is decoration rather than ventilation or lighting, so they are rarely opened. The main features are small size and exquisite carvings.

### 1.3.2 The decoration tradition of ancient residential walls

Walls are the most important building components of houses. In the long history of human development, with the emergence of walls, so-called ground buildings began to appear. Only then did human beings step out of the primitive cave life, and their lifestyle began to undergo qualitative changes. The combination of walls, roofs, and floors gives humans a house to live on. Building materials such as soil, bricks, stones, and wood are all basic materials for building walls. Only by precisely combining the walls with building components such as roofs, floors, doors, and windows can they jointly form a house and its indoor space (Figure 71).



Figure 69 The walls of traditional houses in Hubu Mountain  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

For traditional Chinese houses, walls have always been an important part of house decoration. Builders usually decorate the exterior of a residence in various ways based on the specific circumstances of the owner and on the basis of ensuring a solid wall structure. For the walls of traditional houses, jointing with brick walls or stone walls is the simplest decorative technique, which can make the entire wall look neat and tidy. At the same time, the use of relief decorations such as chiseling and carving on the masonry walls can make the entire residence look refined and elegant.

Generally speaking, the walls of traditional houses in Xuzhou are relatively simple and monotonous in color, usually gray brick walls. In terms of wall decoration, Xuzhou houses often use symbols, homophonies, borrowings, etc., or use intuitive images to express the residents' expectations for life. For example, the gables are decorated with orchids, which express the residents' pursuit of a peaceful life. At the same time, for traditional houses, we regard "walls" as spatial environment and landscape factors, which are often combined in different shapes such as height, length, straightness, and discontinuity. Or elegant, simple or complex indoor and outdoor space effects.

The exterior walls of living rooms are more complex in craftsmanship than walls elsewhere. In order to achieve the thermal insulation effect, special construction technology is adopted. The surrounding walls are mostly made of blue bricks and stones, and the middle part is filled with discarded stones and soil. It is called "raw inside and cooked outside". Because the bricks are fired, they are cooked, and they are "raw on the inside and cooked on the outside" (Figure 72). The material inside has not been processed, so it is raw. The wall is divided into two layers. The outer layer is made of plain bricks, and the inner layer is made of earthen rafters. This not only saves construction costs, but also has a thermal insulation effect, making the house warm in winter and cool in summer.

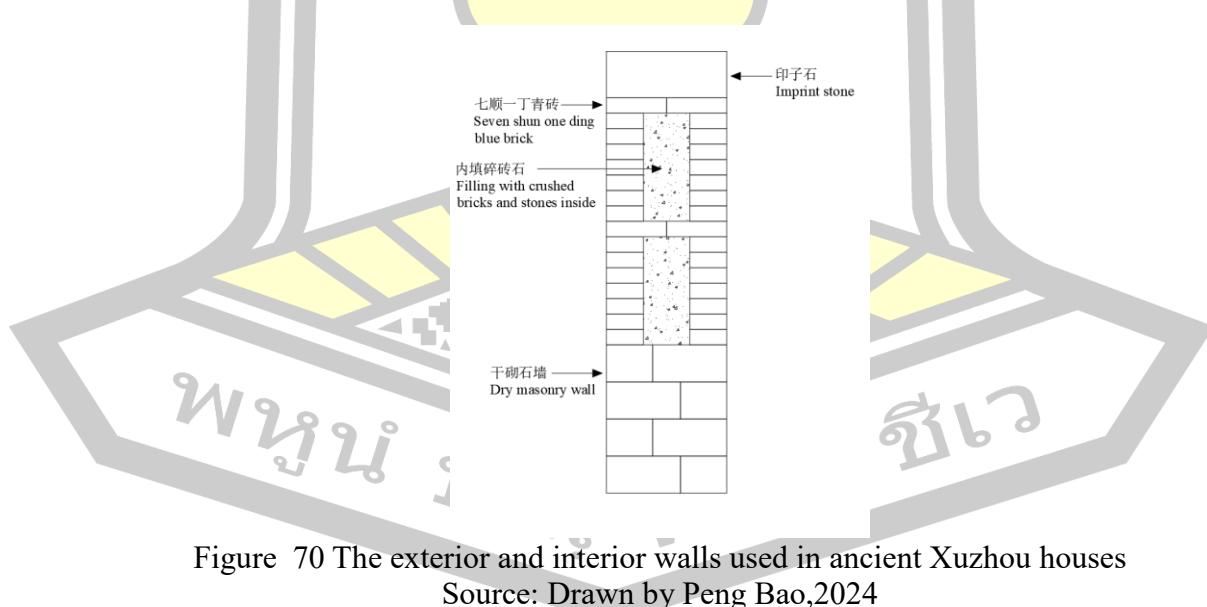


Figure 70 The exterior and interior walls used in ancient Xuzhou houses  
Source: Drawn by Peng Bao, 2024

There are many types of walls in traditional Chinese houses. From the perspective of plan layout, they can be divided into gable walls, eaves walls, partition walls, sill walls, courtyard walls, etc.

Gables refer to the walls on both sides of the house. The common forms are hanging gables and hard gables. In Xuzhou, most of the gables are of the hard gable style. Influenced by the residential architecture in the Jiangnan area, some families will also build volcano-sealing walls. It's called the Fire Wall. Fire-sealing walls refer to gables with fire-proof functions on both sides of residential buildings. They are made of bricks, stones, earth and other materials. In addition to fire-proofing, they can also be used for defense. Therefore, the gable wall is usually 30 to 60 centimeters higher than the roof. The main wall decoration of gables is mountain flowers. Some wealthy families often have various forms of mountain flowers on the gable walls on both sides. On the gable wall of the Cui Family Courtyard in Hubu Mountain District, there are mountain flower patterns in the form of lions rolling hydrangeas and lotus flowers commonly used in Xuzhou area (Figure 73).



Figure 71 Xuzhou's ancient houses basically use hard gables  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

The eaves wall refers to the wall that plays a protective role under the eaves purlins. It can be divided into front eaves walls and back eaves walls. However, the front eaves walls of most traditional houses in Xuzhou are replaced by lattice fans. Partition walls are usually parallel to the gables and are used indoors in residential buildings to divide space. They are mostly made of light wood. The sill wall is the part of the wall under the wooden treads of the windows. Most of them are veneer bricks of various shapes, such as square bricks, patterned tiles and strip bricks.

Courtyard walls refer to the boundary walls inside residential courtyards, which are divided into two types: outer courtyard walls and inner courtyard walls. The outer courtyard wall is usually a solid wall with a defensive function and a certain height. The wall is usually without any decoration and is only made of wall bricks. The function of the inner courtyard wall is to divide the interior space of the residence and decorate it. Some residential houses in Xuzhou often use assorted windows for decoration on the inner courtyard walls. Their function is similar to that of

viewfinders, showing the scenery in the courtyard from a different angle to increase aesthetic appeal.



Figure 72 The screen wall is a part of traditional Chinese residential institutions.  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

Zhao wall, also known as screen wall (Figure 74), can be divided into inner screen wall and outer screen wall, mainly divided into two types: one-shaped and eight-shaped. One of the functions of the screen wall is to block the line of sight, preventing outsiders from having an unobstructed view of the landscape in the courtyard when the door is opened, ensuring the privacy and independence of the internal space of the residence. At the same time, the screen wall is also a kind of decoration. The status and economic foundation of the owner can also be seen through the size, style and carving content of the screen wall. The screen wall can be an independent section located on the inside or outside of the main gate at a certain distance from the gate, or it can be a mountain-type one attached to the entrance of the gate or the side gable. The structure of the screen wall is usually divided into three parts, the lower base, the wall and the roof. The stone base is equivalent to the platform of the building, the wall is equivalent to its structural part, and the roof is the wall of the building itself. The carving patterns on the screen wall are mainly auspicious flowers, birds and animals, or words with auspicious meanings such as fortune, longevity, and happiness.

### 1.3.3 The decorative tradition of ancient residential roofs

For traditional Chinese architecture, the roof has always been the most important part. Construction craftsmen in ancient China often put most of their thoughts on the roof, and ancient Xuzhou houses were no exception.

There is a big difference in roof structure between the north and the south of China. The roofs in the south are usually based on bucket-type structures. Columns are used to directly support the purlins, minus the role of beams. Fangs are used as connections between the columns. Overhang farther to form a gallery. In the north, straight columns are mostly used, leading directly to the top, while in the south, there are also shuttle-shaped columns. The ancient Xuzhou houses have the characteristics of both the north and the south in terms of roof decoration. We can not only see the

thick and heat-insulating side of the traditional houses in the north, but also have the characteristics of moisture-proof and ventilated roofs in the south. Neutralizing techniques are adopted. Make it unique and give people a dignified and elegant feeling overall. The colors are usually plain and simple.



Figure 73 The wooden beam structure in ancient Xuzhou only used a quarter of the wood from other regions.

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2022

Most of the roofs of residential houses in Xuzhou are "hard tops". The hard tops are a type of gable roof (Figure 75). The two-slope roof is paved with bricks or tiles at the junction to form a single ridge. The gables on both sides are usually connected to the entire roof. Level with or slightly above the roof, making the gable appear more prominent. However, higher-level forms are still used in the more important parts of the building. For example, the gatehouse of the Cui family courtyard in Hubu Mountain and the residence hall have rolled roofs. The roofs are mainly composed of roofs and ridges. In addition, for traditional Chinese houses, decorative components such as tiles and drips are also important components of the roof.

#### (1) Roof characteristics of ancient houses in Xuzhou

The roofs of residential buildings in Xuzhou are usually straight slopes. There are two main reasons for this: First, due to the shortage of wood. Traditional residential beams in the Xuzhou area mostly use triangular cross-hand beams, which are relatively small. Because the cross-hands are straight, the roof is also straight; secondly, because the culture in Xuzhou area is deeply influenced by the culture of the Chu and Han Dynasties, the Chu and Han Dynasties The architectural form is mainly straight slope.

For example, Xuzhou has cold winters and lacks wood. The wood in the building walls is smaller and the walls are thicker, about fifty to sixty centimeters. After the Yellow River overflowed, the people of Xuzhou were reluctant to build luxurious houses due to lack of wood and frequent floods. How to choose to use very thin wood as the beam frame on the basis of inheriting the architectural style. At the same time, it must be able to withstand sufficient pressure. As a result, a new building

structure was invented, called the "cross-hand beam" or "heavy beam hanger." (Figure 76)

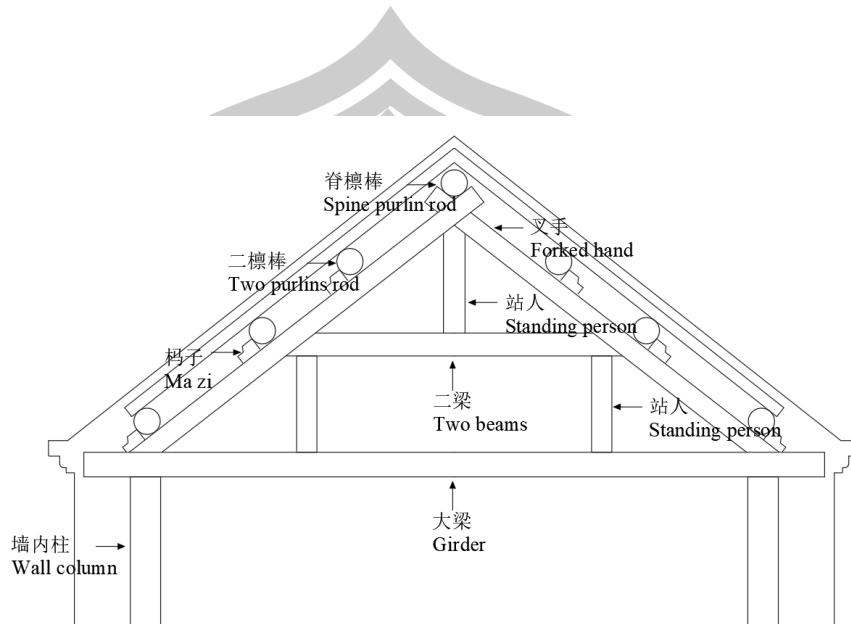


Figure 74 A unique structure of ancient Xuzhou houses : Heavy Beam Hanger

Source: Drawn by Peng Bao,2024

The roof is paved with small green tiles in a regular array, using the method of "pressing four and exposing six" to form rows of tile ridges from top to bottom, forming ditches for drainage. Rows of tile ridges are laid out neatly from bottom to top, creating a strong sense of movement. Since the amount of rainwater in Xuzhou is relatively small, compared with traditional buildings in the south, the requirements for the drainage function of the eaves are not high. The roofs of ancient Xuzhou houses are the same as the roofs of traditional houses in the north. They all use flat roofs and single-slope tile roofs. At the same time, the roof eaves are small, which can ensure that the house gets relatively sufficient sunshine time as much as possible.

## (2) Roofs of ancient Xuzhou houses

The ridge is an important part of the roof, where the two slopes meet. Because the roof ridge is the most likely part of the entire roof to leak, the structure of the roof ridge needs to be covered to a certain extent. At the same time, decoration of the roof ridge has become one of the characteristics of traditional Chinese architecture. Decoration can not only enhance wind and leakage resistance, but also affect the outline changes of the entire roof. Therefore, the ridge has become the main decorative part of the roof, and has attracted special attention from traditional Chinese builders. While solving functional problems, they also pay more attention to its artistic treatment.

The roof ridges of Xuzhou houses can be said to have outstanding features in terms of shape. Roof ridges in the north tend to be straighter in shape, while those in the south are more sinuous. On the other hand, the roof ridges in Xuzhou area have

main ridges that are curved and rarely decorated. The vertical ridges are not completely symmetrical and tilted, and the decorations on the roof ridges are relatively simple and monotonous compared with southern houses. The common roof ridge forms of ancient Xuzhou houses are clear water ridge and tile ridge. Qingshui Ridge is mostly built with bricks and stones for its lines. Most of the roof ridges are made of bricks that are processed on site and then molded into patterns and fired directly to ensure their solidity and thickness. The two ends of the ridge are in the shape of an elephant trunk, while the tile ridge is made of small green tiles stacked up and decorated with flowers. The two ends are raised to form the tip of the turtle.(Figure 77)



Figure 75 left to right are the roof ridge shapes of Zhakou Village House, Tanhua Mansion and Cui Family Courtyard  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2022

In addition to the shape of the roof ridge, the ridge decoration is also a highlight of traditional residential roofs. Ridge decoration not only plays a decorative role in the beautiful and monotonous roof ridge, but also reflects the economic level, social status and aesthetic level of the owner of the house. Like the shape of the roof ridge, the ridge decoration also differs greatly between the north and the south. Due to their high roof ridges and ups and downs, the southern houses have a strong sense of formal beauty. Therefore, the ridge decorations are also quite elaborate and gorgeous, and brick carving, stone carving, wood carving and other techniques are often used in them. However, the ridge decorations in the north are relatively simple and simple.

The carvings on the roof ridges in Xuzhou are generally concentrated in the middle and both ends, and the carving patterns are mainly flower and grass patterns. Higher-level homes will also have ridge beasts at the ends of the roof ridges. The ridge beasts can also play a role in strengthening the structure of the junctions of the roof. The placement of ridge beasts is generally "five ridges and six beasts", that is, the ridge beasts at both ends of the main ridge and the ridge beasts on the four vertical ridges.

### (3) The value of tiles and dripping water in ancient Xuzhou houses

Tile: Also known as "tile head", it is the top hanging component of the roof tile. The shape is mainly round or semi-circular. Wadang was originally a building component used on the eaves of traditional houses. It is the tile at the end of the roof ridge of the building, which is called "wadang". Mainly because it is used to prevent tile ridges from sliding down and water dripping from the eaves. The tiles located in front of the tile ridges, in addition to their practical value, also have a certain decorative effect. They are usually neatly arranged on the upper part of the building, like a beautiful necklace, making the building look more neat and beautiful. Because it is both practical and beautiful, it has become an indispensable part of traditional Chinese building decoration materials for thousands of years. It can be said that a traditional building without tiles is not a perfect building in the traditional Chinese sense.

Dripping water: Located at the bottom of the tile ditch formed by roof tiles, there is a tile with a special shape, sandwiched between two tiles, mostly in the shape of an inverted triangle, which is called dripping water, also known as rain curtain. When it rains, rainwater falls from the "drip". Drips are usually installed on the underside of eaves and window sills. Their main function is to prevent rainwater from penetrating into the wall along the eaves and window sills and eroding the wall (Figure 78).

