



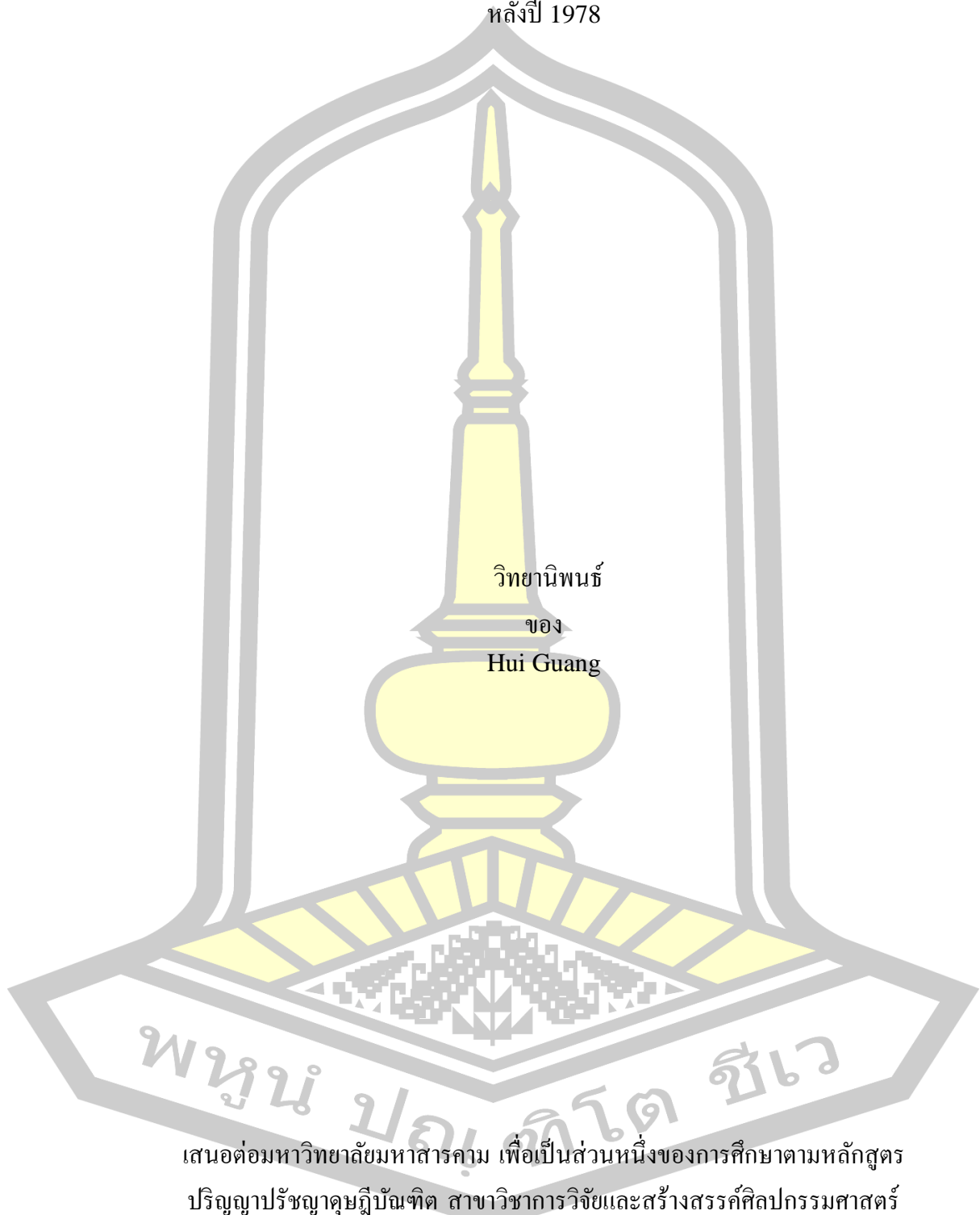
Peng Ancestral Hall in GuangFu District: Bodily Practice and Social Memory in the Context of China after 1978

Hui Guang

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Fine and Applied Arts Research and Creation
March 2025

Copyright of Mahasarakham University

หอบรรพชนฝังในเขตกำแพงผู้ ปฏิบัติการเรือนกายและความทรงจำทางสังคมในบริบทจีนสมัยใหม่
หลังปี 1978

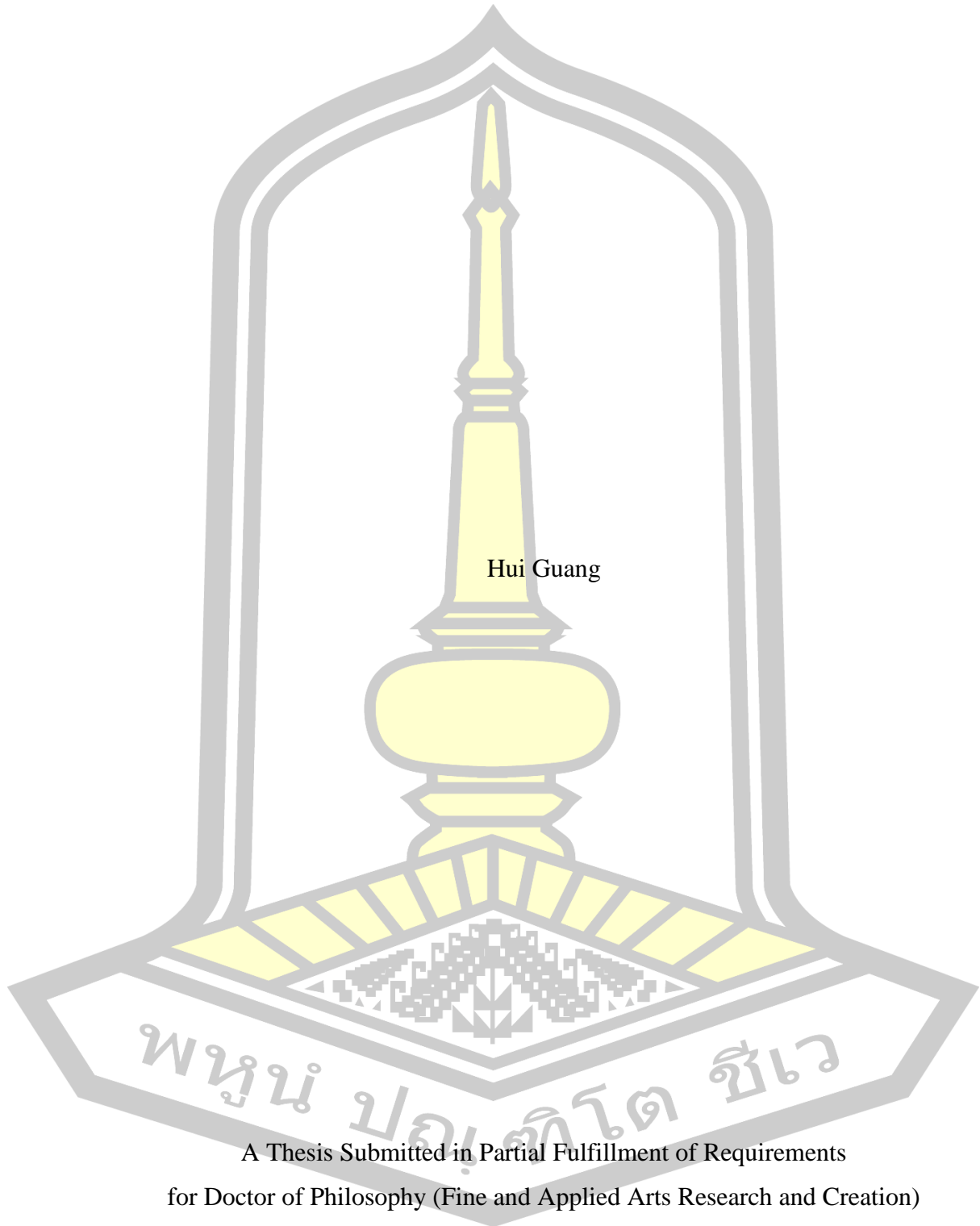


เสนอต่อมหาวิทยาลัยมหาสารคาม เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตร
ปริญญาปรัชญาดุษฎีบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาการวิจัยและสร้างสรรค์ศิลปกรรมศาสตร์

มีนาคม 2568

ลิขสิทธิ์เป็นของมหาวิทยาลัยมหาสารคาม

Peng Ancestral Hall in GuangFu District: Bodily Practice and Social Memory in the
Context of China after 1978



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

March 2025

Copyright of Mahasarakham University



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

Examining Committee

Chairman

(Li Yingfeng , Ph.D.)

Advisor

(Asst. Prof. Peera Phanlukthao ,
Ph.D.)

Committee

(Assoc. Prof. Prathabjai Suwanthada
, Ph.D.)

Committee

(Assoc. Prof. Sakchai Sikka , Ph.D.)

Committee

(Assoc. Prof. Suebsiri Saelee ,
Ph.D.)

Mahasarakham University has granted approval to accept this Thesis as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Fine and Applied Arts Research and Creation

(Asst. Prof. Peera Phanlukthao , Ph.D.)

Dean of Faculty of Fine - Applied Arts
and Cultural Science

(Prof. Anongrit Kangrang , Ph.D.)

Acting Dean of Graduate School

TITLE	Peng Ancestral Hall in GuangFu District: Bodily Practice and Social Memory in the Context of China after 1978		
AUTHOR	Hui Guang		
ADVISORS	Assistant Professor Peera Phanlukthao , Ph.D.		
DEGREE	Doctor of Philosophy	MAJOR	Fine and Applied Arts Research and Creation
UNIVERSITY	Maharakham University	YEAR	2025

ABSTRACT

This study employs the theoretical frameworks of bodily practice and social memory to deeply examine the role of Peng Ancestral Hall in cultural heritage transmission and social memory construction. The specific research objectives are: (1) to explore the historical evolution of Peng Ancestral Hall as a cultural heritage site; (2) to analyze the artistic techniques and cultural functions reflected in Peng Ancestral Hall; (3) to investigate the interactive dynamics between bodily practices and social memory within the ancestral hall; and (4) to design and implement innovative cultural heritage activities in Peng Ancestral Hall.

To counteract the diminishing role of ancestral halls in contemporary society, this study introduces innovative cultural activities, including mural creation, poetry recitation, and ceremonial practices. These activities aim to strengthen participants' sense of cultural identity and appeal to younger audiences, revitalizing the ancestral hall's vitality and establishing it as a significant venue for community-based cultural education.