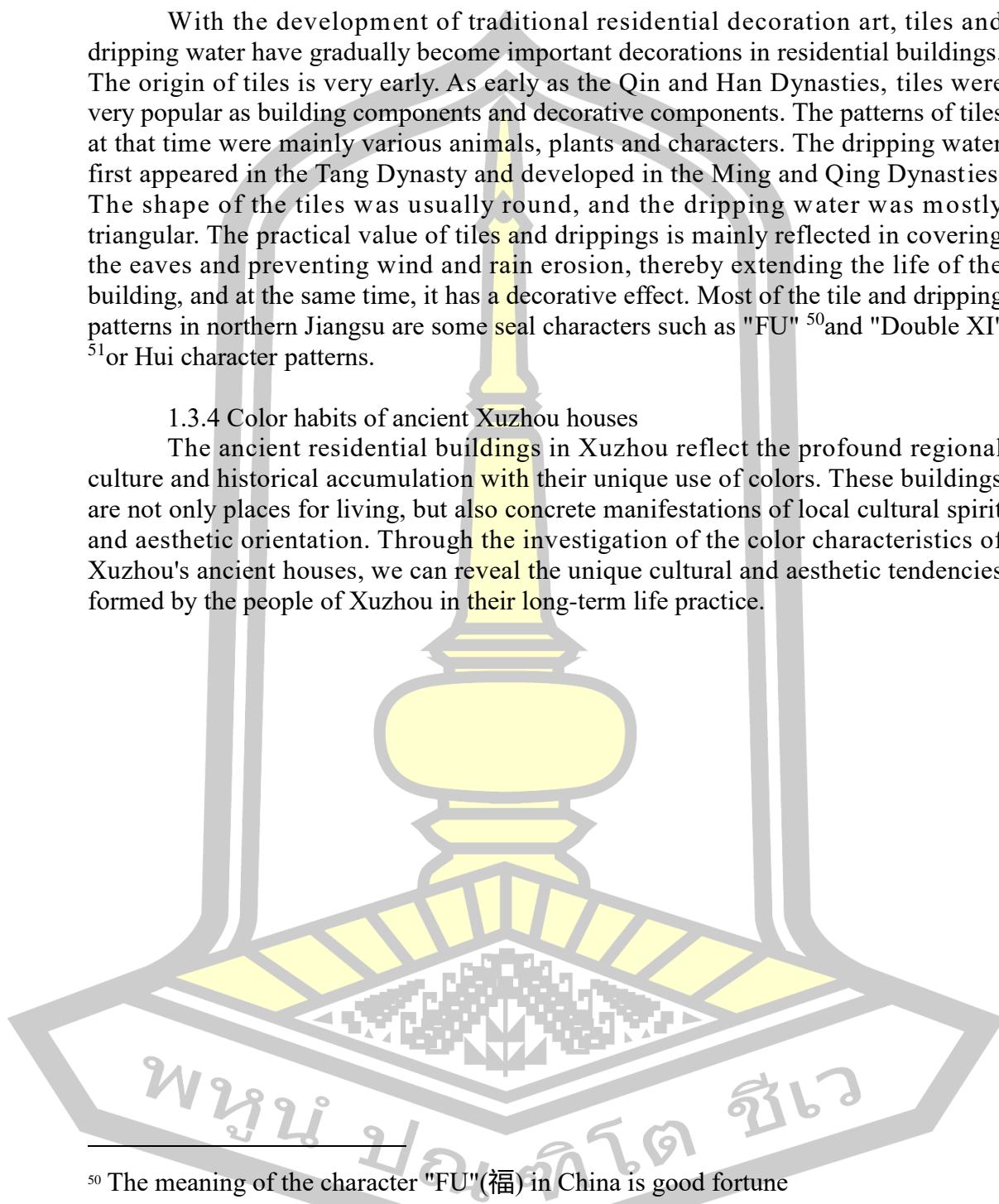


Figure 76 The dripping shape of tiles in ancient houses in Yaowan Ancient Town  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2021

With the development of traditional residential decoration art, tiles and dripping water have gradually become important decorations in residential buildings. The origin of tiles is very early. As early as the Qin and Han Dynasties, tiles were very popular as building components and decorative components. The patterns of tiles at that time were mainly various animals, plants and characters. The dripping water first appeared in the Tang Dynasty and developed in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. The shape of the tiles was usually round, and the dripping water was mostly triangular. The practical value of tiles and drippings is mainly reflected in covering the eaves and preventing wind and rain erosion, thereby extending the life of the building, and at the same time, it has a decorative effect. Most of the tile and dripping patterns in northern Jiangsu are some seal characters such as "FU"<sup>50</sup> and "Double XI"<sup>51</sup> or Hui character patterns.

#### 1.3.4 Color habits of ancient Xuzhou houses

The ancient residential buildings in Xuzhou reflect the profound regional culture and historical accumulation with their unique use of colors. These buildings are not only places for living, but also concrete manifestations of local cultural spirit and aesthetic orientation. Through the investigation of the color characteristics of Xuzhou's ancient houses, we can reveal the unique cultural and aesthetic tendencies formed by the people of Xuzhou in their long-term life practice.



<sup>50</sup> The meaning of the character "FU"(福) in China is good fortune

<sup>51</sup> "Double XI", which can be written as "囍", originally refers to two happy events at the same time. It is mostly used in wedding celebrations to express the joy of both parties. It is a traditional Chinese folk custom to post "囍" when getting married.



Figure 77 Ancient Xuzhou houses with yellow bodies  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

The color selection of ancient Xuzhou houses reflects a simple and restrained aesthetic pursuit. These buildings mostly use colors close to nature, such as earthy yellow, gray, etc. (Figure 79), which not only shows the concept of harmonious coexistence between man and nature, but also reflects the simple attitude of people in Xuzhou area. The use of this color visually creates a deep and simple aesthetic. At the same time, under different lighting conditions, these colors can show rich levels and changes, adding to the vividness and variability of the building.



Figure 78 Ancient Xuzhou houses with gray and white bodies

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2021



Figure 79 Ancient Xuzhou houses with gray and black bodies

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2021

Yellow and gray walls were the most widely used colors in ancient Xuzhou houses (Figure 80 & Figure 81). This color choice not only reflects the natural color of traditional building materials, but also brings a cooling effect to the interior in summer due to its better reflectivity. In some areas, white lime is used to coat the walls for waterproofing and decorative effects. This reflects the ancient Xuzhou people's pragmatism in architectural design and their emphasis on the comfort of the living environment. Wooden structures were widely used in ancient Xuzhou houses, and the original wood color was retained or painted in dark red, brown, etc., which not only enhanced the texture and visual level of the building, but also made the building more harmonious with the surrounding natural environment. This use of color reflects the Xuzhou people's respect for nature and their pursuit of architectural aesthetics.

In terms of decorative arts, the brick carvings and painted tile decoration techniques of ancient Xuzhou residences, with their bright colors and rich local characteristics, demonstrate the profound cultural heritage and artistic creativity of the Xuzhou area. These brick carvings and paintings not only beautify the building, but also express the Xuzhou people's wishes for a better life and auspicious meanings. The blue-grey tiles on the roofs of ancient Xuzhou houses blend in with the surrounding natural landscape, demonstrating the architectural concept of harmonious coexistence between man and nature. The choice of this color is based on practical considerations and also reflects the aesthetic tendency of regional culture.

The color characteristics of ancient Xuzhou houses are not only the pursuit of beauty, but also a reflection of the cultural spirit and life philosophy of the people in Xuzhou area. Through the analysis of these architectural colors, we can gain a deeper understanding of the cultural and social characteristics of Xuzhou and the wider region, providing a unique perspective and rich materials for the study of traditional Chinese architectural culture.

### 1.3.5 Pattern symbols used in ancient Xuzhou houses

The decoration of traditional Chinese houses always has symbolic meaning, and there is a tradition that "the picture must be intentional and the meaning must be auspicious".

From the decorative patterns of traditional houses in a place, we can understand the local customs, customs and sentiments. Local residents use the folklore of the area, common local plants or some famous figures as decoration themes. After adapting and processing, they integrate the patterns into the decoration of residential buildings.

They express their outlook on life, values, religious beliefs, etc. through these meaningful animals, plants, characters, and words. In terms of moral content, decorative patterns can be divided into three major categories: first, happiness, longevity and health, second, moral and ethical enlightenment, and third, praying for wealth and money. People express these beautiful yearnings and pursuits through the attributes and characteristics of some things, and process them based on the attributes and characteristics of these things. For example, turtles have a long lifespan, so people use turtles to symbolize longevity. Another example is that fish is a homophone for "surplus", so people will use fish to express "more than enough" year after year. The bat represents blessing. The lotus symbolizes purity, the pomegranate symbolizes fertility, etc. There are many kinds of decorative patterns in traditional houses in Xuzhou area, mainly animal and plant patterns, geometric continuous patterns and text.

#### (1) Animal-shaped symbolic elements

Animals are one of the common themes in traditional Chinese house decoration. In ancient Chinese mythology, there are "four great spiritual beasts". It refers to the dragon, phoenix, lin, turtle, as well as the "blue dragon, white tiger, red bird, and Xuanwu" known as the "four gods".<sup>52</sup>

<sup>52</sup> "The four great spiritual beasts" are what modern people call them. In fact, they are not mythical beasts, but gods. In ancient times, it was also called the Four Symbols

Although some animals do not exist in reality, they have always influenced people's spiritual world since ancient times, penetrated into all aspects of people's lives, and became totems with fixed images. The animal patterns that appear more frequently in the decoration of traditional houses in northern Jiangsu are dragons, lions, bats, rats and fish. Sometimes these images appear alone, and sometimes they are combined with plants to form different shapes. Different combinations also make these patterns have different meanings.

Dragon - The dragon has been the spiritual symbol of our Chinese nation for thousands of years, symbolizing nobility and holiness. The shape of the dragon is most commonly used in Chinese palace architecture and official architecture, but in fact, we can also often see the image of the dragon in many residential buildings. In ancient Chinese folk, the dragon was considered an auspicious symbol that brought blessings to all things. It could not only ward off evil spirits and expel disasters, but also bring good luck and joy. In traditional houses in Xuzhou area, dragons are used as decorative patterns, mainly appearing on roof ridges, screen walls, etc., and also appear on some interior decorations such as embroidery, paper-cutting and other artworks (Figure 82).



Figure 80 Dragon symbol of dripping water

Source: [www.xzmsbwg.com](http://www.xzmsbwg.com)

Lion - The lion is one of the most common decorative themes in Chinese architecture, and its image has multiple meanings in China (Figure 83).

and the Four Spirits of the Sky. It was a product of ancient star worship.



Figure 81 Stone carving of two lions symbol

Source: [www.xzmsbwg.com](http://www.xzmsbwg.com)

First of all, the lion has been regarded as the king of beasts since ancient times, and is regarded as a symbol of authority and strength in China. Secondly, China's feudal society has believed in Buddhism for thousands of years. In Buddhist allusions, the lion is highly respected. It is the mount of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva. It is considered to have the function of warding off evil and protecting the law, and is a symbol of power. At the same time, lion is also homophonic with the word "Shi"<sup>53</sup>, which means everything goes well. Therefore, in ancient China, it was customary to place two stone lions at the entrance to the courtyards of palaces and wealthy homes, playing a protective role in guarding the house and avoiding disasters. At the front entrance of ordinary houses, lions are used as carvings, and they often appear on the drum stone in front of the door as the guardian animal.

In addition, "lion rolling hydrangea" is often used as a decorative pattern in traditional residential brick carvings. The lion rolling hydrangea originated from ancient Chinese mythology. It is said that two lions, male and female, are playing together and rolling the fluff together into a ball, and the little lion will come out of the ball. At the same time, the hydrangea is also regarded as a traditional Chinese auspicious object.

Qilin - Qilin is the first of the "four great spiritual creatures" in ancient Chinese legends. The male is Qilin and the female is Lin. Kirin is somewhat similar to a deer in appearance, with scales on its body, a single horn, and a tail like an ox's tail. Kirin is a very spiritual animal in Chinese folklore and can bring auspiciousness to the world. Legend has it that worshiping Qilin can help you get a son, so Qilin is used as a decorative pattern in many houses, most of which appear on drum stones or ridges.

Fish - The fish culture of the Chinese nation has a long history. For thousands of years, fish has been an indispensable food for people, and it is also widely used as a pattern symbol in residential decoration. Since ancient times, people have always believed that fish and dragons are related. Dragon is a mythical beast recognized in traditional Chinese culture, and fish is regarded as the descendant of dragon. Dragon and fish live symbiotically in the water, separated by a dragon gate. After the fish crosses the dragon gate, it can transform into a dragon and achieve success and fame.

<sup>53</sup> "shi" means "thing" or "matter" in Chinese characters

At the same time, because fish also have a strong reproductive ability, they symbolize a family full of children and grandchildren. The word fish is homophonic with the word "surplus", and there is also a saying that there will be more than enough every year. Therefore, in the decoration and construction of traditional Chinese houses, fish has always been an auspicious decoration and is widely used in beams, columns, doors, windows, tiles, and dripping water.



Figure 82 Phoenix symbol of dripping water  
Source: [www.xzmsbwg.com](http://www.xzmsbwg.com)

**Phoenix** - Like the dragon, the phoenix is considered a symbol of Chinese national culture and a divine bird that can bring auspiciousness to the world. Later, it developed into a symbol of noble female image (Figure 84). In ancient China, the pattern combination of phoenix and peony was commonly used, which was called the phoenix piercing the peony, symbolizing wealth. The phoenix sometimes appears in combination with the dragon to form the "dragon and phoenix present auspiciousness", which is used to pray for harmony between husband and wife and good luck.

**Bats** – The pattern of bats is quite common in traditional Chinese houses. Bat is an animal that symbolizes good luck among the people. Bat has the same pronunciation as "LUCK". Therefore, using bats in decorative patterns mostly means praying for blessings and receiving good fortune. They are often used on beams or screen walls.

In addition to the above animals, patterns of magpies, elephants, deer and other animals are also often seen in the decoration of ancient Xuzhou houses. Some animals often do not appear alone in decoration, but appear in combination with other animals or plants. For example, bats are often combined with peaches in patterns, which means "five blessings and longevity" and "both happiness and longevity".

## (2) Symbolic elements of plant decoration

There are many kinds of decorative patterns on ancient Xuzhou houses, among which plant patterns are particularly common. Plant decorative patterns mainly include flower shapes, tree shapes, grass shapes, etc. Flower shapes mainly include flower heads, fruits, branch flowers, etc. The grass shape includes deformed curly grass patterns and other patterns combined with animals, geometry or text. In terms of the meaning of plant patterns, they can basically be divided into two categories. One type is plant patterns that reflect the spirit or character of the owner, such as plums, orchids, bamboos, and chrysanthemums, which are plants with moral integrity and are generally used in the homes of literati.<sup>54</sup> The other type is plant patterns used for blessing, such as peonies, pomegranates, etc., which usually reflect people's yearning for a better life and pray for more children and more blessings (Figure 85).

Peony - Peony has been regarded as a symbol of wealth and splendor in China since ancient times. It is called the king of flowers and is very precious. Therefore, the peony pattern occupies an important position in the decoration of traditional Chinese houses. Whether in official buildings or residential buildings, peony patterns can be seen everywhere, mostly on the wood carvings of doors and windows or in indoor furniture and furnishings. Some will also appear in the form of combined patterns, such as peonies in a bottle, which symbolize peace and wealth, and pomegranates with peonies, which also mean wealth and fertility.



Figure 83 Window decoration with four symbols of peony, lotus, plum blossom and camellia

Source: [www.xzmsbwg.com](http://www.xzmsbwg.com)

<sup>54</sup> These four kinds of flowers are cultural symbols in China. Known as the "Four Gentlemen". The qualities are: proud, quiet, strong, and not prone to violence.

**Lotus** - The lotus is also called lotus or hibiscus. Since ancient times, China has had a reputation for being able to grow out of mud and remain unstained. The lotus is regarded as a noble flower, representing the quality of steadfastness and purity. It can be said that it contains the moral standards of life. It has always been favored by literati. At the same time, the lotus is a symbol of Buddhism, implying holiness and auspiciousness. Since China has always believed in Buddhism since the Han Dynasty, the lotus is more common in traditional Chinese architectural decorations. Lotus patterns often appear as ridge flowers on roof ridges. As decorative patterns, there are many shapes of lotus flowers. Common ones include upward lotus, covering lotus, single branch, continuous lotus, etc.

**Plum Blossom** - Plum blossom is a common theme in the works of ancient Chinese literati, with red, yellow, white, pink and other colors. People appreciate plum blossoms not only because of their appearance, but also because of the important philosophy of life they contain. Plum blossoms generally bloom in the cold winter, so plum blossoms are endowed with an indomitable, strong and optimistic spirit. In residential decoration, plum blossoms often appear on the wood carvings of lattice doors and windows as well as on some stone carvings on the walls. Plum blossoms sometimes appear in combination with animal patterns. For example, the pattern of plum blossoms and magpies combined is called "happy eyebrows".

In addition to plum blossoms, orchids, chrysanthemums, bamboo, pine, cypress, willow and other plants are also common themes in the decorative components of traditional Chinese houses. Orchids often bloom in the valley, giving people a feeling of orchids in the empty valley, pure and pure. Chrysanthemums bloom in autumn, so they are regarded as a symbol of pride. Bamboo is endowed with the qualities of humility and uprightness because of its straight appearance and hollow interior. Pines and cypresses are evergreen all year round and are regarded as symbols of immortality. Willow trees have extremely strong vitality, meaning they are full of vitality. These plants often appear in combination and are mostly used on doors, windows or screen walls for residential decoration.

Decoration with combined patterns of plants and animals is also quite common in residential decoration in Xuzhou. For example, the famous "Flower Arranged Cloud Swallow" in the Cui Family Courtyard in Hubu Mountain District is a typical representative of the roof decoration of traditional houses in Xuzhou area. Flower-arranged cloud swallows are the highest level of roof decoration, and their shape can be said to be quite unique. The orchid grass pattern can be seen on the forehead of the Yunyan beast, and there are flower branches next to the orchid grass. There are also patterns of auspicious clouds, sun, moon and stars on the flower branches, and there is also a swallow on the flower branch. The overall shape includes birds, animals, plants, sun, moon and stars, which contains the ancient traditional thought of the right time, place and people.