Methodologically, this research adopts a qualitative approach, involving literature reviews, in-depth interviews, field observations, textual analysis, and interpretive methods. The findings provide comprehensive insights into the historical evolution and modern transformation of Peng Ancestral Hall. The study further proposes diversified cultural activities to enhance cultural preservation and transmission, offering new perspectives on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and promoting local cultural tourism in the Guangfu region.

Keyword : Bodily Practice, Social Memory, Ancestral Hall Culture, Cultural Transmission, Guangfu Region, Peng Ancestral Hall

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this doctoral thesis is a milestone in my academic journey, and I am deeply grateful to everyone who has provided guidance, support, and encouragement along the way.

First and foremost, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my advisor, Asst.Prof.Dr. Peera Phanlukthao, for his invaluable guidance, profound academic insights, and unwavering support. Dr. Peera Phanlukthao has been a source of inspiration, not only through his rigorous academic approach but also through his dedication and patience in helping me navigate challenges and solve problems throughout my research. I am deeply appreciative of his mentorship, which has greatly shaped both my academic achievements and personal growth.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to Mahasarakham University for providing an excellent academic environment and the necessary resources to complete this research. Special thanks to the members of my thesis committee and faculty, whose valuable feedback, constructive criticism, and professional guidance have been instrumental in refining my work and shaping my academic path.

My deepest appreciation goes to my family and friends for their unwavering support, encouragement, and understanding throughout this journey. Your belief in me has been my greatest source of motivation, especially during challenging times.

Finally, I would like to thank all the individuals who contributed to my research process in various ways. Although I cannot list everyone individually, please know that your contributions have been deeply valued and integral to the completion of this thesis.

Once again, my sincerest gratitude to all!