#### Symbolic elements of utensil patterns

Decorative patterns of utensils refer to decorative patterns based on ancient utensils such as bottles, jade, and tripods that sometimes appear in traditional residential decoration. These patterns often have special meanings and are widely used in residential decoration, mostly in combination with other patterns. The most common ones include jade ruyi patterns and vase patterns. Most vases appear in

combination with peonies. Because peonies symbolize wealth and vase symbolizes peace, combining the two patterns has the meaning of peace and wealth. The jade Ruyi itself has the effect of making everything go well, so Ruyi patterns are a common pattern in residential decoration.

#### (4) Text symbol elements

In the decoration of Xuzhou houses, there are basically two types of patterns decorated with text. One type uses a single auspicious text as a decorative theme with a direct expression, such as happiness, longevity and happiness. The word "FU" means good fortune and luck. The word "Shou" means health and longevity, and the word "Shou" also has multiple expressions in decorative patterns. If the glyph is elongated, it means longevity. The shape of the font is round, which means longevity (longevity). Or combined with the bat pattern, it means good fortune and longevity. These patterns often appear on the carved wood partition doors and windows or the brick carvings on the eaves of the main door. The other type is based on some ancient Chinese poems and verses, which are often used on larger areas of walls to express some of the owner's feelings.

#### (5) Geometric symbolic elements

Geometric decorative patterns are the most basic and simplest type of traditional Chinese residential decoration and are suitable for any decorative components, decorative techniques and decorative techniques. In the decoration of traditional houses in Xuzhou area, geometric patterns can be seen almost everywhere, mostly in combination with other types of patterns. The main forms commonly used in traditional residences include swastika patterns, back patterns, cloud patterns, ingots, coins and other forms. Most of these geometric patterns are created following the principles of plane composition and have a certain degree of special meaning. Most of the geometric patterns are symbols used by ancient people to pray. Many of them have original forms, and some have religious or witchcraft overtones (Figure 86).



Figure 84 Geometric symbolic elements

Source: [www.xzmsbwg.com](http://www.xzmsbwg.com)

According to the above, I have summarized the commonly used symbols and meanings in a table:

Table 1 Symbolic meanings of common symbols

	Symbols	Meanings
1	Loong(Dragon)	Noble
2	Lion	Power
3	Qilin	Many children
4	Fish	Rich
5	Phoenix	Auspicious
6	Bat	Lucky、blessing
7	Crane	Longevity
10	Chrysanthemum	Miss, Commemorate
11	Bamboo	Upright
12	Lotus	Honest
13	Peony	Wealth
14	Plum blossom	Strong
15	Pines and cypresses	Health and longevity
16	Orchid	Elegant
17	Cloud pattern	Get promoted and make a fortune
18	Fret	Wealth and peace
19	Ruyi	All wishes come true
20	Coin	Prosperous financial resources
21	Ingots	Symbol of wealth
22	Swastika	The meaning of longevity

Source: Drawn by Peng Bao, 2024

1.3.6 The symbolic significance of the spatial layout of ancient Xuzhou houses  
 Spatial layout is the distribution form of a building or building group. The use of this form is the result of people's long-term experience in life and work. Although it was not until the beginning of the 20th century that academic circles regarded "space" as the core of architecture. But the ancestors of ancient Xuzhou began research and exploration thousands of years ago.

The spatial layout of ancient Xuzhou houses followed the principle of facing mountains and rivers to avoid disasters. People in Xuzhou like to choose a place with mountains behind and water facing the sun. Residents in mountainous areas mostly choose to live on slopes near the water in the south of the mountains. Residential buildings mostly choose sloping beaches on both sides of the river. Residents living near the lake area mostly choose the beaches in the north, east and west. The settlement of Pizhou ancestors in the Xuzhou area 5,000 years ago also reflects this preference and habit. The Dadun site is located on the east side of the ancient river Ancestral River. The ancient river is now called Wen River, and in the past it was commonly known as Yunliang River. Dadunzi was the center of settlement for the ancestors of Pizhou 6,000 years ago. They chose the highlands adjacent to the Sichuan River where it was easy to drink water, make pottery, and catch fish and shellfish.

from the water to satisfy their hunger. There are also places where ancestors lived together on both sides of the Sangliang River, and many stone tools, bone tools, and ancient pottery have been discovered. Such as the east beach of Shilan Village, the west bridge of the Liangbi Xinghuayuan ruins (tanzi), the small beach on the east bank of the Muzhu River (former temple water), Yuntan Mountain, and west Qiaotou Mountain, etc. The ruins on both sides of the river belong to the Dadunzi culture. This shows the ancestors' custom of choosing water for their residence.

However, due to the later diversion of the Yellow River, Xuzhou often suffered from floods after the Yellow River passed through Xuzhou. Therefore, in order to avoid floods, villagers in Xuzhou generally choose to build villages on the mountainside relatively far away from the river. The ancient village settlement conforms to nature, and the houses are built against the mountains, with mountains on their backs and rivers on their sides, surrounded by green mountains. Generally, the village is located on the south slope of the mountain. The whole village is harmonious and unified according to the mountain.

The houses inside the village look messy and disorderly due to the mountain topography, but in fact the main and branch roads connect the spatial structure of the village and form the overall spatial texture of the village. Because Xuzhou is located in the north, in order to get more light, most houses face due south, but there are also some areas that face southeast. For example, Wushao Village is one of the more complete and primitive ancient villages preserved in Xuzhou. In the last century, there was a large lake named Wushao Lake in the south of Wushao. There is a record in history that "most of the four or five people in Shuiya Village are fishermen." The internal buildings of Wushao Ancient Village are connected and have continued to grow since the Ming and Qing Dynasties, forming a compact and continuous spatial development pattern. (Zhang Xiaosi, a scholar, "Walking with Friends Early on Wushao Lake in Winter", the Qing Dynasty)



Figure 85 The main house is divided into three rooms

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

Most of the ancient Xuzhou houses had three main rooms, and there was also a pot house (kitchen). Put up the courtyard wall around it, and then determine the door according to the road location (Figure 87). The bedrooms used for daily living are all in the main hall. The general layout of a main hall consists of an east room, a middle room and a west room. The east and west sides are usually bedrooms, and the middle room is used as the main room. All matters such as entertaining guests are carried out in this room.

The main room is the main living room of a family. For most ordinary people, it used to be earthen walls and grass roofs. There are three types of main halls: tile-roofed houses, bungalows, and buildings, but they basically continue the previous layout.



Figure 86 Interior furnishings of ancient houses

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

There are two types of houses: "two light and one dark" and "two dark and one light". "Two dark and one light" means two solid gables without wooden beams. There are two dark rooms at both ends and a light room in the middle (Figure 88). "Two light and one dark" means one end is a solid gable, the middle is a wooden beam, one is a dark room, and two are bright rooms. Some are built in the style of "four bedrooms and one living room", with the two rooms at the two ends being "two rooms" and the middle room being divided into three parts in the shape of "pin". Make a horizontal and vertical partition wall in the middle, leaving two small doors to make two small rooms, that is, "two rooms", and the one facing the door is the living room. There are also main rooms built with "one light and two dark rooms", with one light room in the middle being an open room and the living room. The "hanging ear rooms" on both sides have two bays on each side. The two bays and two doors face the open room, which is used as a hanging room. The two outer bays facing each other under the eaves can be used as a dining room or a small guest room, which can also be called "four rooms and one living room".

Ancient Xuzhou houses respected filial piety in terms of spatial layout. The elders live in the main room, the younger generation lives in the side room, and the third generation lives in the side room. This is the principle of respecting the elders and has become a common rule. (Cheng Sihua, construction worker in Hanwang Town, Xuzhou City, 2023)

## 2. The artistic value of ancient Xuzhou houses in the symbolic dimension

Semiotics, as a discipline that explores symbols and their meanings, provides a theoretical framework to help us understand and explain the various symbolic systems used by humans. In the context of ancient Xuzhou houses, architectural elements, spatial layout, decorative arts, etc. can be regarded as symbols carrying specific cultural and social meanings. By analyzing the meaning of these symbols, we can gain a deeper understanding of not only the visual and aesthetic value of houses, but also their far-reaching influence on the cultural and social levels.

### 2.1 Cultural symbolism of symbols

Xuzhou is a city with a history of 2,600 years. This long history has given this city a profound cultural heritage. In the course of thousands of years of history, Xu culture, Han culture, and Confucian and Taoist culture have continuously enriched the cultural connotation of Xuzhou, so the cultural themes in ancient Xuzhou houses have also been enriched. The theme selection of ancient Xuzhou houses not only reflects the residents' deep understanding of nature, history and society, but also reflects people's pursuit of harmony, virtue and purity.

#### 2.1.1 The spiritual connotation of residential symbols

The design of ancient Xuzhou houses not only shows the worship of natural landscapes, but more importantly, they embody the concept of harmonious integration of humanistic spirit and nature. This integration is not only reflected in the direct depiction of natural elements, but also in the harmonious unity of the overall layout of the building and the natural environment. This shows that the ancients demonstrated extremely high wisdom and aesthetic pursuit in their pursuit of a balance between material and spiritual life.

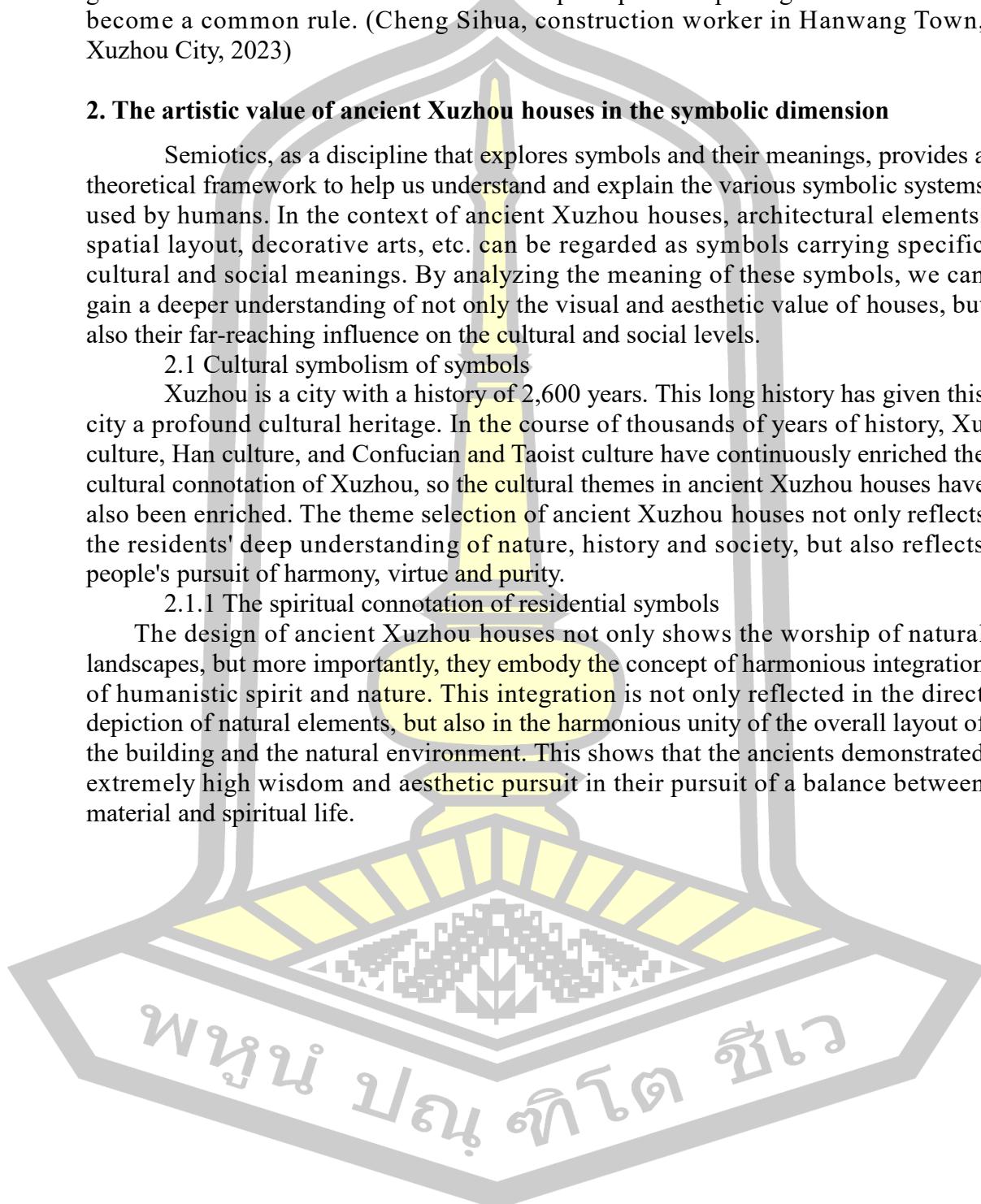




Figure 87 Qilin sends gourd  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

For example, in the Quanjin Archway in Hubu Mountain District, there are representative local brick carving art images in Xuzhou such as "Kirin Sending Gourd" and "Flower Arranging Cloud Swallow" (Figure 89). The columns and beams are combined to pass through the roof to above the roof, forming a verandah-roof-style wooden roof truss. The upper part is covered with tiles, and the four corners are high. A fish-tailed beast with an open mouth is installed at both ends of the main ridge of the flower board. The beast is decorated with a "flower-arranged cloud swallow", and the middle part of the main ridge is inlaid with copper to cast a unicorn-backed camel gourd (Fulu).

"Qilin sends gourd" is a typical auspicious pattern, which combines the two symbolic elements of Qilin and gourd. Kirin is regarded as an auspicious animal in traditional Chinese culture, symbolizing good luck, peace and harmony. The appearance of Qilin is often considered to be a symbol of good fortune from heaven and an emperor and sage. The gourd also has far-reaching symbolic meanings in traditional Chinese culture. Its shape resembles the connection between heaven and earth, symbolizing fortune and wealth. At the same time, the gourd's homophonic sound is "Fu Lu", making it a symbol of wealth and prosperity for descendants.



Figure 88 Flower Arranged Cloud Swallow  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

"Flower Arranged Cloud Swallow" is another highly symbolic pattern that combines swallows and flowers to form a beautiful picture. Swallows are a symbol of spring in Chinese culture, representing the arrival of good luck and joy, and also implying the fidelity of love in the saying "Swallows fly faster than their feathers". Flowers often symbolize beauty, purity and prosperity. Therefore, the pattern of "flower arrangement and cloud swallow" usually means the arrival of spring, the happiness of love and the prosperity of life (Figure 90).

"Kirin sends gourd" and "flower-arranged cloud swallow" are patterns with profound cultural implications and aesthetic value in traditional Chinese culture. They are commonly seen in ancient paintings, sculptures, architectural decorations and daily necessities. These patterns not only show the aesthetic pursuits of the Chinese people, but also contain rich symbolic meanings and blessings, reflecting the cultural concepts and aesthetic tastes of ancient Chinese society. Therefore, the pattern of "Qilin sending gourd" has far-reaching meaning. It not only indicates auspicious, harmonious, safe and happy life, but also represents the best wishes for wealth and official career, as well as a prosperous family and descendants. In ancient times, this pattern was often used on festive occasions such as weddings and birthdays to pray for good luck and good fortune.

In general, the two patterns of "Qilin Sending Gourd" and "Flower Arranging Cloud Swallow" not only beautify people's living environment, but also are rich in profound meanings of traditional Chinese culture, reflecting the ancients' wishes and pursuit of a better life. . Through these patterns, we can deeply understand the rich connotation and unique aesthetics of Chinese traditional culture.

The full name of its roof ridge decoration is "flower arrangement, clouds, swallows, unicorns to send blessings", which is the highest level of Xuzhou's traditional architectural ridge decoration. The entire ridge decoration has beautiful appearance, clear layers, profound meaning, exquisite workmanship and a long history of craftsmanship.

The Taoist philosophy of "Tao follows nature" has deeply influenced the Xuzhou people's cosmology.<sup>55</sup> Taoism not only influenced the way of thinking of Xuzhou people, but also widely adopted natural landscape as the main source of design inspiration in ancient Xuzhou residences. This is reflected in the architectural layout of residential houses, garden design, and decorative details on walls and window lattice. The frequent appearance of natural elements such as landscape paintings, flower and bird patterns not only provide residents with visual enjoyment, but more importantly, they symbolize the ideal of harmonious coexistence between man and nature. This design concept reflects the Taoist philosophy of "Tao follows nature" and the Confucian pursuit of a harmonious social order. The use of natural elements aims to remind residents to follow the laws of nature and promote people's inner peace and spiritual satisfaction.

At the same time, the space layout also follows the penetration of Chinese concepts of yin and yang interaction and Feng Shui. For example, in the Hubu Mountain houses, the construction of courtyards is very particular about "Feng Shui".

From site selection and positioning to determining the specific scale of each building, all must be carried out according to Feng Shui theory. According to the innate Bagua, most gates are opened in the southeast corner, and the gates of houses in the south of the road are located in the northwest corner. Because the northwest is the hexagram Gen, which is the mountain, and the southeast is the hexagram Dui, the hexagram Dui is the lake. The interpretation of this kind of gate setting means "the mountains and rivers are ventilated". The northeast direction is Zhen Gua, and Zhen is thunder. This is the second best direction, and a door can be set up if necessary. To the southwest is the Xun hexagram.

For example, there is a door in the southwest corner of the inner house behind the large living room of the Yu family courtyard that is connected to the west courtyard. This door opens in the Kun direction of the Kan house, which is considered unlucky. The designer built a "room gallbladder" in the courtyard to eliminate this. (Liu Yuzhi, Zhai Xianzhong. Research on Houses in Hubu Mountain, Xuzhou [J]. 2001)

### 2.1.2 Reflection of social ethics and family values

Social ethics and family values play a very important role in the moral values of Xuzhou people. The choice of themes of ancient Xuzhou houses also profoundly reflects the importance of family values and social ethics. The architecture and interior decoration of family ancestral halls emphasize the respect for ancestors and the continuation of family bloodlines. The calligraphy and paintings posted on the

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<sup>55</sup> "Dao follows nature", which comes from the philosophical thought of the Tao Te Ching, meaning that "Dao" means "naturally and naturally".

residences, the family trees and portraits of ancestors on the walls are records of family history and achievements.

For example, Chinese people have the custom of posting Spring Festival couplets during Chinese New Year.<sup>56</sup> Posting couplets has rich meanings and is often used to express people's best wishes and expectations. Especially during the Spring Festival, every household will post couplets to pray for peace, good fortune and good luck in the new year. Spring couplets have also become one of the most important decorative symbols in Chinese residential buildings. But if an elder in the family dies, the style of Spring Festival couplets in Xuzhou will change greatly.

In the Xuzhou area, a family event refers to the death of a relative in the family. Within three years after the funeral, the entire family must observe some traditional customs to express their memory of the deceased. For example, the color of couplets during the New Year period cannot be red. Generally, yellow couplets are posted in the first year, green couplets are posted in the second year, and purple couplets are posted in the third year. Different colors represent different times of mourning. We locals all understand this rule. Just look at the colors on the houses to know what is going on (Peng Hao, farmer, Jiawang, 2023)

As a system of symbols, these buildings and decorative arts convey the ancients' reverence for nature, their attitude towards life, and their maintenance of social order. Spring couplets generally convey the message of the Chinese New Year to people, but people in Xuzhou can get different messages through the different colors of the couplets. At this time, the Spring Festival couplets convey more than just blessings for the new year. From within the family, different colors symbolize grief for the deceased. From a social perspective, it also examines whether a family abides by the established social order. As a carrier of symbols, Xuzhou houses have become a space for passing on family traditions and educating future generations.

In houses, not only the thoughts of the deceased are expressed, but also the blessings for the birth of new life are expressed. Peach branches have the function of warding off evil spirits in Chinese Taoist culture. Because infants and young children have poor immunity, it is the custom of Xuzhou people to prepare a peach branch when receiving a newborn from the hospital after delivery, with money, dates, peanuts, gourds, apples and other things tied with red thread on the peach branch. The newborn is packed with red envelopes and sent home as a sign of good fortune. When you get home, put the peach branch on the door to ward off evil and attract good luck. Therefore, if you pass by a residential house in Xuzhou with branches stuck on it, it means that the family has added a family member. (Peng Hao, farmer, Jiawang, 2023)

Residential houses serve as places of residence. The interior decorations and symbols express the pursuit of beauty, and their deep meaning reflects a cultural identity and expression. In residential spaces, the younger generation can learn traditional values such as respecting the elderly and caring for the young, family unity, and social responsibility. These values play an indispensable role in maintaining

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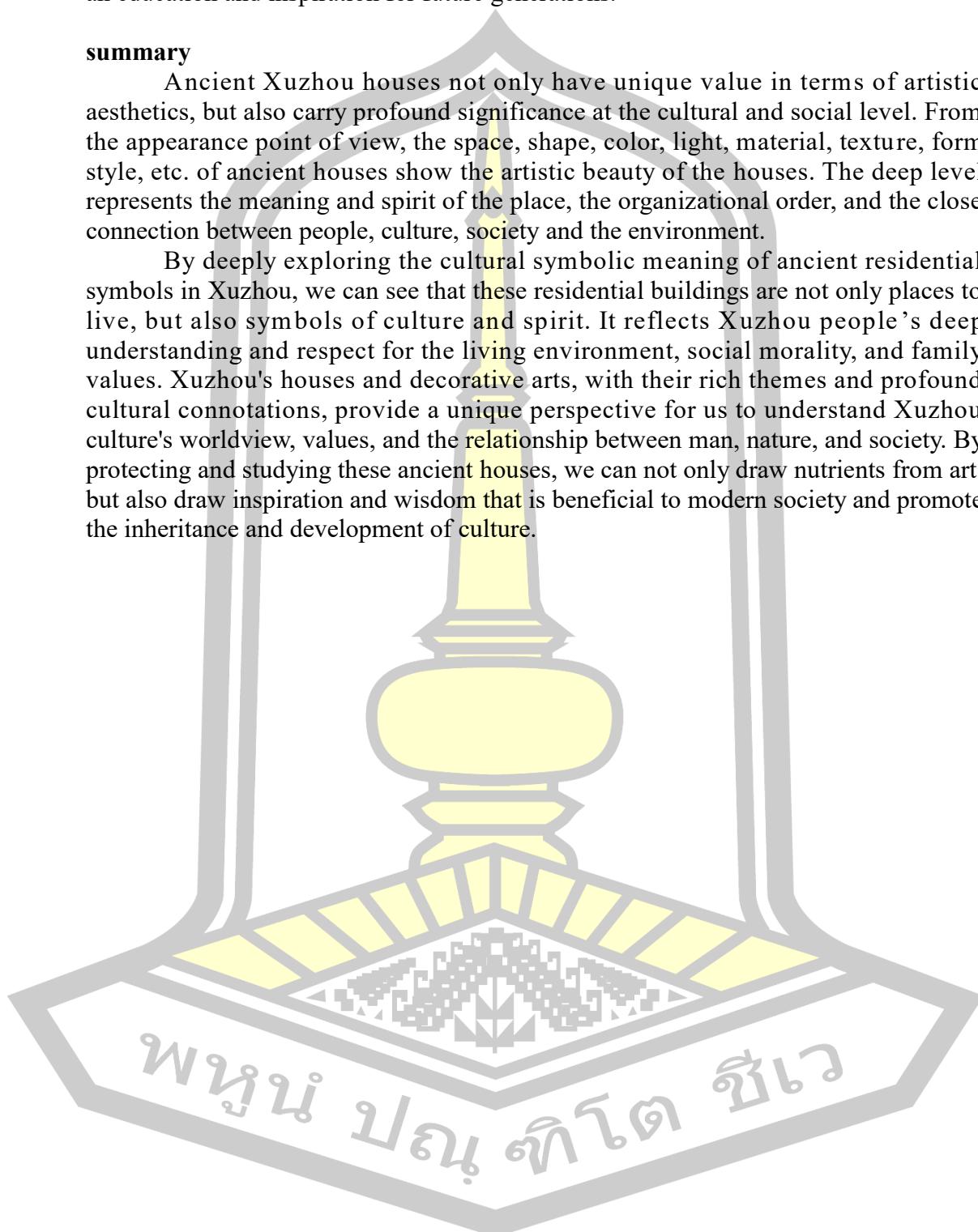
<sup>56</sup> Spring couplets express the Chinese working people's best wishes to avoid evil and disaster and welcome good fortune. It is said that this custom originated in the Song Dynasty and became popular in the Ming Dynasty.

social harmony and stability. This is not only a commemoration of the past, but also an education and inspiration for future generations.

### summary

Ancient Xuzhou houses not only have unique value in terms of artistic aesthetics, but also carry profound significance at the cultural and social level. From the appearance point of view, the space, shape, color, light, material, texture, form style, etc. of ancient houses show the artistic beauty of the houses. The deep level represents the meaning and spirit of the place, the organizational order, and the close connection between people, culture, society and the environment.

By deeply exploring the cultural symbolic meaning of ancient residential symbols in Xuzhou, we can see that these residential buildings are not only places to live, but also symbols of culture and spirit. It reflects Xuzhou people's deep understanding and respect for the living environment, social morality, and family values. Xuzhou's houses and decorative arts, with their rich themes and profound cultural connotations, provide a unique perspective for us to understand Xuzhou culture's worldview, values, and the relationship between man, nature, and society. By protecting and studying these ancient houses, we can not only draw nutrients from art, but also draw inspiration and wisdom that is beneficial to modern society and promote the inheritance and development of culture.



## CHAPTER V

### The reconstruction process of Liyushan Village: symbols and memory transmission in the context of rural revitalization

The fourth research objective is the reconstruction process of Liyushan Village in Xuzhou. During the reconstruction process, contemporary houses convey local memories to people through the implantation of symbols and arouse villagers' awareness of the protection of local culture.

In recent years, under the upsurge of rural revitalization, the rural construction movement has emerged. Faced with the impact of urbanization and the passively assigned commercial attributes, the regional cultural characteristics of rural areas have not been explored and promoted. The construction of rural customs and civilization has lacked vitality, and cultural landscape design has converged. This requires designers to fully explore the symbolic symbols in rural residences, inherit cultural memories, and combine rural revitalization policies to build a new carrier for inheriting rural culture and retaining nostalgic memories.

#### 1. Rural revitalization policy

The rural revitalization strategy in the new era refers to the implementation of a series of measures to protect rural culture and ecological environment, promote the rapid development of rural economy, and achieve the goal of rural revitalization.

Adhere to the priority development of agriculture and rural areas and follow the general requirements of prosperous industry, livable ecology, civilized rural customs, effective governance, and prosperous life. Establish and improve the institutional mechanisms and policy systems for urban-rural integrated development, and coordinate the promotion of rural economic construction, political construction, cultural construction, social construction, ecological civilization construction and party building. Accelerate the modernization of rural governance systems and governance capabilities, accelerate the modernization of agriculture and rural areas, and follow the path of socialist rural revitalization with Chinese characteristics. Let agriculture become a promising industry, farmers become an attractive profession, and rural areas become beautiful homes where people can live and work in peace and contentment. (The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued the "Strategic Plan for Rural Revitalization (2018-2022)")

##### 1.1 The formulation process of rural revitalization strategy

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, especially after the reform and opening up, China's economy has developed rapidly, and the problem of unbalanced urban and rural development has become increasingly prominent. Therefore, in 2017, the country proposed a new era rural revitalization strategy.

The rural revitalization strategy was first proposed by China in the report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China on October 18, 2017, in

order to solve a series of rural problems. In the report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, it was pointed out that the problems of agriculture and rural farmers are fundamental issues related to the national economy and people's livelihood. Solving the "three rural" issues must always be the top priority of the whole party's work and implement the rural revitalization strategy.<sup>57</sup>

Since 2004, the No. 1 Central Document issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council for 21 consecutive years has focused on "agriculture, rural areas and rural issues." The overall plan for prioritizing the development of agriculture and rural areas in the new development stage and comprehensively promoting rural revitalization has pointed out the direction for the work on "agriculture, rural areas and farmers" at present and in the future.

On March 5, 2018, Li Keqiang, then Premier of the State Council, mentioned in the "Government Work Report" that the rural revitalization strategy should be vigorously implemented. On May 31, 2018, the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee held a meeting to review the National Rural Revitalization Strategic Plan (2018-2022). In September 2018, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued the "Strategic Plan for Rural Revitalization (2018-2022)" and issued a notice requiring all regions and departments to conscientiously implement it based on actual conditions.

On February 21, 2021, the "Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on Comprehensively Promoting Rural Revitalization and Accelerating Agricultural and Rural Modernization", the No. 1 Central Document, was released. This is the 18th Central Committee No. 1 document to guide the work of "agriculture, rural areas and farmers" since the 21st century. On February 25, the National Rural Revitalization Administration, an agency directly under the State Council, was officially established. To do a good job in the big article of rural revitalization, in March 2021, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued the "Opinions on Effectively Coordinating the Consolidation and Expansion of Poverty Alleviation Results with Rural Revitalization" and set out key tasks.

On April 29, 2021, the 28th meeting of the Standing Committee of the 13th National People's Congress voted to pass the "Rural Revitalization Promotion Law of the People's Republic of China" (Figure 91). On May 18, 2021, the Ministry of Justice issued the "Rural Revitalization and Rule of Law Activity Plan". It only took three years from the proposal of the rural revitalization strategy to the promulgation of legal protection, which is enough to illustrate the importance of the rural revitalization strategy to national development.

<sup>57</sup> "Three Rural" is the abbreviation for agriculture, rural areas and farmers.

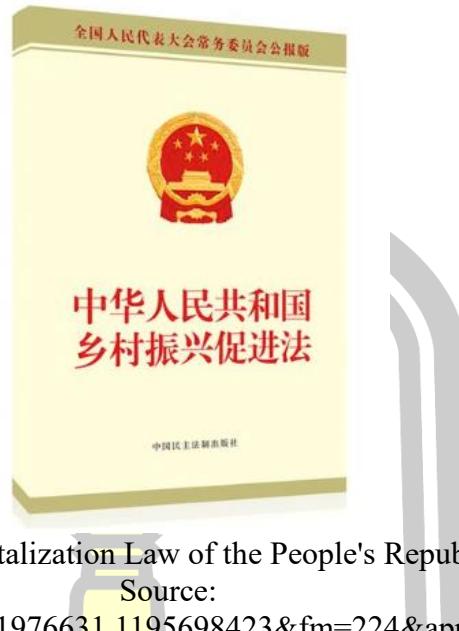


Figure 89 Rural Revitalization Law of the People's Republic of China

Source:

<http://t14.baidu.com/it/u=2541976631,1195698423&fm=224&app=112&f=JPEG?w=500&h=500>

## 1.2 Implementation of rural revitalization strategy

In accordance with the strategic arrangements proposed by the Communist Party of China at the 19th National Congress to secure a decisive victory in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and achieve the second centenary goal in two stages, the Central Rural Work Conference clarified the goals and tasks for implementing the rural revitalization strategy:

- By 2020, important progress will be made in rural revitalization, and the institutional framework and policy system will be basically formed;
- By 2035, decisive progress will be made in rural revitalization and agricultural and rural modernization will be basically realized;
- By 2050, the countryside will be fully revitalized, agriculture will be strong, the countryside will be beautiful, and farmers will be prosperous. (Central Rural Work Conference, 2017)

At present, China has completed the first goal in 2020 and is moving towards the second goal in 2035. In this process, the goals of inheriting China's excellent traditional culture, inheriting, developing and improving farming civilization, adhering to the harmonious coexistence of man and nature, and prospering rural culture require consideration and implementation by all aspects of society. As traditional houses are an important carrier of rural culture, it is particularly important to study and analyze how the cultural memory contained in traditional houses can be inherited and developed in the context of rural revitalization.

### 1.3 The significance of residential reconstruction in the context of rural revitalization

Residential buildings are an important part of rural construction and the habitat of rural people. The construction of residential buildings is the foundation of rural construction. Villages rich in natural, historical and cultural resources, such as traditional villages and famous tourist villages with characteristic landscapes, are important carriers for highlighting and inheriting China's excellent traditional culture. The "Notice of the General Office of the Ministry of Finance and the General Office of the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development on Organizing the Application for Demonstration of Concentrated Protection and Utilization of Traditional Villages in 2022" clarified 40 demonstration counties for the contiguous protection and utilization of traditional villages. Covering many provinces, cities and regions across the country.

Taking traditional villages as nodes, we should give full play to their unique resource advantages, coordinate the construction of infrastructure, public service facilities and the layout of characteristic industries, comprehensively promote rural revitalization, and inherit and develop excellent traditional culture. It is necessary to activate and make good use of traditional buildings, put forward measures and technical routes for the livability renovation of traditional residences based on the actual needs of villagers, and achieve the convenience and modernization of living facilities. The Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development and the Ministry of Finance also require relevant provincial and municipal departments to carry out corresponding protection and utilization demonstration work for the traditional villages in the counties and cities listed in the notice.

In order to protect villages with cultural value and the farming civilization nurtured in the countryside, so that they can be passed down in the torrent of history, the protection of traditional houses and the reconstruction of new houses have become a very important topic.

Schulz pointed out: "Although we have to accept changes in the surrounding environment for the sake of social and economic development, there is an important social concern that should not change. That is to preserve the authenticity of those important witnesses of history. In order to allow current people and even future generations to make their own judgments on past history" (Aleida Asman, 2016, 76).

However, we cannot watch history, and the authenticity of history is difficult to verify. The history we can see is not only determined by social factors, but also by human subjective factors. This determines to a certain extent that it depends not only on the way in which people remember them perceptually, but also on how they are narrated and accepted in a public communication situation.

Memory constructs history and even replaces history. History is the history that is remembered; history is constructed and completed by memory, and memory is basically equivalent to the memory of history. From this, it is asserted that the development of history from historical facts to historical discourse is actually the process in which the original experience of history is subjectively remembered by the subject, that is, the memorization of history (Zhao Jinrong, 2015, 165).

If memory is regarded as a special symbolic expression of the subject, it is believed that it creates an atmosphere of historical reproduction and becomes a historical catalyst that activates history. So can we think that "ritual" creates "historical themes" as social dramas in the form of social performance, and develops them into widely influential public stage performances in the form of historical reproduction? Previous studies may have used myths and legends as narrative carriers of memory. Such as Sahlins' myth about "Captain Cook". China's "Myth of Guan God"<sup>58</sup>. Wang Mingke's legends about "Taibo fled to Wu"<sup>59</sup> and "Jizha Rangguo"<sup>60</sup>. The purpose of historical memory at this time is not to explore whether this historical event happened, but to inject symbolic symbols and rational critical factors into the past.

Others use village space as a cultural symbol, using village-specific houses and rituals as memory carriers. Buildings such as the "siheyuan" in Beijing, the "cave houses" in Shaanxi, the "ganlan style" in Guangxi, the Hakka "dragon house", and the "Yin Ying Yin" in Yunnan. In short, these memory carriers are long-term deposits in the process of social development and remain in the real environment as historical legacies.