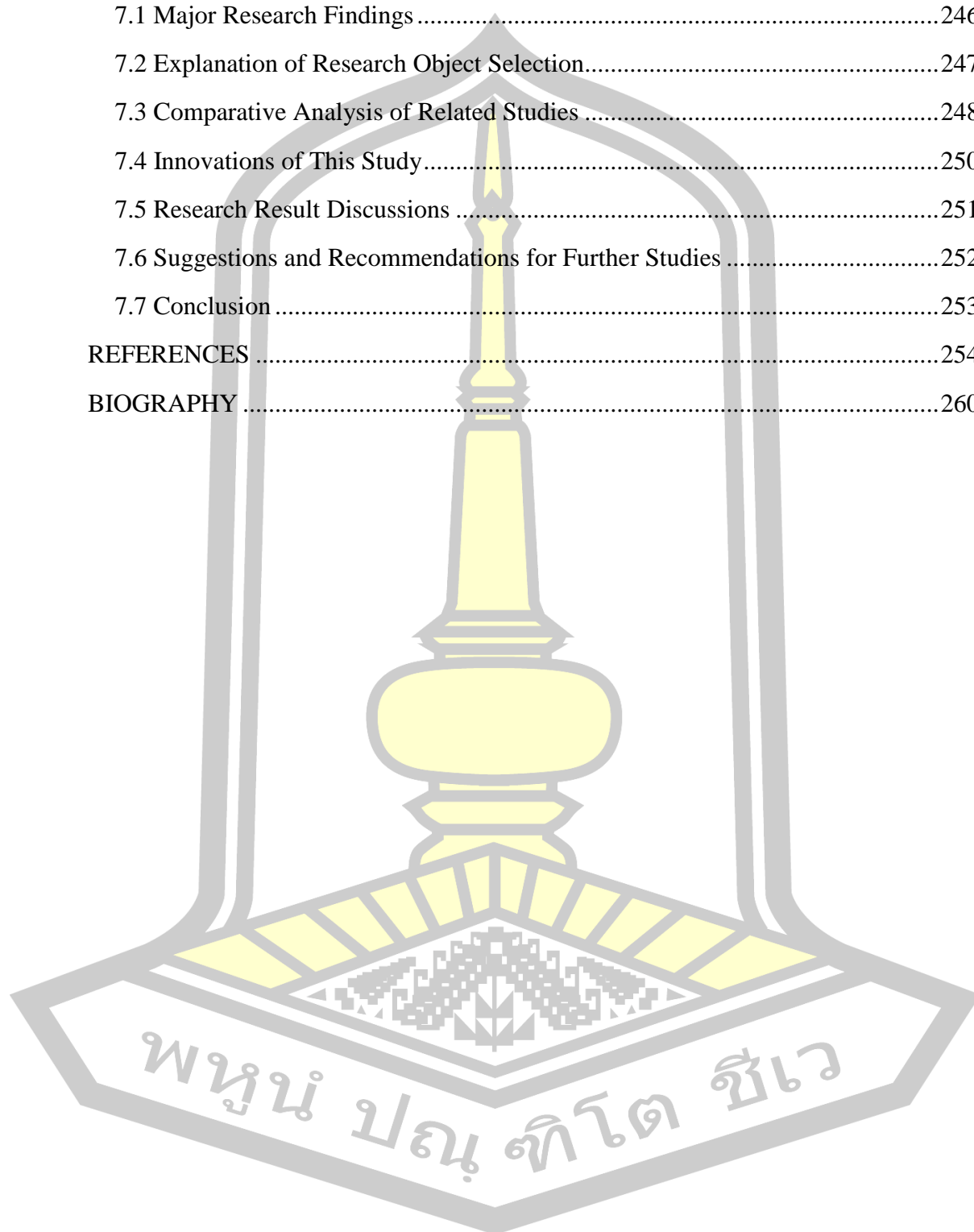
Hui Guang

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	D
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	E
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	F
LIST OF FIGURES	I
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of Research.....	1
1.2. Purpose of Research	5
1.3 Research question	5
1.4 Definition of Terms	5
1.5 Scope of Research.....	7
1.6 Research Methodology	9
1.7 Literature Review	11
1.8 Concept, Theory and Conceptual framework.....	17
1.9 Research plan.....	19
1.10 Chapter structure.....	20
1.11 Benefit of Research:	22
CHAPTER II The historical development of Peng Ancestral Hall as Artifact.....	23
2.1 The Ecology and Physical Space of Pengwu Village, Dongkeng Town, Dongguan City, Guangdong Province.....	25
2.2 The Ecology and Physical Space of Pengwu Village	27
2.3 Tracing the History and Artistic Value of Guangfu Ancestral Halls.....	28
2.4 The Importance of Ancestral Hall Cultural Research.....	30
2.5 Introduction to the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall.....	32
2.6 Cultural Elements in the Ancestral Hall Reflecting Bodily Practice and Social Memory	33
2.7 Summary	36

CHAPTER III Historical Development of Peng Ancestral Hall as Artifact.....	38
3.1 The Memory-Bearing Function of Traditional Imagery.....	38
3.2 The Evolution of Mural Themes and Techniques During the Republican Period	41
3.3 Overview of Ideological and Cultural Changes in the Lingnan Region After 1978.....	51
3.4 Summary.....	53
CHAPTER IV To analytical study art techniques and functions of Peng Ancestral hall	54
4.1 The Relationship Between Functional Images and the Functions of the Ancestral Hall.....	54
4.2 The Functions of Images within Ancestral Hall Spaces Introduction	56
4.3 The Cultural Significance of the Doorstone	171
4.4 The Social Memory of Poetry.....	176
4.5 Couplets and Ancestral Hall Culture	200
4.6 Summary.....	209
CHAPTER V Analyze the bodily practice and social memory of Peng Ancestral Hall	210
5.1 Case Study: Ancestral Worship Ceremony in the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall..	210
5.2 Worship Ceremony: The Core of Family Memory	212
5.3 Visual Art and Ritual Space: A Study of Door Gods and Murals in the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall	216
5.4 Cultural and Symbolic Significance of Ancestral Portraits.....	219
5.5 The Construction of Collective Memory: The role of space and visual symbols in the Rear Hall.....	221
5.6 Summary.....	228
CHAPTER VI Create the inheritance cultural activity of Peng Ancestral Hall	230
6.1 Case Study Painting of Memory: Ancestral Worship Ceremony in the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall	230
6.2 Case Study Meaning of Painting and Literature: Practical Activities to Inherit and Preserve Ancestral Hall Culture	239
6.3 Summary.....	244

CHAPTER VII Conclusion and Research Result Discussions.....	246
7.1 Major Research Findings	246
7.2 Explanation of Research Object Selection.....	247
7.3 Comparative Analysis of Related Studies	248
7.4 Innovations of This Study.....	250
7.5 Research Result Discussions	251
7.6 Suggestions and Recommendations for Further Studies	252
7.7 Conclusion	253
REFERENCES	254
BIOGRAPHY	260



LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1. China map.....	25
Figure 2. DongGuan map.....	25
Figure 3. Bar chart of the development of Dongguan GDP over the years	26
Figure 4. PengWu map	27
Figure 5. Peng Clan Ancestral Hall	32
Figure 6. The pattern of flowers and birds in the mustard garden painting score	39
Figure 7. The painting depicts an ancient pine tree and two white cranes, symbols of longevity in Chinese folklore, hence the title "Pine and Crane Longevity."	39
Figure 8. This picture depicts the traditional plants and fruits from the Lingnan region	40
Figure 9. This picture depicts the traditional Chinese allusion of "Wang Xizhi feeding a goose" Wang Xizhi, a revered calligrapher from China's Eastern Jin dynasty, drew inspiration for his famous running script from observing the elegant movements of geese in his courtyard. Captivated by their graceful neck stretches while pecking, he incorporated this fluid motion into his calligraphy, enhancing the beauty and flow of his writing.	40
Figure 10. This painting showcases a Chinese landscape style, featuring a large tree and distant mountains. The overall style is minimalist, rendered in light ink to create a serene natural scene.	41
Figure 11. This painting displays a traditional Chinese landscape style, featuring a pavilion, mountains, and flowing water. The overall style is fresh and natural, emphasizing a serene and harmonious beauty.	46
Figure 12. This painting depicts a majestic lion standing on a rock, with a traditional Chinese landscape as the background. The lion appears dignified, with its tail raised, conveying a sense of strength and nobility. The overall composition combines an animal figure with traditional landscapes, presenting a unique artistic style.	46
Figure 13. The lion image of traditional China.....	47
Figure 14The Frequency of the Term "Lion" in National Newspaper Index by Year	48
Figure 15. The Lion image in 1909	48