But rural development is a dynamic process. In this process, residential buildings are affected by both people and the social environment. The cultural memories carried by houses are also affecting people and society. In the context of rural revitalization, residential buildings have been given a special historical mission.

Therefore, in the context of rural revitalization, the reconstruction of residential buildings should conform to the laws of village development and evolution trends. According to the development status, location conditions, resource endowments, etc. of different villages, rural revitalization will be promoted in categories according to the ideas of agglomeration promotion, integration into cities and towns, characteristic protection, relocation and merger.

<sup>58</sup> Guan Yu, a famous general in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. Known for loyalty and righteousness in later generations. After his death, he was revered as "Guan Gong"、"Guan God" by the people

<sup>59</sup> In order to fulfill his father's wish, Taibo three times let the throne lead his younger brother Zhongyong from the Central Plains to Meicun in the suburbs of Wuxi, developed the vast Jiangnan region, and established the state of Wu.

<sup>60</sup> The story of Jizha, the prince of Wu Kingdom in the Spring and Autumn Period, who resigned from the throne. Promote the precious virtue of humility

## 2. Reconstruction of contemporary Xuzhou residential buildings in the context of rural revitalization :Taking Liyushan Village as an example

Liyushan Village is a small village in Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province. Like tens of thousands of villages in China, it has not experienced rural renewal. Due to differences in concepts, the first few times did not show very good results. However, the reconstruction process that Liyushan Village has just undergone is very typical in terms of symbol and memory transmission.

2.1 The reconstruction process and symbolic evolution of Liyushan Village  
We will sort out the reconstruction of Liyushan Village from the following points。

### 2.1.1 The reconstruction background of Liyushan Village



Figure 90 Fence material rooftops of ancient houses in Zhakou Village

Source: Marked by Peng Bao, 2022

Liyushan Village is located in the northwest of Wangji Town, Suining County, Xuzhou City, Jiangsu Province. It is a natural village under the jurisdiction of Hongshan Village. The village area is 396,000 square meters. The village is higher in the west and lower in the east, with Liyu Mountain in the southeast, the Yellow River Ancient Road in the east, and Provincial Highway 324 in the south. The village is 5 kilometers away from the Shuanggou exit of the Ningsu-Xu Expressway and about a 5-minute drive from Xuguanyin Airport. The location is advantageous. The ancient Yellow River, Liyu Mountain, and Liyu Spring are the unique hydrological mountain features of Liyushan Village (Figure 92).

Liyu Mountain was originally located on the north bank of the old Yellow River (ancient Sishui). Later, because the Yellow River took Si and entered the Huaihe River, Liyu Mountain "swam around" on both sides of the Yellow River, and the shape of the mountain resembled a carp, so it was called Liyu Mountain. According to the map of Suining during the Tianqi period of the Ming Dynasty, Liyu Mountain is located on the north bank of the Yellow River, and there is Liyu Mountain Crossing. It is a place where merchants gather. Historical records record: Standing in the middle of the Yellow River beach, it is called Liyu Mountain; and Liyu Mountain has rugged rocks and sparkling waves, making it look like a fish in the

water from a distance. ("Guangxu Suining County Chronicles" ,the Qing Dynasty,P12)

Liyushan Village covers an area of 1,700 acres, with a total of 5 villager groups and 283 households with 970 people. The village environment in Liyushan Village is poor and rural development is relatively backward. Mainly manifested in the following two aspects.

First, the infrastructure is weak and management and maintenance are not in place. Water supply, power supply, roads, and network construction are all going their own way, even causing some households to not have access to them. There is a lack of unified management and control, severe deficiencies in sewers, underground pipelines, garbage and water treatment, and incomplete public infrastructure. The village lacks cleaning staff and the people's awareness of environmental protection is weak, resulting in a dirty and poor environment in the village. Some public infrastructure in the village was not maintained in time, and the villagers did not take care of it during use, resulting in serious damage to the facilities. Due to the lack of dedicated management and related management systems, the doors of farmhouse bookstores, elderly activity rooms, chess and card rooms, etc. in the village are often closed, and no one cleans the thick dust on tables and bookshelves. Public service infrastructure has become a decoration.

Second, the economic foundation is weak and industrial development lags behind. The farmers have a single source of livelihood, mainly relying on family farming and breeding. Farmers' family-style small-scale agricultural production and operations lack scientific management technology, have high labor costs and low efficiency, and farmers' incomes are not high. Moreover, due to the lack of scientific guidance, villagers are relatively single in choosing planting varieties, mostly traditional food crops, with low returns. The village collective's thinking in terms of management and industrial development is not broad enough and its thinking is relatively conservative. Most of the village collective's assets are idle, and many assets have been misappropriated by private individuals. As a result, the village collective's economic income is not high and industrial development is relatively lagging behind.

Because Liyushan Village is facing the problems of village hollowing and aging population (Figure 93). Therefore, in the process of rural construction, great emphasis is placed on improving the charm of the countryside and exploring the rural culture of Liyushan Village. Attract villagers to return to their hometowns with rural culture and tourism industries, and drive villagers to become rich and expand the village collective economy with industrial development to truly realize rural revitalization.



Figure 91 Rural areas are facing population aging and hollowing out  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

First, Liyushan Village develops and utilizes existing intangible cultural heritage such as traditional houses and characteristic handicrafts. Taking advantage of its abundant characteristic cultural resources and having the conditions to develop characteristic cultural industries, characteristic ancient houses and folk art can be created. There are many legends surrounding Liyu Mountain, forming a unique culture of filial piety. Therefore, Liyushan Village focuses on the culture of filial piety as the village spirit, with Wang Xiang lying on the ice asking for carps as the main cultural tone, building multiple cultural nodes, actively polishing the spirit of filial piety, leading the masses to inherit the virtues of filial piety, and passing on the culture of filial piety from generation to generation.

In addition, during the rural construction process of Liyushan Village, the original style of the village has been preserved. The village has beautiful scenery, pure folk customs and a strong local flavor. By vigorously developing characteristic rural tourism, the village's popularity has been improved, villagers' employment has been promoted, and a gathering of people has been formed. (Figure 94: Before reconstruction, Liyushan Village was a backward village)



Figure 92 Before reconstruction, Liyushan Village was a backward village  
Source: Photographed by Zhang Wei, 2011

Beginning in 2018, the local town government began to manage the public space in Liyushan Village, focusing on recovering the encroached collective land and cleaning up abandoned debris in front of and behind the house. 5,000 square meters of illegal construction have been demolished, and 392 places such as old toilets, pig pens, and firewood stacks have been cleaned up. More than 200 toilets outside the hospital were demolished, 232 graves were relocated, more than 50 high-rise building floors were cleaned, 5,500 square meters of large abandoned pig houses were demolished, and 67.4 acres of collective construction land, 76 acres of mountainous land, and 114 acres of agricultural land were recovered.



Figure 93 Liyushan Village in 2018

Source: [https://www.sohu.com/a/345423549\\_120053815](https://www.sohu.com/a/345423549_120053815)

After the remediation, Liyushan Village was built by the town government in accordance with the three functional sections of residents' life, nostalgia memory and characteristic industries (Figure 95). It planned a farming experience area, a characteristic industry area, a filial piety display area, a Lili ceremony symbol area, a village life area and a nostalgia memory area. The six major functional areas, including widely promoting the culture of filial piety, developing special agricultural products such as yellow peaches, pears, peanuts, and repairing ancient stone houses, demonstrate the unique rural style of northern Jiangsu.

Liyushan Village has successively completed the construction of 6,000 square meters of asphalt roads and 4,200 meters of cement roads. Construction of 10,244 meters of sewage pipe network and 50 cubic meters/day sewage treatment plant. 800 meters of strong power to the ground and 4,500 meters of three-network integration pipeline erection. Landscape construction of 30,000 meters of lighting strips and 600 street lights. 40,000 square meters of new walls and 8,000 square meters of themed wall paintings. There are 10,000 native tree species and 50,000 square meters of vegetable garden green space. 4 flush toilets and 6 leisure squares will be constructed.

At present, the entire village has achieved street lighting, rainwater and sewage diversion and road hardening. Transfer the land to build 300 acres of yellow peach orchard, 800 acres of crisp pear orchard, 150 acres of fruit orchard, and 100 acres of private farmland, extend the development of deep processing industry of

agricultural specialty products, upgrade the villagers' traditional handicrafts, and create a unique cultural brand of Liyushan Village.

### 2.1.2 Problems that occurred during the previous renovation of Liyushan Village

After the previous round of renovation by the government, the quality of the village appearance of Liyushan Village has been significantly improved, and part of the rural culture has also been discovered. However, due to insufficient understanding and emphasis on rural culture, the following problems still exist:

#### (1) The local culture of Liyushan Village has not been fully explored

Although the government is also actively guiding Liyushan Village to build cultural industries, the process of building a characteristic pastoral village has not been closely linked to the actual situation of the village. The corresponding housing construction, infrastructure and various entertainment activities have not integrated the local characteristic culture, resulting in the village's cultural characteristics not being prominent enough.

The construction of characteristic rural areas not only greatly improves the economic and living standards of residents, but also enriches their spiritual level. This is because the staff within Liyushan Village have a major misunderstanding of the construction of characteristic rural villages. They believe that characteristic rural areas are about economic development and ignore cultural characteristics. It is not very attractive to foreign tourists, lacks creativity in village construction, does not form a deep impression on tourists, and does not have a large supporting effect on the local economy.

With the rise of rural tourism in Liyushan Village, villagers have become more interested in this new economic income model, but they have no way to create a close connection, which has promoted farmers' income increase in a short period of time, but they have no innovation ability. After a long period of time, your economic income level will return to its original state. Villagers are the direct beneficiaries of characteristic rural construction and are also the initiators of this project. However, if their own economic living standards and spiritual culture have not been greatly improved, the connotation of characteristic rural areas has not been fundamentally realized.

#### (2) Over-designed and lost rural characteristics

The countryside has a high-quality environment and its own unique local culture. These characteristics are not found in the city, and some villages also have many historical monuments, which are of great significance to most scholars. Its own environment is the result of years of hard work by local farmers, and the corresponding characteristic culture is the basis for its attraction to tourists. A high degree of integration of the above conditions can result in impressive pastoral scenery.

As the rural construction of Liyushan Village continues to deepen, the infrastructure in the village has become more complete and sound, and there is basically no gap between the services enjoyed by rural and urban areas. The corresponding living conditions and transportation have greatly improved the life experience of farmers. However, with the large-scale construction of urban facilities in villages, it has had a greater impact on the village's own characteristic landscape and culture. Moreover, the construction process was not closely connected with the local local culture, and the local cultural connotation was not fully explored. Some

villagers even plant exotic flowers and exotic grasses in the original green areas, causing great damage to the ecological environment within the village.

(3) The degree of development is low and the imitation atmosphere is strong

The construction of characteristic pastoral villages in Liyushan Village started later than other pilot villages, and the township government lacked relevant work experience. Because it is carried out step by step, Liyushan Village must learn from advanced villages and imitate its construction style. Moreover, without overall planning and design within the village, it is impossible to show the advantages of its own culture. Just copying the buildings in different areas will eventually lead to the failure of the construction of characteristic villages to proceed smoothly, and the loss of its own characteristic culture.

Therefore, in order to solve the above problems, the government summed up the experience and lessons, and carried out an update process of Liyushan Village that combined the old and the new by mining the cultural memories carried in the residences and combining them with the connotation of symbols.

2.1.3 The reconstruction process and symbolic evolution of Liyushan Village

The residential houses in Liyushan Village are divided into two types. One type is houses newly built 20 years ago using new materials such as cement red bricks. These houses are of better quality and retain tradition in spatial layout. The other type is the existing residential houses that are more than a hundred years old. These houses preserve the architectural features of ancient Xuzhou houses, but some are no longer inhabited due to their age. There are also some ancient houses that are inhabited, but there are serious safety hazards. The foundations in the courtyard are obviously lower than the road at the entrance, so there is serious backflow when it rains.

In the context of rural revitalization, the appearance of Liyushan Village no longer meets contemporary requirements for rural construction. Therefore, the government department where Liyushan Village is located has begun an orderly plan to promote the residential reconstruction of Liyushan Village.

The Suining County Government invited a professional design team to plan the construction of Liyushan Village. The construction is divided into two parts. Part of it is to decorate the facades or reinforce the buildings of valuable houses in the old villages. The other part is to do the overall construction of the new village in an open space in the village (Figure 96).





Figure 94 Rural areas are facing population aging and hollowing out  
Source: Suzhou Survey and Design, 2021

According to legal provisions, farmers can only build their own houses on their own homesteads. Homestead land is collective construction land used by rural villagers to build residences and ancillary facilities. It includes land for housing, ancillary buildings, courtyards, etc. It belongs to (collective) construction land in terms of land type management. Homestead land is a rural property rights model with Chinese characteristics formulated after the founding of New China in 1949. Before the founding of New China, China's land was privatized and basically concentrated in the hands of capitalists and rich peasants. China is a society with thousands of years of farming civilization. Farmers are the main component of China's population. In order to solve the survival problem of farmers, New China formulated the policy of land nationalization. Abolish the land ownership system of feudal exploitation by the landlord class and implement the land ownership system of farmers. (Article 1 of the "Land Reform Law" of the Central People's Government of China, 1950)

China nationalized land across the country and then divided the land according to the population of rural families, thereby solving the problem of food and housing that had troubled farmers in China for thousands of years. The land allocated to farmers is divided into two forms, one for agricultural production and the other for residential use. This update is also based on the nature of existing land ownership.



### (1) Continuation and innovation of memory in residential construction

China's rural areas have experienced thousands of years of agricultural labor, so rural groups have accumulated rich experience in the land, climate, planting practices and rural interactions related to agricultural labor. This experience is partly objective and scientific, and partly subjective. But these experiences in production further shape the cultural integration into all aspects of life. These experiences and traditions are stored and passed on through generations in the form of cultural memories such as words, rituals, and buildings. They gradually form values and dominate the behavioral choices of rural groups, giving birth to the splendid rural civilization in traditional Chinese society. Houses are the main carriers of rural cultural memories that record the historical circulation. Taking rural historical traditions as the object, through oral narration, writing, ritual activities and other carriers, the selective and imaginative construction of rural traditions reflects the shared memories in the consciousness of rural groups.

On the one hand, the spiritual symbols of houses diachronically point to the rural past and are memories of the rural past's historical traditions. These rural traditions are experiential memories formed through social practice in rural history and influence the ideological concepts and behavioral choices of rural groups.

On the other hand, the traditional memories carried by the physical symbols of residential buildings are derived from rural historical traditions in content. However, the goal orientation is not just a simple imitation of the past rural historical traditions, but also contemporary innovations, giving contemporary symbolic meaning and memory. The memory presented and circulated in the form of rural historical traditions includes, in terms of content, the memory of material traditions such as rural village spaces and ancestral temples, as well as the memory of institutional traditions such as village rules and conventions. It also includes the memory of behavioral traditions such as rural etiquette and folk customs, and the memory of spiritual traditions such as rural values and aesthetic tastes.

Contemporary values have improved traditions, and rural cultural memory is always based on the present moment in history in terms of value goals. It shapes the past rural historical tradition into a form of meaning and serves the actual current rural synchronic development goals.



## (2) Summary of problems in existing residential buildings

Through the inspection and research of the traditional houses in Liyushan Village, it was found that the ancient houses in the old village were seriously damaged.



Figure 97 Discover existing ancient houses

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

On the one hand, with the development of the times, villagers' pursuit of a more comfortable life has led to the need to replace houses, resulting in the demolition and reconstruction of ancient houses. Many residents demolished or rebuilt their ancient houses for living needs. During the survey, it was found that many villagers demolished their ancient houses and rebuilt them into flat-roofed buildings (Figure 97).



Figure 95 Collapsed ancient houses in Liyushan Village

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

On the other hand, traditional houses also have problems with natural weathering. The main building materials in Liyushan Village are wood, rammed earth, and bricks. Over time, wooden and rammed earth buildings can suffer damage or even collapse due to problems such as moisture and corrosion. After investigation, we found that many uninhabited houses in Liyushan Village have collapsed and the courtyards are overgrown with weeds (Figure 98).

The last aspect is the strong rise of modern civilization, which makes people forget the importance of tradition. With the prosperity and development of rural tourism and the widespread dissemination of modern media, foreign cultures such as urban culture and foreign culture are visibly affecting the villagers' concepts and consciousness. The original value concept centered on family ethics has gradually become marginalized, and it has also caused villagers to doubt or even deny their own culture and customs.

At the same time, the departure of the rural labor force has caused the hollowing out of the countryside, causing local culture to lose the main body of inheritance and protection. Local culture itself lacks the ability to circulate autonomously, ultimately causing local culture to lose its vitality under the impact of modern civilization.

Our house has been renovated three times. From the earliest ancestral home by the Yellow River to the building just built two years ago. The layout of this new house is basically the same as our ancestral home. The original house had a one-story rammed earth structure. In the past few years, two-story Western-style houses were popular, so when my house was renovated into a brick house, it also had two floors. However, the stones used in the foundation of the house were dismantled from the original old house. This is the case when building houses in rural areas, and many materials are recycled. This time, the village collective renovated the exterior of the house for us, and added decorations that were only used by wealthy families in the past on the roof. The exterior looks more antique and better looking than the original one. (Zhang Wei, Liyushan Village, 2023)

### (3) The ceremony of building a house

When building a house in Liyushan Village, there are many rituals involved in the whole process of building a house. Among them, the opening ceremony, beam-laying ceremony and completion ceremony are essential during construction. It usually starts with setting off firecrackers. There are also reasons for setting off firecrackers at these three stages. The beginning is to break the ground. When the ground is broken, you inform the gods that you have started construction, which may affect the local soil every day (Figure 99).