Figure 16. The Lion image in 1926	49
Figure 17. The Lion image in 1926	49
Figure 18. Lingnan School painter Gao Qifeng's 1915	50
Figure 19. The four immortals in the picture of eight immortals (WU, Y.2007)	58
Figure 20. The four immortals in the picture of eight immortals	59
Figure 21. Jiang Taigong fishing map	61
Figure 22. Three visits to the thatched cottage	62
Figure 23. Traditional Chinese landscape map	64
Figure 24. Traditional Chinese landscape map	65
Figure 25. Traditional Chinese landscape map	67
Figure 26. Traditional Chinese landscape map	68
Figure 27. The deer figure	71
Figure 28. The eagle figure	72
Figure 29. Gongbi-Style Bird-and-Flower Paintings	74
Figure 30. Gongbi-Style Bird-and-Flower Paintings	75
Figure 31. Gongbi Bird-and-Flower Paintings Inside the Head Gate	78
Figure 32. Gongbi Bird-and-Flower Paintings Inside the Head Gate	79
Figure 33. Painting content: auspicious still life	81
Figure 34. Sparrows and Bamboo	83
Figure 35. Women's Army (Pingyang Princess Legend)	84
Figure 36. Gongsun Daniang (Theatrical Figure)	86
Figure 37. Bird on a Branch	89
Figure 38. Two Birds on a Branch	90
Figure 39. Rabbits	92
Figure 40. Lotus and Mandarin Ducks	93
Figure 41. Goldfish and Small Fish	95
Figure 42. Twin Fish	96
Figure 43 Plum Blossoms, Magpies, and Peonies (Inscription: Prosperity and Flourishing)	98

Figure 44. Five Blessings and Three Abundances (Inscription: Five Blessings, Three Abundances, Wealth, Longevity, and Honor)	99
Figure 45. White Rabbit and Black Rabbit	101
Figure 46. Three Fish	102
Figure 47. Five Bats Offering Longevity	104
Figure 48. Two Pigeons	105
Figure 49. Butterfly and Flowers	107
Figure 50. Bonsai and Containers (Inscription: "Fortune, Longevity, and Eternal Spring")	108
Figure 51. Drunken Story	109
Figure 52. Wang Xizhi Feeding Geese	111
Figure 53. Bird and Flowers	112
Figure 54. Lotus and Bird	113
Figure 55. Landscape with Pavilion.....	115
Figure 56. Waterfall and Distant Mountains.....	116
Figure 57. Bird on a Plum Branch	118
Figure 58. Peacock Among Flowers	119
Figure 59. Ink-Style Dragon Variant Decoration	120
Figure 60. Flowers and Butterflies.....	122
Figure 61. Flowers and Hummingbirds	123
Figure 62. Lion in the Mountains	125
Figure 63. Elephant in a Mountainous Landscape.....	126
Figure 64. The Eight Trigrams Formation	129
Figure 65. The Legend of the Finishing Touch	130
Figure 66. TCorner Area Decorative Motif Phoenix and Flowers	133
Figure 67. Phoenix and Flowers	135
Figure 68. Long-Tailed Bird in the Mountains	136
Figure 69. Landscape Paintings Based on Transfer Sketching Techniques	137
Figure 70. Landscape Paintings Based on Transfer Sketching Techniques	138
Figure 71. Yellow Orioles and Flowers.....	139

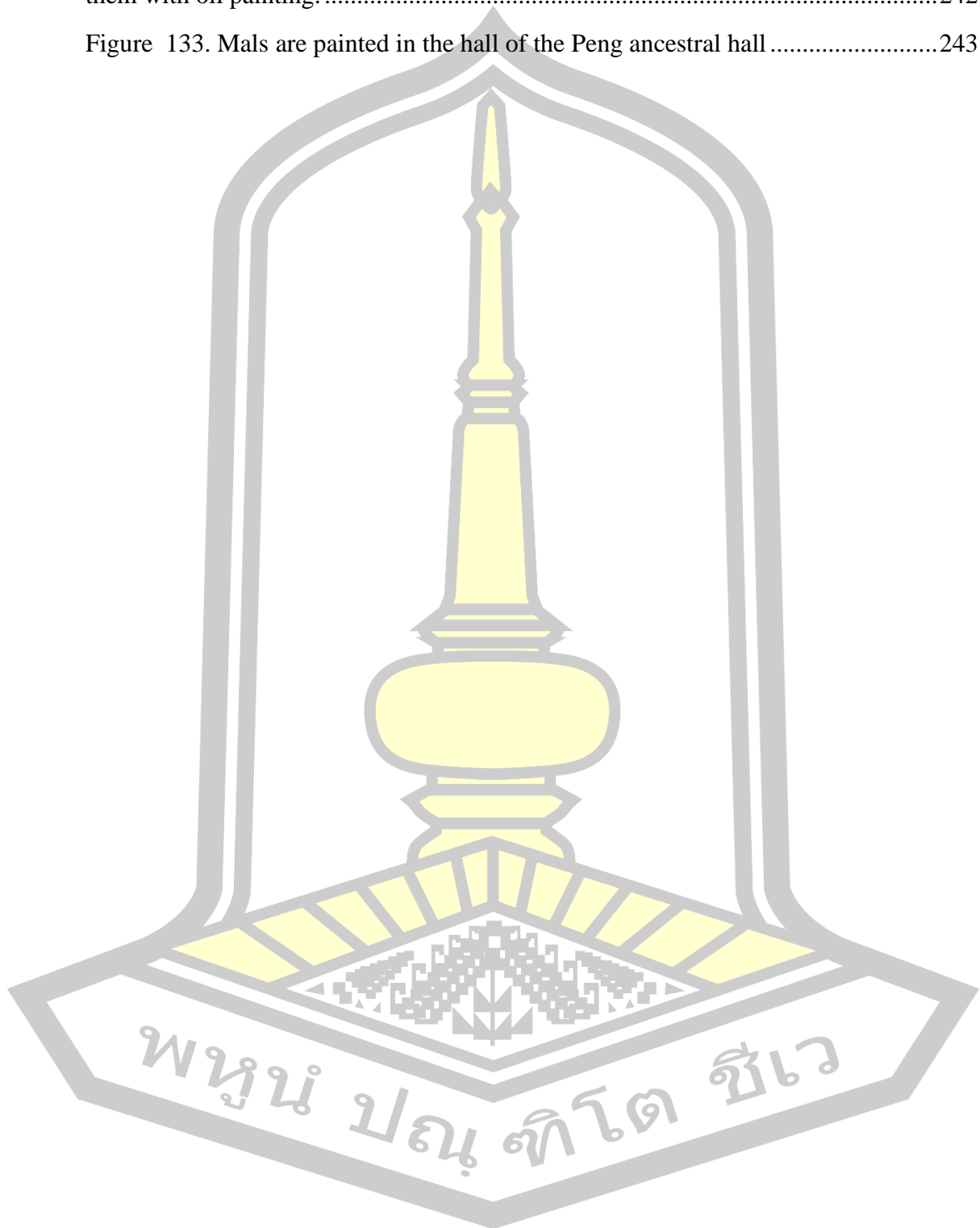
Figure 72. Red-Crowned Cranes on Pine Tree	140
Figure 73. Bamboo and Hermit	141
Figure 74. Peony and Plum Blossoms	142
Figure 75. Pine Tree and Rocks	143
Figure 76. Birds and Blossoms	144
Figure 77. Phoenix and Flowers	146
Figure 78. Mountain Rocks, Peacocks, and Flowers	148
Figure 79. Pastoral Landscape	149
Figure 80. Distant Autumn Scene	150
Figure 81. Chrysanthemums and Insects	151
Figure 82. Plum Blossom Branch	152
Figure 83. This mural depicts a classic Chinese landscape scene	153
Figure 84. The second mural portrays a vast mountain valley, featuring ancient rock formations and vegetation	154
Figure 85. Rooster and Hen	155
Figure 86. Quails and Fruit Tree	156
Figure 87. Modern flowers and birds	158
Figure 88. Landscape with Pavilion and Tower	160
Figure 89. Smooth Sailing under Cloudy Skies	161
Figure 90. Mountain River Tranquility	163
Figure 91. Pine-Clad Peaks	164
Figure 92. Serene River Valley	165
Figure 93. Lake and Pavilion Scene	167
Figure 94. Expansive Lake with Distant Peaks	168
Figure 95. Palatial Reflections Over the Lake	169
Figure 96. Serene Lake Amidst Mountain Peaks	170
Figure 97. On the right side of the door pillow stone at the door of the main hall	171
Figure 98. The front of the stone at the main hall	172
Figure 99. The front of the stone at the main hall	172

Figure 100. Peng's poetry works. These poems were written by the ancestors of the Peng family of different dynasties. The picture is taken in the atrium of Peng's great ancestral hall, where the poems are hung on the walls.	176
Figure 101. Peng's poetry works. These poems primarily describe the authors' personal life experiences, life reflections, and their states of mind during different stages of their lives.	177
Figure 102. Two couplets in the atrium	203
Figure 103. The couplet at the door of the temple	204
Figure 104. Couplet on the left side of the hall.....	206
Figure 105. The couplet in the hall of Peng ancestral hall.....	207
Figure 106. The couplet in the hall of Peng ancestral hall.....	208
Figure 107. The pattern diagram of Peng's big ancestral hall.....	211
Figure 108. On January 22,2023, Peng clan people into the ancestral temple worship scene.....	212
Figure 109. On January 22,2023, When the descendants of Peng's men have dinner together, people over 70 will receive 200 yuan in red envelopes	214
Figure 110. On January 22,2023, a lion dance was performed at the entrance to the gate of the ancestral temple.....	215
Figure 111. On January 22,2023, a lion dance was performed at the entrance to the gate of the ancestral temple.....	215
Figure 112. On January 22,2023, The door god at the gate of the Great ancestral hall	217
Figure 113. Portrait of two family builders of the Peng Great ancestral Hall	219
Figure 114. The descendants of the Peng family will come to worship on special days such as the New Year and having children	222
Figure 115. This image is a portrait of Peng Zu, a legendary figure in Chinese mythology known for his longevity and expertise in the art of health preservation. He is regarded as an important symbol of health and Daoist culture.	222
Figure 116. Peng ancestral hall worship hall, this table is mainly dedicated to the deceased ancestors in the family, there are ancestral tablets	224
Figure 117. Dongkeng town Peng wu shares economic joint conference, the conference was held in the ancestral hall. The function of the ancestral temple is closely combined with the contemporary development.....	230