Figure 96 The ceremony of building a house  
Source: Photographed by Zhang Wei, 2019

The beam-laying ceremony is the most important part of the house-building process. Many cultures in China emphasize the importance of beams. There is a saying that goes: "Build a house with beams, and the family will be prosperous; build a house without beams, and the population will not be prosperous." There is another saying that every Chinese knows: "If the upper beam is not straight, the lower beam will be crooked, and if the middle beam is not straight, it will fall down." Folks believe that whether the beam is installed smoothly is not only related to whether the structure of the house is strong, but also related to whether the occupants will prosper in the future. These cultural traditions all reflect the importance of raising beams when building houses in rural areas.

The original beams were all tree trunks, but now they have been converted into prefabricated concrete beams or concrete poured on site, but this ritual is still passed down. When the top beam is poured or raised, you must first choose a good day and a good time, and wrap the beam with red paper, pine and cypress, and sometimes write the words "Good luck with the beam". When lifting or pulling a beam, the beam-raising master should shout "Go on, good luck!" and should be accompanied by the sound of firecrackers. After the beams are installed, the builder will give red envelopes to the workers and prepare meals for the workers.

The completion ceremony has been a custom in various regions since the beginning. In traditional Chinese culture, the completion ceremony is both a celebration and a tribute to the Lord of the Land. Tutuye is the god who governs the land in Chinese mythology. Generally, it is best to start setting off firecrackers before twelve noon for the completion ceremony. The day to celebrate a new house can't just be about setting off firecrackers. Because we just woke up the land man, we actually need to prepare nutritious meals, fruits and drinks to entertain the land man. After all, the previous groundbreaking affected his land. The house is the foundation of the family, and we also hope it can bring good luck to everyone in the family. (Cheng Sihua, rural construction worker, 2023)



Figure 97 The foundations of Suining's houses still follow the tradition of laying stones.

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

#### (4) The stone and earth building skills of Liyushan Village

The traditional houses in Liyushan Village have distinctive characteristics and adopt the construction technology of earth and stone (Figure 100). It has unique natural environment resources such as the ancient Yellow River, Liyu Mountain, and Liyu Spring. Therefore, Liyushan Village follows the principle of adapting measures to local conditions in the process of reconstructing residential buildings. Some of the original buildings with unique village features will be retained and renovated, and new residences and landscape systems will be built using Liyushan's own stone materials and traditional crafts such as earth and stone. It not only inherits the tradition, but also creates a village style with the characteristics of the ancient Yellow River. Continuing traditional craftsman-style construction techniques, while improving the living conditions and quality of the original villagers, reshaping the living space and inheriting cultural memories.

Barrier stone is one of the Jiangsu Provincial Intangible Cultural Heritage - Traditional Building Construction Techniques (Xuzhou Houses). The stone laying method is generally used to build the foundation of a house. In some areas, because of the abundant stone resources, stones are also piled from the underground foundation to the roof. Generally, large stones about 50 cm long are used and are spliced together by experienced stonemasons. The purpose is to make the house more stable. This construction method of the basic part is suitable for various types of Xuzhou residential buildings. The difference is the choice of venue, such as on a mountain or on land.

To build a house on the land in Liyushan Village, you need to dig into the hard soil layer and then lay stones about 40cm into the ground. This height can not only provide a stable building base, but also the height between the indoor ground and the outdoors, which is helpful for rainwater intrusion and moisture prevention. This is a construction standard formed by the natural environment of the branch Xuzhou area with heavy rainfall in summer.

### (5) Color matching

The roofs of traditional houses in Xuzhou are mainly composed of small green tiles that form a rhythmic tile array. The tiles in Liyushan Village began to use larger area of green tiles, which improved the efficiency of construction. One layer after another from bottom to top is laid out neatly, creating a strong sense of movement. Most of the buildings in Xuzhou are made of adobe bricks or wood. The former generally retains the original color of the material or plasters the walls with white plaster, while the latter uses paint finishes. Whether it is the building materials themselves, mineral pigments, or natural resin pigments, they are all derived from nature. Their color expression is limited, but they are easy to collect and use in large quantities. Under the conditions at that time, if the cost of building exterior color was higher than the economic purchasing power, it would be difficult for poor people to bear the burden of painting the building's exterior.



Figure 98 The public activity center retains the stone appearance and traditional color

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

The architectural exterior colors of Liyushan Village follow the characteristics of ancient Xuzhou houses, and are differentiated due to the different construction backgrounds of the old village and the new village (Figure 101).

Because most of the old villages are brick houses newly built in the past 20 years and have not been used for a long time. Therefore, during the reconstruction process of the brick buildings in the old village, in order to meet the requirements of waterproofing and durability while retaining the base stones, we chose to first paint the brick exteriors with cement for protection. After that, white, commonly used in Xuzhou area, was chosen as the color of architectural decoration. It is painted with white paint, and black and gray brick patterns are used in parts to imitate the effect of ancient houses.

The new village part of Liyushan Village is rebuilt as a whole, so it is more creative in terms of the unity of appearance and shape. Xinmin's residential houses use dark yellow as the main color of the walls in a more modern style. Because

Liyushan Village is located on the edge of the ancient Yellow River, many houses are directly made of rammed earth structures. Dark yellow is the main color of the rammed earth houses in Liyushan's traditional houses. Yellow represents the geographical characteristics and historical memory of Liyushan Village. This enables contemporary people to feel the contemporary aesthetic appearance and the transmission of rural memories after seeing the new houses.

#### (6) Structure and decoration

The hard gable roof is the most common roof form for residential buildings in northern China. The roof is divided into front and rear slopes with the middle transverse ridge as the boundary. The left and right gables are either flush with the roof or higher than the roof. The high gable wall is called a volcanic wall, and its main function is to prevent the fire from spreading along the house when a fire occurs. However, it is also quite stylish in appearance.

The roofs of the houses in Liyushan Village are made of hard tops, which continues the tradition of ancient Xuzhou houses. It is a form of gable roof, with the characteristics of clear distinction between ruling and opposition parties, simplicity and ease of implementation. Its basic shape is a two-slope roof. The junction of the two slopes of the roof is paved with tiles or bricks to form a single ridge. The gables on both sides are flush with the roof or slightly higher than the roof. This makes the image of the gable more prominent and appears relatively simple and upright.

The roof of Liyushan Village follows the tradition of all building roofs in Xuzhou not having stacked curves but straight lines. As shown in the architectural data of the Han Dynasty. The slope (lift-off) of the large wooden beam frame itself is about 30% to 35%. In addition to the slope increased during the thatch backing and tile laying, the exterior slope of Xuzhou's buildings is steep. But modern technology is used in the materials. The roof of Liyushan Village now uses reinforced concrete prefabricated rafters instead of traditional wood. The number of rafters is important and cannot be an odd number (a single child is unlucky). The rafters cannot press directly on the middle seam of the beam, otherwise it will constitute "disturbing the beam", which is unlucky. Although building materials have changed with the development of the times, the tradition continues.

As the highest point of a house, the roof ridge not only protects the ridge purlins and stabilizes the house, but also represents social status. Royal, aristocratic and common people's homes have obvious levels of use on the roof. The social psychological function of striving for beauty and avoiding misfortunes is why the folk call "Doing Ji" the pronunciation of "Doing Ji". Therefore, ordinary people will decorate the roof ridges as their status rises.

For Xuzhou folk architecture, no matter where or how the roof ridge is made, it can be divided into two basic structural parts: the ridge head and the ridge body according to the longitudinal position. The so-called ridge head refers to the two end parts of the roof ridge, which are either straight or warped. They are often the most prominent decorative focus of the roof ridge and are also the primary factor in generally distinguishing the types of roof ridges. Some books mention that sugar cane, female hair, tattooed head, chicken-feeding, dragon-feeding, fish-dragon kiss, dragon kiss, etc. are styles named after the characteristics of the spine.<sup>61</sup> The part of the roof

<sup>61</sup> "Construction Law" is a book published by China Construction Industry Press in

ridge other than the ridge head is the ridge body. The middle part of the ridge body can also be called the center of the ridge, and is generally the decorative focus of the roof ridge. Distinguishing the ridge head and ridge body is of great significance for understanding the shape of Xuzhou residential roofs and the reasons for their formation.



Figure 99 The inheritance and innovation of the raised-ridged form during the reconstruction process of Liyushan Village  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

The roof ridges of most buildings in Xuzhou are low in the middle and high at both ends. This tradition has also been adopted in the private houses in Liyushan Village New Village, but some improvements have been made based on contemporary aesthetics (Figure 102). Connect the ridge heads on both sides to the wall higher than the ridge body. It not only follows the tradition of ancient Xuzhou houses that the roof ridge head is higher than the roof ridge body, but is also more modern and concise in form. During the reconstruction of the residential houses in Liyushan Village, innovations were made in the symbols on the roof ridges, and towering orchid symbols were placed on both sides. After searching the information, we found that this method of placement is not common, but it conforms to the principle of ridge decoration (Figure 103). As an ancient flower, orchids symbolize nobility, elegance, tranquility and tranquility in traditional Chinese culture. Therefore, it is a very common architectural decorative symbol in ancient Xuzhou houses, and is often used in Hubushan houses.



Figure 100 Comparison of the roof decorations used in the reconstruction of Liyushan Village and the roof decorations of ancient houses in Hubushan  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

At the same time, during the reconstruction process, combined with the current concept of "low carbon and environmental protection", taking advantage of the unique hydrological mountain shape of Liyushan Village, solar energy was used to guide water from the ancient Yellow River into the village, which not only realized the ecological cycle of the water system in the village, but also respected the lives of the locals. It provides free water for villagers to water their flowers and plant their fields. Every household in Liyushan Village will plant fruit trees, ornamental trees and other tree species. During the reconstruction, most of the original tree species will be retained, and cash crops with significant seasonal effects will be planted to form a characteristic rural landscape with the water system in the village.



Figure 101 Reconstructed residential buildings  
Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

This project will retain rural memory and regional characteristics as the design premise, and design a public building belt along the adjacent mountain to add public buildings that the villagers urgently need, such as farmers' markets, auditoriums, public service centers, etc. At the same time, a green belt perpendicular to the public building belt was added, and local economic fruit trees were planted to organically connect farmland and mountains. In addition, we adopt a free design for the entire rural residence, hoping to let the countryside grow naturally through village design. During the construction of the village, most of our construction team were local farmers and local masons. They also feel a sense of accomplishment after the house is built, because they built all the houses themselves. Finally, the mountain village forms a very natural state, growing naturally and integrating into the environment. At the same time, it retains the memory of the region, improves the function and quality of the village, and forms a new rural culture that will be passed. (Feng Zhenggong, Designer ,Liyushan Village,2022)



Figure 102 The author's renovation plan for a rural house in Xuzhou  
Source: Drawn by Peng Bao,2024

The protection and reconstruction of traditional houses in Liyushan Village provide good reference value for regional architectural creation in Xuzhou area (Figure 105). Regional architecture should show the influence of regional materials, shapes, functions and ideological concepts, and all of these are well reflected in ancient Xuzhou houses. Xuzhou houses have a long history of accumulation. Whether it is the overall layout, design and construction, it all reflects the construction technology, building materials, productivity level and economic strength of the time. They are all products adapted to the geographical climate, and are adapted to local conditions and materials. They have excellent adaptability, reflect folk customs, folk customs, and sentiments, and are a concentrated expression of national culture.

## 2.2 Spatial memory transfer in Liyushan village residents

The visualization of the residential space form and cultural memory of Liyushan Village promotes the process integration and overall unity of the physical space of the building and the psychological dynamics and external form of the visitors. The study

of spatial memory transmission in residential buildings combines the disciplinary advantages of design and culture, with the goal of strengthening the relationship between the construction and continuation of cultural memory.

Starting from the actual rural environment, the mutual mapping and translation of the symbols and cultural memory of Liyushan Village. It becomes vivid because of its rich spatiality and emotion, and can be divided into two major types of cultural memory systems: material and psychological. First, the material cultural memory type system, including functional landscape symbols such as natural ecology, settlement construction, symbiosis patterns, architectural forms, node landscapes, etc., constitutes the natural texture and ecological spatial pattern of the countryside. Second, the psychological and cultural memory type system. Including indicative, experiential and symbolic landscape symbols, involving social, economic, historical texts, traditional skills, literary works, artistic works, folk festivals, overall perception and humanistic spirit and other memory contents. Here, both the tangible and the intangible contain the unique regional spirit of Liyushan Village.

### 2.2.1 Construction of physical memory space

An important reason for the decline of traditional villages is the backwardness and imperfection of infrastructure. Therefore, in the process of village construction, emphasis should be placed on the construction of infrastructure in old villages, and the construction of new and old villages should be given equal importance. While improving the village's infrastructure, we must also ensure that the facilities are consistent with the local culture that has lasted for thousands of years.

An old house in an old village that is more than 100 years old. You can see that its entirety has been damaged. Although there are many structural problems, this building contains very important features of buildings along the Yellow River. First of all, you can see that its foundation is stone, and above the foundation is a rammed earth wall. This is an inherent feature of buildings along the Yellow River. Therefore, we proposed during the design stage that we still need to retain the architectural memory of the countryside beside the Yellow River, but more importantly, we hope that it can present a new contemporary countryside, so in this process, we are following the Zhushan designed a public building belt. Some public buildings needed in rural areas, such as farmers' markets, stages, auditoriums, learning centers, etc., were designed along this green belt. Then, in the vertical direction of this public green belt, we made another green belt related to farming to connect the farmland together and introduce fruit trees. Later, we will take a look at this old house that is more than 100 years old. We hired local masons to build the stone part according to the unique construction methods of the Xuzhou area. Finally, this building became a public service center serving rural villagers.

The original building had a low floor height in order to save construction costs, so we raised it using a modern method. But in this process, we have mastered a very important principle. That is, the historical part and the modern part need to be clearly distinguished. When visitors look at this building, they can feel the history that has taken place for more than 100 years. There is also an old house on the top of the mountain, which was originally built during the war. We used the original house to transform it into a memorial hall. This house can increase communication between architecture and people. It not only promotes the past history, but also becomes the

ancestral hall of this village. I think when we actually design the mountain village, it can grow naturally and integrate into the environment. While passing on regional memories, we also improve functions and quality through design to create and pass on a new rural culture. (Feng Zhenggong, designer, 2022)

Authenticity<sup>62</sup> plays a role in protecting the accuracy of memory transmission in the construction of memory space. In the process of reconstructing the residential buildings in Liyushan Village, the principle of authenticity in the repair process was followed when protecting individual buildings. Allowing visitors to clearly distinguish the difference between history and contemporary times. It ensures the accuracy of architectural symbols and allows viewers to clearly distinguish the symbolic meaning behind the symbols (Figure 106).



Figure 103 Reinforcement while retaining the tradition of ancient house

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

According to this idea, the relationship between the old village residences and the new village residences was also focused on during the reconstruction process of Liyushan village residences. The traditional houses and loess houses, historical school buildings, street spaces and landscape features of the old village will be gradually infiltrated into the new village, thereby realizing the connection and stitching of the new and old village styles. Specifically, the reconstruction of Liyushan houses inherits the form of Xuzhou's traditional houses. The internal space of residential buildings should be designed to meet the living habits of contemporary people. The supporting

<sup>62</sup> The "Nara Document on Authenticity" adopted by the International Heritage Protection Organization in Nara, the ancient capital of Japan, is the most important international document on authenticity, affirming the role of authenticity in the definition, evaluation and monitoring of cultural heritage.

public facilities in the external spaces of residential buildings must also respect local culture:

**Small market:** Going to the market is an economic activity that has lasted for thousands of years in rural Xuzhou. People will bring their various daily raw materials or handicrafts to the market to sell, and they will also purchase them at the market. As a gathering place for traditional neighborhood markets, Liyushan Small Market continues the tradition and innovates in form. Corner shops are set up in the streets and alleys as farmers' self-produced and self-sold outlets, selling homemade food, tools, repair services and other self-sufficient functions (Figure 107).



Figure 104 Preserving the tradition of going to the market in rural culture

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

**Multifunctional activity field and open-air square on the north side:** Chinese people often say that "distant relatives are not as good as close neighbors." Especially in rural culture, neighborhood relations are not only important in social relations, but also the main way of daily leisure and relaxation in the countryside. Farmers in rural areas usually bring benches to visit their neighbors to chat and communicate after dinner. This activity ground provides a place for communication for the villagers of Liyu Mountain and can also be a place for various collective ceremonies.

**Public Service Center:** Preserve the existing century-old house in the village, carry out reinforcement and renovation, and use it as a village history exhibition to convey regional culture. Combined with the old house, functions such as village affairs office, small conference, one-stop service center and health and medical service station are set up.

**Knowledge Center:** As a place for villagers to receive and exchange information, it not only enriches the lives of villagers, but also improves the cultural

level of villagers and cultivates and develops cultural and recreational activities with positive value.

Child care room: Consider providing indoor activity space for children in the village, and also serving as a public welfare place for villagers to temporarily care for children, with villagers taking turns to take care of children.

Villager Restaurant: Carp Village is surrounded by mountains and rivers, and the ingredients are fresh, so special consideration was given to setting up a villager restaurant in the design. Provide a place for villagers to improve their diet, and also consider holding regular cooking classes for villagers to promote communication among villagers. At the same time, the restaurant also serves as a display window for the village, welcoming visitors from all over the world.