Figure 118. In the Pengwu village Committee, we had an in-depth conversation with the village and deputy village heads, mainly discussing the details of the next art activities in the Peng Great ancestral hall	231
Figure 119. A survey of 15 local art students revealed limited knowledge of ancestral hall culture. 71.43% had basic understanding, while 14.29% had no understanding at all.....	232
Figure 120. Most students showed interest in learning ancestral hall culture, with 80% focusing on history and art appreciation, 60% on communication, and 46.67% on creative practices. This highlights the cultural value for young people.	233
Figure 121. The first wall painting activity. The five people in the photo are all descendants of the Peng family. The third from the left is a cadre of the Peng family village committee, mainly responsible for the external affairs of the ancestral temple. But not a descendant of the Peng family.	234
Figure 122. I was explaining the origin of the door pillow stone to the participants	235
Figure 123. I was explaining the origin of the door pillow stone to the participants	235
Figure 124. Participants in the activity are painting the murals, which are the works of the ancestral hall	236
Figure 125. The six people participated in the activity, five of them were descendants of the Peng family, and the woman from the left was a staff member of the Pengwu village government, mainly responsible for the daily affairs of the Peng family of the big ancestral hall.	237
Figure 126. Participants in the activity are painting the murals, which are the works of the ancestral hall	237
Figure 127. The four people participated in the activity, three of them were descendants of the Peng family, and the woman from the right was a staff member of the Pengwu village government, mainly responsible for the daily affairs of the Peng family of the big ancestral hall.....	239
Figure 128. Participants will draw the works on display	239
Figure 129. I was telling the people who participated in the activity about the poems created by the ancestors of the ancestral temple. All three of them were descendants of the Peng family	240
Figure 130. The murals organized in the Peng hall painted the activity scenes	241
Figure 131. The scene painted by the mural. The left and right sides are the descendants of the Peng family. In the middle is the head of the Pengwu village committee.....	242

Figure 132. The painters first take pictures of the murals on the wall, and then draw them with oil painting.....242

Figure 133. Mals are painted in the hall of the Peng ancestral hall243



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Research

In traditional rural Chinese society, ancestral halls have always played a pivotal role in maintaining social cohesion. These ancestral halls, as public spaces that carry cultural significance, have been highly esteemed throughout different dynasties. Historical records trace the origins of ancestral hall culture in Guangzhou Prefecture back to Foshan during the Song Dynasty, and it gradually spread throughout the Guangfu region in the subsequent dynastic changes. Its pinnacle was reached during the Ming and Qing Dynasties.

The Great Ancestral Hall in PengWu Village, DongKeng Town, DongGuan City, Guangdong Province, China, serves as an exemplary representation of this cultural heritage. This ancestral hall was initially constructed in the 25th year of the JiaJing period (Ming Dynasty) and took a decade to complete, from 1547 to 1557. The expansion of the ancestral hall was carried out by Peng ShiChao, a descendant of the Peng family, who held the highest official position recorded in the Peng family tree during the Ming Dynasty. Under his supervision, the ancestral hall grew to cover an area of more than 1.3 mu (approximately 0.0867 hectares). The hall's layout follows the traditional three-section design of GuangFu ancestral temples.

The entrance is adorned with a grand ancestral hall plaque, a red stone courtyard in front of the door, and a pair of red stone lions flanking the walls. Upon entering the gate, a courtyard can be seen, along with pavilions on both sides, which are used for Peng clan Spring and Autumn festivals and lantern festival celebrations. Further in, at the center, is the pavilion dedicated to ancestor worship. The front posts of the pavilion bear a couplet inscribed by Peng ShiChao: "further staggering, calendar three yi let grace." Inside the main hall is a space for guests and visitors. Beyond that lies a shrine for the ancestors, flanked by a pair of couplets: "bat plum Lin Ju, deer willow bear lotus," which are highly distinctive.

The ancestral hall underwent reconstructions in the Qing Dynasty and the 9th year of the Republic of China (1920). In 2004, it was designated as a municipal

cultural relics protection unit, and in 2019, it received the status of a provincial-level cultural relics protection unit. The entire temple is supported by 36 stone pillars, showcasing excellent materials, exquisite architectural structure, and an aura of antiquity.

Over more than 400 years of historical evolution, the Peng Great Ancestral Hall has experienced numerous changes in its purpose and has been rebuilt by the descendants of the clan multiple times. This enduring relevance reflects the dynamic interaction between architectural heritage and socio-cultural evolution.

This paper will focus on analyzing the spatial layout and symbolic meanings of the murals within ancestral halls. Detailed analysis of the content, meanings, and placement of these murals provides a deeper understanding of the core concepts that hall administrators wish to convey and the functional roles murals play in different areas. As time progresses, particularly after 1985, the choices of patterns for redecorating the murals by hall administrators reflect the continuity and change in social memory.

The formation of social memory is facilitated through two significant avenues: ritual enactment and bodily practice. Ritual enactment is realized through bodily practice, as habitual memory sedimentates within individuals' bodies, constructing social memory. For instance, in the context of ancestral halls like the Peng Great Ancestral Hall, habitual memory continuously settles within the individual's body through practices such as looking up at the mural paintings to understand their meanings and engaging in mural painting activities. Each iteration of these activities constructs a memory link between the individual and society.