Figure 105 The reconstructed market retains elements of ancient Xuzhou houses

Source: Photographed by Peng Bao, 2023

In the second half of 2019, Liyu Villa started to build a new farmer community based on the ancient residential style of the Yellow River. It retains the stone foundation, earth walls, main room, front yard, and backyard architectural pattern, retaining the nostalgia of the countryside. A total of 119 private houses have been built in the new village, as well as public buildings such as Longli Cultural Center, Koi Street, Red Carp Theater, Litang Training Center, Children's Intangible Cultural Heritage Learning Center, Convenient Service Center, Liyu Villa Restaurant (Figure108). The reconstruction of Liyushan Village also brought many villages to learn and exchange, and promoted people's emphasis on traditional rural memories. (Zhou Quansheng, Secretary of the Party Branch of Hongshan Village, Wangji Town, 2020)



Figure 106 Designed a venue for villagers' exchanges and cultural performances  
Source: Suzhou Survey and Design, 2021

Rural culture such as going to the market, ceremonies, and performances are facing extinction due to market demand and lack of venues. Liyushan Village has targeted the addition of rural market places, villager exchange places and cultural performance venues around the residential areas. Combining rural life with tourism not only solves the problem of employment and promotes the development of tourism, but also reduces the risk of disconnection and disappearance of rural folk culture (Figure 109).

In accordance with the concepts of memory transfer and symbol reconstruction, Liyushan Village has completed the renovation of residential buildings, infrastructure construction and modernization. In the process of infrastructure construction, on the one hand, it ensures the needs of village residents for modern life, and on the other hand, it also ensures the transmission of regional cultural memory. The cultural memory carried by the ancient residences has been passed on after the reconstruction of the Liyushan village residences, awakening the cultural identity of the people who once lived in Liyushan. Not only are more and more young people willing to return to the countryside from cities to work, inherit and promote rural culture. There are also many elites who settled in the city after leaving Liyushan Village in the early days and chose to return to their hometown after retirement. The return of the intellectual elite has enriched the rural sage culture that has been passed down for thousands of years and played a role in maintaining social order.

#### 2.2.2 The spiritual connotation inheritance behind the symbols

The color symbols of traditional houses in Liyushan Village are derived from regional materials, mainly bluestone and loess. On the basis of inheriting traditional colors, the renovation of residential buildings should not be limited to traditional materials and technologies, and construction costs should also be considered. On the basis of continuing the traditional masonry method, the foundation part of the building's exterior wall still uses bluestone to be spliced regularly. The main body of the building abandons the traditional earthen wall method of residential buildings and uses modern bricks and concrete as the structure, which increases the stability and lifespan of the building. However, the exterior wall coating still uses the traditional yellow color, which is conducive to restoring traditional environmental scenes and

shaping regional characteristics and a sense of belonging. Try to avoid using glazed tiles, marble and other materials that are incompatible with the local traditional environment.

The facade form of ancient Xuzhou houses has great regional heritage recognition and should be identified during the reconstruction process. The roof is an important part of the building facade, mainly hard hillside roofs. Dark gray tiles are used on the roofs of newly built houses, continuing the simple and elegant style of local traditional residences and setting off the classical architectural space atmosphere. The partial decoration of the building uses dark colors to add a modern feel. In the transformation of the original Liyushan rural residence, suspended fish, crowns, ridge ends, ridge bodies, and ridge decorations were added to refine and simplify them, and the regional characteristics of the architecture were added during the reconstruction process. (Figure 110 is an aerial view of the snow scene of Liyushan Village after renovation)



Figure 107 Aerial view of Liyushan Village

Source: Suzhou Survey and Design, 2021

Symbols are the main medium for transmitting spatial memory based on the dimension of cultural memory. Translating and updating symbolic architectural decorative symbols is an important strategy for updating new residential designs. Design elements are extracted directly or indirectly from regional characteristic building materials, textures, etc., and local characteristic cultural symbols are created through deconstruction, reorganization and other techniques to convey regional cultural characteristics. Reasonably plan and integrate cultural symbols and landscape design to create an interactive and experiential landscape with cultural heritage. Liyushan Village has a long and unique regional culture. Symbolic elements can be refined during residential and environmental design, and various symbolic elements can be introduced into parts of the building for decoration and embellishment. The

project selects local characteristic stones of Liyushan Village and integrates carp culture to form a unique cultural symbol: the designed "koi" totem is used in landscape sketches, node squares, etc. and in cultural and creative industries to enhance the cultural characteristics of Liyushan Village and reshape the spiritual outlook of the village.

The fish symbol is a common symbol that has special symbolic meaning in China and often appears in various Chinese items or poems. Chinese people like to give carp as a gift during the Chinese New Year, not only because fish is used as food, but also because fish and abundance have the same pronunciation in Chinese. Wish the people around you "abundance (fish) every year" is equivalent to wishing you a lot of harvest this year. In Liyushan Village, in addition to the symbolic meaning that Chinese people know, carp also has a more regional interpretation.

68-year-old Uncle Chen said: From ancient times to the present, there is a legend circulating in Liyu Villa: In ancient times, there was a young man named Jinsuo in the village. His father died early, leaving his sick mother to be taken care of by Jinsuo alone. Jinsuo went up to the mountains to cut firewood and farm in the fields every day, doing manual labor and cooking three meals a day for his mother. The Carp Fairy living in the Yellow River was moved by Jinsuo's filial piety and cooked meals for Jinsuo every day. Finally, the two got married and lived a happy life. In Carp Villa, adults will tell this legend to children. The villagers regard carp as a symbol of filial piety and attach great importance to filial piety culture and education. It can be said that the "filial piety" symbolized by carp culture has influenced the development of the entire village. (Zhang Wei, villager of Liyushan Village, 2023)

In addition to the black tiles and white walls in color, Carp Villa also has traditional cultural characteristics in the wall paintings. Wall paintings are not only located at the entrance of the village, but also in front and back of every house. "Each wall painting is a classic story of filial piety." There is an ancient legend called "Lying on the Ice to Seek Carp." It tells the story of Wang Xiang, a native of Jin Dynasty, who fished on the ice for his stepmother in winter. It was regarded as a classic of filial piety by later generations. What "Lying on the Ice Seeking Carp" and Carp Villa have in common is not only that they both have the word "carp", but they are also related to the culture of filial piety. Therefore, after discussion among all the villagers, the village decided to hand-paint some classic stories of filial piety on the walls to form wall paintings. This not only beautifies the overall environment of the village, but also allows villagers to learn traditional culture and improve their mental outlook and cultural confidence. ( Zhou Quansheng, villager of Liyushan Village, 2023)

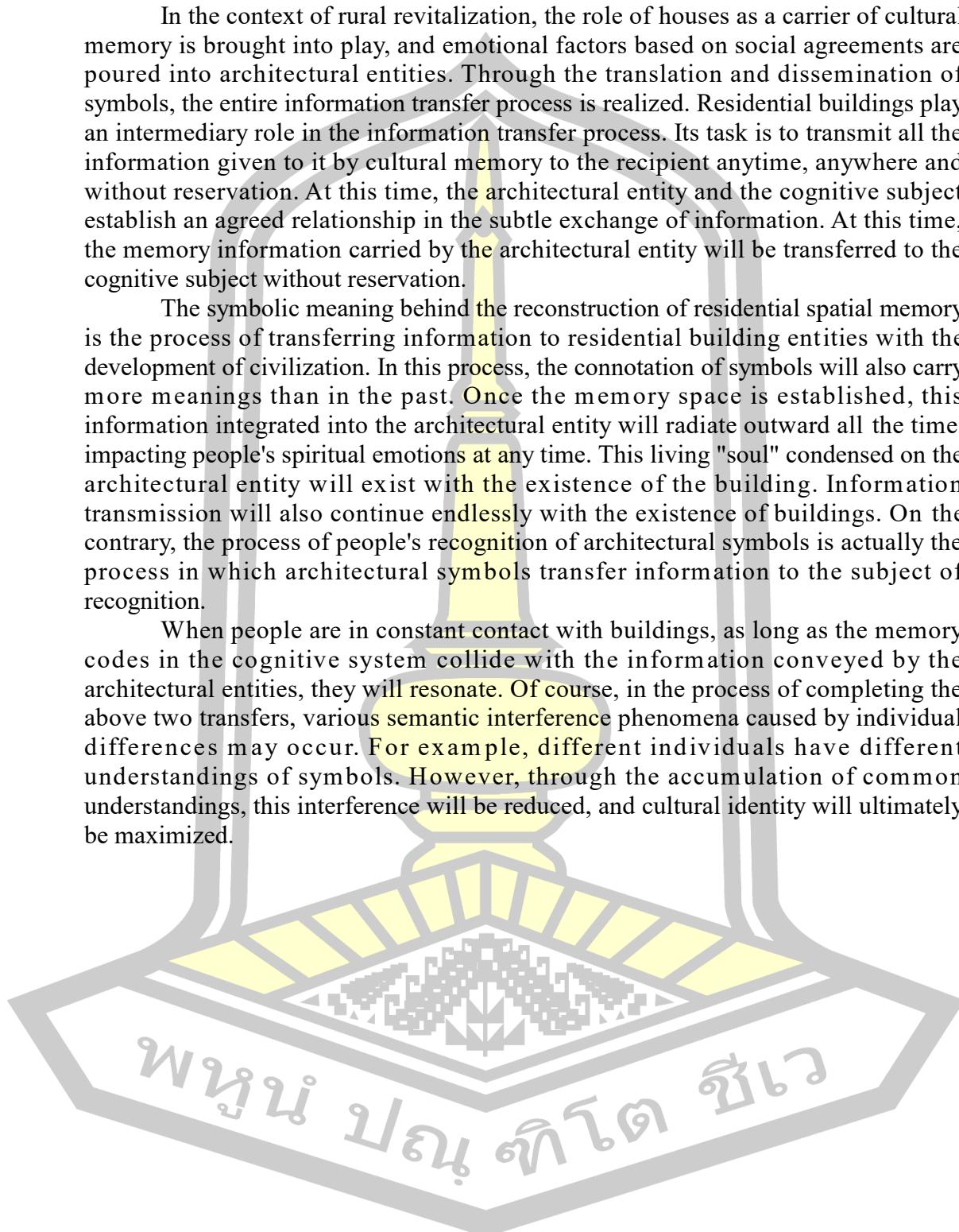
Therefore, carp elements are often extracted and abstracted in the design of murals, architectural sketches, site paving and landscapes. Integrating the unique local culture into the artificial landscape atmosphere symbolizes the local history and culture and plays a role in inheriting the local humanities and history.

### summary

In the context of rural revitalization, the role of houses as a carrier of cultural memory is brought into play, and emotional factors based on social agreements are poured into architectural entities. Through the translation and dissemination of symbols, the entire information transfer process is realized. Residential buildings play an intermediary role in the information transfer process. Its task is to transmit all the information given to it by cultural memory to the recipient anytime, anywhere and without reservation. At this time, the architectural entity and the cognitive subject establish an agreed relationship in the subtle exchange of information. At this time, the memory information carried by the architectural entity will be transferred to the cognitive subject without reservation.

The symbolic meaning behind the reconstruction of residential spatial memory is the process of transferring information to residential building entities with the development of civilization. In this process, the connotation of symbols will also carry more meanings than in the past. Once the memory space is established, this information integrated into the architectural entity will radiate outward all the time, impacting people's spiritual emotions at any time. This living "soul" condensed on the architectural entity will exist with the existence of the building. Information transmission will also continue endlessly with the existence of buildings. On the contrary, the process of people's recognition of architectural symbols is actually the process in which architectural symbols transfer information to the subject of recognition.

When people are in constant contact with buildings, as long as the memory codes in the cognitive system collide with the information conveyed by the architectural entities, they will resonate. Of course, in the process of completing the above two transfers, various semantic interference phenomena caused by individual differences may occur. For example, different individuals have different understandings of symbols. However, through the accumulation of common understandings, this interference will be reduced, and cultural identity will ultimately be maximized.



## CHAPTER VI

### Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestions

#### 1. Conclusion

The research topic of this article is "Ancient Xuzhou houses in China: Cultural Memory, Symbols and Process Reconstruction in the Context of Rural Revitalization". This article adopts a qualitative research method. During the research process, some important and relevant historical documents were retrieved, and long-term field surveys and interviews were conducted. We collected a large amount of first-hand information to conduct the research of this article. The research purposes of this article are as follows:

1.1 To study and analyze the historical changes of Xuzhou and the historical development process of ancient Xuzhou houses.

This chapter studies the impact of social changes and changes in living and production methods on ancient Xuzhou houses during the development process of Xuzhou. The relationship between residential buildings and society, as well as residential buildings and people is analyzed.

In the early days of ancient Xuzhou, the fertile land and abundant water resources provided conditions for farming. People summed up their experience through long-term labor and formed the prototype of ancient Xuzhou houses. The rich social environment made Xuzhou the center of the region at that time. Xu culture was born in the ancient Xuzhou area and became the mainstream regional culture in early China. Xu culture proposed benevolence, righteousness, virtue, trust, etiquette, Tao and other cultures, which not only promoted the development of local culture, but also spread its influence to the outside world. Ancient Xuzhou houses began to pay attention to the combination of spiritual connotation and architecture. The later development of Han culture inherited many of the essence of Xu culture. In the construction of houses, people pay more attention to the integration of spiritual totems and houses, and the ideas of roof ridge decoration and spatial layout have been influential to this day.

Subsequently, China experienced a stage of cultural migration southward. Xuzhou is located to the north of the Yangtze River, and its historical status has also been reduced in the context of history. The main factor affecting Xuzhou is changes in the water environment. The Yellow River changed its course and flowed through Xuzhou for 700 years. In order to fight against natural disasters, the people of Xuzhou began to choose areas with higher terrain and harder soil for their residential buildings. The residential buildings are integrated with the historical memory of the Yellow River culture. The rise of the canal economy in the later period provided another opportunity for Xuzhou to communicate with the outside world. Ancient Xuzhou houses also incorporate architectural features from southern and northern China.

After the founding of New China, the fate of ancient Xuzhou residential buildings was closely linked to social development. From initial neglect and destruction to later attention and protection. The changing process of ancient Xuzhou houses reflects the profound changes in Chinese society, especially Xuzhou society.

### 1.2 To study and analyze the concept of cultural memory and the construction of the spatial memory field of ancient Xuzhou houses

When studying ancient Xuzhou houses, we need to explore more deeply the relationship between cultural memory and cultural identity. Through the research and analysis of cultural memory, we can better understand the formation of individuals and social groups' sense of identity and belonging to the culture to which they belong. For example, the nostalgia that exists in society is an emotional expression of cultural identity. As a specific rural landscape heritage, ancient Xuzhou houses are both cultural heritage and symbolic carriers, carrying rich historical memories and cultural connotations.

In constructing the spatial memory of ancient Xuzhou houses, cultural memory adopts various methods such as inheriting and retaining traditional architectural styles and elements, focusing on spatial layout and sequence, designing in conjunction with the natural environment, and using symbols and symbols to convey meaning. Residential elements not only constitute the daily life environment of residents, but also become an important medium for transmitting and maintaining regional culture, history and social identity. By maintaining, using and telling stories about these spaces, spatial memories are passed on and preserved between generations.

Against this background, by introducing the concept of "spatial memory transfer" into the study of ancient Xuzhou houses, we have not only opened up a new research direction in the fields of art design and cultural heritage. It also provides a new perspective for an in-depth understanding of how these historical buildings transmit culture and historical memory between different generations, and captures the importance of spatial positioning and environmental interaction in the transmission of cultural memory.

### 1.3 To study and analyze the artistic value and artistic characteristics of ancient residential architecture in the symbolic dimension

In the context of ancient Xuzhou houses, architectural elements, spatial layout, decorative arts, etc. can be regarded as symbols carrying specific cultural and social meanings. By analyzing the meaning of these symbols, we can gain a deeper understanding of not only the visual and aesthetic value of houses, but also their far-reaching influence on the cultural and social levels.

The composition of architectural decoration of ancient Xuzhou residential buildings is based on people's perception and experience of the landscape environment, and is developed from two aspects: formal composition and physical construction. Decorative symbols are divided into two levels: surface information and deep place spirit, that is, "external physical appearance and internal meaning expression." The surface information corresponds to the form of the residential space, such as space, shape, color, light, material, texture, form and style, etc., showing the artistic beauty. The deep structure corresponds to the meaning and spirit of the place, the organizational order, and the close connection between people, culture, society and the environment.

Ancient Xuzhou houses not only have unique artistic and aesthetic value, but also carry profound significance at the cultural and social levels. They are the

concrete embodiment of Xuzhou people's wisdom and aesthetic pursuit, and are also important carriers of Chinese traditional culture and social values. Through an in-depth exploration of the cultural symbols of the symbols in ancient Xuzhou houses, we can see that these houses are not only places to live, but also a symbol of culture and spirit. It reflects the Xuzhou people's profound understanding and respect for the living environment, social ethics, and family values. Through its rich themes and profound cultural connotations, Xuzhou houses and decorative arts provide us with a unique perspective to understand the worldview, values and relationship with nature and society in Xuzhou culture. By protecting and studying these ancient houses, we can not only extract nutrients from art, but also draw inspiration and wisdom that are beneficial to modern society and promote the inheritance and development of culture.

#### 1.4 To study and analyze the memory transmission and symbolic evolution of contemporary residential buildings in Xuzhou under the context of rural revitalization

Foreign cultures such as urban culture and foreign culture are invisibly affecting the villagers' conceptual awareness, making the original values with family ethics as the core gradually marginalized, and making villagers doubt or even deny their own culture and customs.

In the context of rural revitalization, people have shifted their focus from cities to rural areas. Taking Liyushan Village as an example, the local government influenced the national policy call and formulated a reconstruction plan for Liyushan Village. The design team explored the rural cultural memory of traditional houses in Liyushan Village. On the one hand, the use of the spiritual symbols of traditional residences diachronically points to the rural past, allowing the memory of rural past historical traditions to be preserved. On the other hand, the use of traditional residential symbols is not just a simple imitation of past rural historical traditions, but also contemporary innovations. Although the traditional memory carried by the symbols of houses is derived from rural historical traditions in content, it also enriches the connotation of the symbols and adds the memories of contemporary people.

The symbolic meaning behind the reconstruction of residential space is the process of transferring information to residential building entities with the development of civilization. In this process, the connotation of symbols will also carry more meanings than in the past. Once the memory space is established, this information integrated into the architectural entity will radiate outward all the time, impacting people's spiritual emotions at any time.

The cultural memory carried by the ancient residences has been passed on after the reconstruction of the Liyushan village residences, awakening the cultural identity of the people who once lived in Liyushan. Not only are more and more young people willing to return to the countryside from cities to work, inherit and promote rural culture. There are also many elites who left their hometowns with urbanization and chose to return to their hometowns after retirement. The return of the intellectual elite has enriched the rural sage culture that has been passed down for thousands of years, and further improved the structure of local culture.

## 2. Discussion

This research topic is "Ancient Xuzhou houses: Cultural Memory, Symbols and Process Reconstruction in the Context of Rural Revitalization". It takes ancient Xuzhou houses as the research object, and uses cultural memory and symbols as research concepts. In the context of rural revitalization, it analyzes how the cultural memory carried by ancient houses can play a role in inheriting local civilization in contemporary houses through the concept of symbols.

First of all, in the existing research papers on ancient Xuzhou houses, most of the researchers' research results focus on the architectural features, architectural decoration, aesthetics and digital communication of ancient Xuzhou houses. For example, Zheng Lei's (2006) "Protection and Development of Ancient Residential Building Villages - Taking Xuzhou Surrounding Towns as an Example" and Tian Yuan's (2023) "Research on the Digital Development Strategy of Xuzhou's Stone Residence Cultural Heritage under the Background of Smart City Construction". As well as Ma Xuan's (2015) "Analysis of the Decorative Art of Traditional Residential Houses in Xuzhou" and Lan Feng's (2019) "A Brief Analysis of the Brick Carving Techniques of Traditional Residential Houses in Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province". In recent years, a few researchers have begun to study ancient Xuzhou houses from the perspective of semiotics, such as "Thoughts on Designing a Wayfinding System Based on the Triadic Relationship of Peirce Symbols" by Ni Ran and others (2021). As well as Wang Qianqian's (2017) "Graphic Expression of Auspicious Art in Folk Culture in Residential Architectural Decoration - Taking Xuzhou Hubu Mountain Residential Houses as an Example" and Geng Chenyi's (2022) "Application Research of Xuzhou Hubu Mountain Traditional Residential Architectural Decoration Elements in Pastry Packaging Design". Researchers have gradually turned their attention from the surface to the exploration of cultural connotations, but these are still relatively superficial.

Few researchers have combined the perspectives of cultural memory and semiotics to study ancient Xuzhou houses. Symbols are not only a substitute in form, but also gain an interpretation in connotation due to their "meaning". The phenomenon of contemporary people's nostalgia originates from the emotional value of rural symbols in personal memories. This article not only pays attention to the aesthetic value of the symbolic table level, but also pays attention to the cultural memory and emotional value behind the symbolic symbols. By analyzing the cultural connotation of ancient residential symbols, we explore the mutual influence of cultural identity and cultural memory represented by contemporary nostalgia.

Secondly, most of the existing research on ancient Xuzhou houses focuses on Hubushan houses. For example: Ji Xiang's (2009) "Research on Traditional Residential Houses in Xuzhou Hubu Mountain", Du Peng's (2013) "Roof Decoration Art of Ancient Residential Houses in Xuzhou Hubu Mountain", Wang Xuelian's (2012) "Research on the Hall Design of Cui Family Courtyard in Xuzhou Hubu Mountain", etc. Although Hubushan houses are the main representatives of ancient Xuzhou houses, ancient Xuzhou houses belong to the upper class houses. Although they occupy an important position among ancient Xuzhou houses, they do not represent the whole picture of ancient Xuzhou houses. This study breaks through the

field limitations of Hubu Mountain residential buildings. Ordinary houses such as Suining Liyushan Village Houses and Pizhou houses are also included in the scope of the study, which enriches the research material of ancient Xuzhou houses and is more universal for the reconstruction of houses in other areas. Through on-site inspections, interviews, surveys and other methods, materials such as photos, audio recordings and videos were obtained. A lot of first-hand information was obtained from government officials, designers, and farmers, such as design concepts, rural history, personal identities, etc. All laid the foundation for subsequent thesis writing.

Third, from a research perspective, since there is no concept of cultural memory, most scholars only focus on the historical value of ancient houses, but do not pass this history on to the contemporary era. Cultural memory is a concept proposed at the end of the last century. It is a branch of memory research. Its purpose is not simply to recall a distant memory, it repeats what everyone already knows in order to re-present the past into the present moment. Through the study of shared memories, we provide an overall reflection on the construction and inheritance of memory from a cultural perspective. This kind of thinking is not isolated. It is closely connected with the value norms and commonly recognized values that are collectively observed. It can support people's overall perception of their own region and has a clear direction for the future.

In the context of rural revitalization, the state supports the construction of residential buildings in rural areas. This process involves not only the protection of traditional residences, but also the connection between new residences and rural civilization. Based on the concept of cultural memory, by studying the mechanism of spatial memory transmission, the memory of traditional residential spaces can be transmitted to contemporary readers through symbolic symbols. Each village can record and interpret the local culture of the region through residential space, and contribute to the inheritance and protection of local civilization.

There is no doubt that the research results of predecessors are the basis for the research and innovation of ancient Xuzhou houses. The research of this article is based on previous research, combined with China's rural revitalization policy, and conducted in the context of the protection and inheritance of farming civilization. Through the construction of residential space and memory space, a spatial environment that can truly and vividly connect the traditional village culture and local people is constructed. This will arouse people's awareness of the protection of local culture, enhance villagers' passion for inheriting and innovating local culture, and revitalize the vitality of the village.

### 3.Suggestions

3.1 When reconstructing rural residences, designers should pay attention to exploring the spatial memory of residences, continuing the regional context of traditional villages, and reshaping the villagers' sense of belonging. In the context of rural revitalization, the creation of residential spatial memory is not a simple preservation of local culture or the accumulation of symbolic symbols, but the excavation and display of the original local cultural memory of the village. Lively protection and development of local culture through the creation of rural spatial memory. It can not only improve the quality of the village's living environment and promote the cultural identity of the villagers, but also help to continue the regional context of atypical traditional villages and reshape the villagers' sense of belonging.

3.2 Scholars can refer to the strategy of spatial memory transfer in this article, which will help improve the theoretical system of traditional village vernacular cultural space research. At present, the research on rural reconstruction in my country is mostly focused on the discussion of the cultural value, landscape planning, inheritance methods and other aspects of its local culture. Rural construction is just a simple use of architectural symbols, rather than focusing on exploring the cultural connotation behind the symbols. Therefore, from multiple perspectives such as urban needs and rural development, we should first explore the connotation of traditional village local culture, and then build a model for creating rural spatial memory, which will help improve the theoretical system of rural spatial memory research.

3.3 Government departments should pay attention to the continuation of cultural context and broaden their ideas for the protection and development of traditional villages. The excavation of spatial memory of ancient houses is only part of the excavation of rural memory. Government departments should sort out various cultural heritages in rural areas and bring into play the unique charm of rural culture. By creating local cultural space, we can reverse the current one-sided pursuit of formal urbanization. Formulate policies for the coordinated development of urban and rural areas and the construction of beautiful countryside.

3.4 This article is approached from the perspective of cultural memory and symbols. This is an attempt at cross-border research between art and sociology. Although this article has put forward some insights on the reconstruction of contemporary residential buildings, rural construction is a systematic cultural project. This involves complex relationships between tradition and modernity, regionality and globalization, protection and renewal, etc. At the same time, with the continuous development of science and technology, it is also worth thinking about how to use AR and artificial intelligence technology to participate. Due to the limited research level of the author, I have only made some preliminary explorations on this topic, and more professionals are needed to further deepen the research in terms of depth and breadth.

### 4.Discovery of This Thesis

4.1 The development of ancient Xuzhou houses is related to the social and historical development of China and is closely related to the specific social

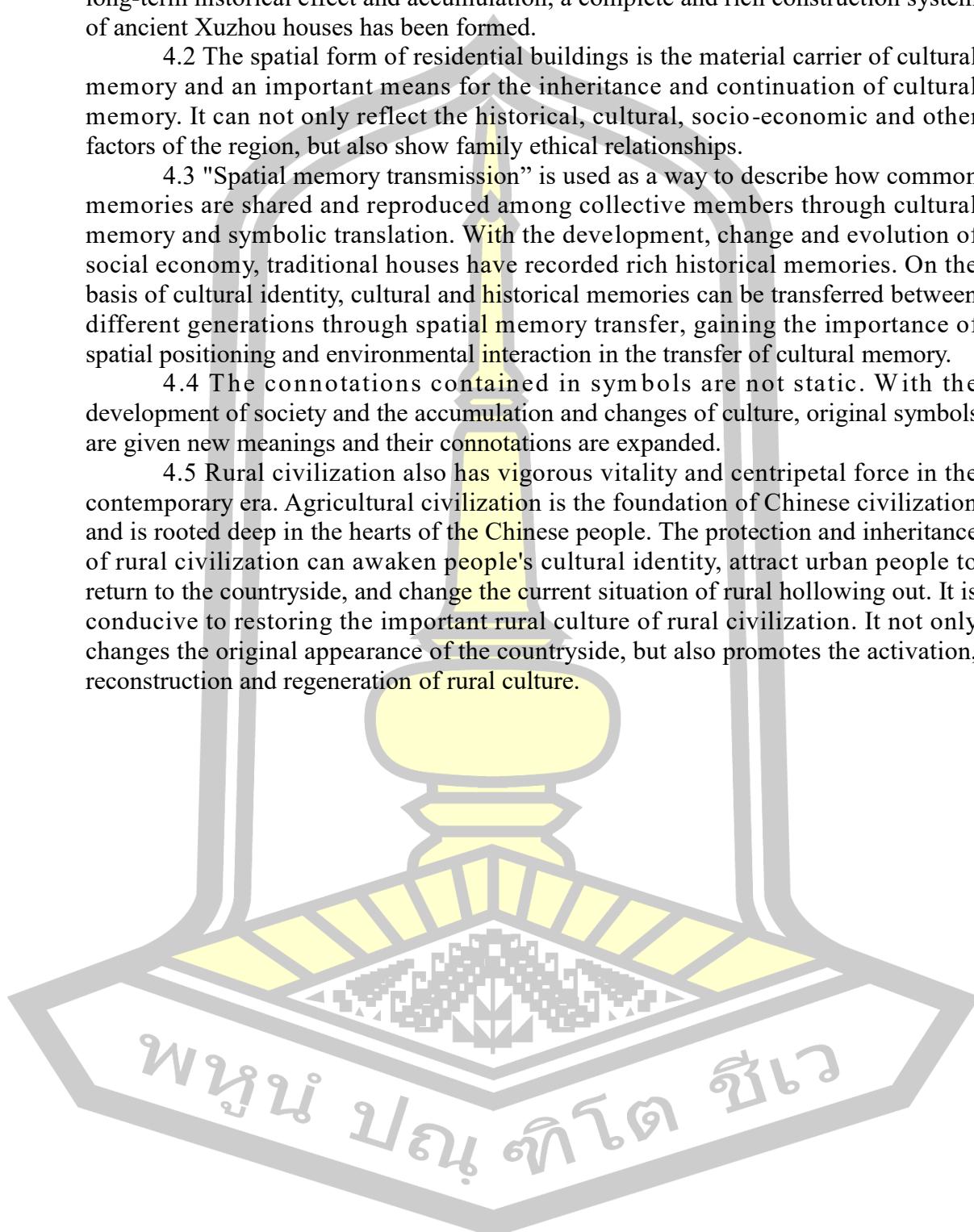
environment, such as economy, culture, institutions, beliefs, customs, etc. Under the long-term historical effect and accumulation, a complete and rich construction system of ancient Xuzhou houses has been formed.

4.2 The spatial form of residential buildings is the material carrier of cultural memory and an important means for the inheritance and continuation of cultural memory. It can not only reflect the historical, cultural, socio-economic and other factors of the region, but also show family ethical relationships.

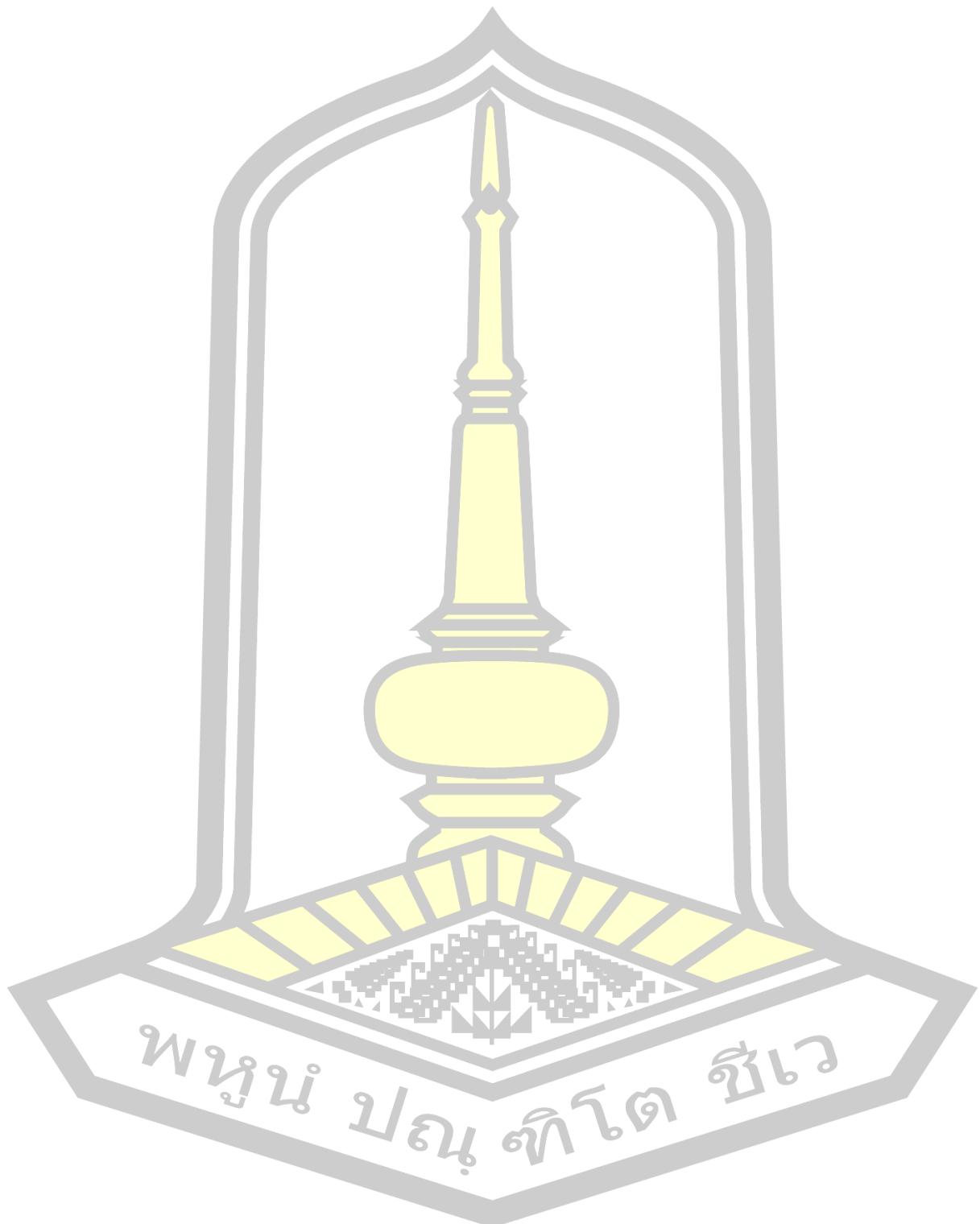
4.3 "Spatial memory transmission" is used as a way to describe how common memories are shared and reproduced among collective members through cultural memory and symbolic translation. With the development, change and evolution of social economy, traditional houses have recorded rich historical memories. On the basis of cultural identity, cultural and historical memories can be transferred between different generations through spatial memory transfer, gaining the importance of spatial positioning and environmental interaction in the transfer of cultural memory.

4.4 The connotations contained in symbols are not static. With the development of society and the accumulation and changes of culture, original symbols are given new meanings and their connotations are expanded.

4.5 Rural civilization also has vigorous vitality and centripetal force in the contemporary era. Agricultural civilization is the foundation of Chinese civilization and is rooted deep in the hearts of the Chinese people. The protection and inheritance of rural civilization can awaken people's cultural identity, attract urban people to return to the countryside, and change the current situation of rural hollowing out. It is conducive to restoring the important rural culture of rural civilization. It not only changes the original appearance of the countryside, but also promotes the activation, reconstruction and regeneration of rural culture.



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