Additionally, this paper examines a specific case of ancestral worship: the murals in the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall enhance the solemnity and sacredness of the rituals. Descendants of the hall engage in ritual activities and view murals, receiving visual education about family history and values. During ancestral worship, the presence of murals serves not only as decoration but also as a crucial medium for transmitting family memory and cultural values.

Through research on the cultural elements of the Peng Great Ancestral Hall, this reinterpretation will be achieved through officially recognized cultural activities designed for promotion and dissemination (Peng Zhaorong, 2021).

This study employs qualitative research methods, specifically including the following aspects:

1. Field Observation:

Conducted multiple on-site visits to the Peng Great Ancestral Hall to meticulously document its architectural structure, mural layout, and symbolic meanings.

Observations were carried out at different times, especially during festivals and ancestor worship ceremonies, to capture the dynamic changes and social functions of the ancestral hall during these specific occasions.

2. Activity Implementation:

Organized and participated in various cultural activities centered around the ancestral hall, such as mural painting and poetry recitation.

These activities served not only as research subjects but also as part of practical research to observe participants' behaviors, reactions, and interactions during the events.

Through these activities, the study explores how artistic creation and literary events can promote cultural transmission and the construction of social memory.

3. Interviews with Community Members:

Conducted in-depth interviews with descendants of the Peng family and local community members to understand their perceptions and emotional connections to the ancestral hall culture.

Interview topics included the significance of the ancestral hall in their lives, their understanding of the murals and other cultural elements, and their experiences and feelings about participating in ancestral hall activities.

These interviews provided firsthand data, revealing the role and impact of ancestral hall culture in contemporary society.

This comprehensive qualitative research methodology aims to thoroughly understand the multiple functions of the Peng Great Ancestral Hall as a cultural heritage site and its dynamic changes in modern society.

Modern Context and Challenges

Since the acceleration of China's modernization process in 1978, the traditional bonds within rural societies have undergone unprecedented transformation.

Diversity and mobility have become prominent features of modern society, with large-scale population movements and rapid changes in identity making the connection between the past and present increasingly fragmented. As ancient social structures, family ancestral halls face significant challenges in maintaining clan relationships and enhancing cohesion. Particularly in the Guangfu region, economic development has led to changes where many ancestral halls have been demolished due to urban planning, affecting the inheritance of traditional culture. Additionally, the connection between the younger generation and ancestral halls has weakened, leading to a gradual loss of knowledge about their clan's history and culture.

In this context, this study proposes two specific solutions aimed at reconnecting modern society with traditional culture and revitalizing the space of ancestral halls through the application of bodily practice and social memory:

1. Mural Creation Activities:

Organize mural creation activities using cultural elements from within the halls as materials, allowing participants to experience and inherit culture through artistic creation.

2. Poetry Recitation and Writing Activities:

Conduct poetry recitation and writing activities based on the cultural background of the ancestral halls to deepen the understanding and appreciation of the halls' history and culture through literary forms.

These activities not only attract the participation of the younger generation, enhancing their identification with the clan and traditional culture, but also provide opportunities for the elderly to continue participating in community cultural life, thus achieving intergenerational communication and the continuous inheritance of culture.

Through these specific practical activities, this research aims to explore how to protect and inherit traditional culture in the rapidly changing modern society, especially how to use ancestral halls, a unique cultural heritage, as a platform to strengthen social cohesion and promote cultural inheritance. This not only helps to preserve precious cultural heritage but also provides modern society with a bridge connecting the past and the future, tradition, and modernity.

1.2. Purpose of Research

- 1.2.1 To study the historical development of Peng Ancestral Hall as Artifact.
- 1.2.2 To analytical study art techniques and functions of Peng Ancestral hall
- 1.2.3 To analyze the bodily practice and social memory of Peng Ancestral Hall
- 1.2.4 To create the inheritance cultural activity of Peng Ancestral Hall

1.3 Research question

- 1.3.1 What has been the process of historical development of Peng Ancestral Hall as an Artifact?
- 1.3.2 What is the art technology and function of Peng's great ancestral hall?
- 1.3.3 How can the bodily practice and social memory of Peng Ancestral Hall be analyzed?
- 1.3.4 How can the inheritance cultural activity of Peng Ancestral Hall be created?

1.4 Definition of Terms

1.4.1 Guangfu District

The Guangfu District, often referred to in academic research, typically encompasses the central and eastern areas of Guangdong Province in China, particularly the Pearl River Delta region. In academic contexts, the term is frequently used to denote the unique cultural, historical, and social characteristics of this area. Guangfu culture, an integral part of Guangdong culture, is renowned for its distinct dialects, customs, arts, and traditions. Historically, the Guangfu District played a significant role in China's economic and cultural development, especially during the Ming and Qing dynasties, marked by thriving commercial activities, overseas trade, and cultural and artistic endeavors. Academic studies on Guangfu often focus on the social history of southern China, local identity, and the transmission and transformation of local culture. (Wu Qiong. 2021)

1.4.2 Peng Ancestral Hall

In academic terms, "Peng Ancestral Hall" refers to a significant ancestral hall located in Pengwu Village, Dongkeng Town, DongGuan City, Guangdong Province, China. This ancestral hall is not only a cultural and social hub for the Peng family but

also represents the unique architectural style of family ancestral halls in Southern China. It holds significant value for the study of Chinese familial systems, regional architectural art, and social and cultural traditions. The historical context, architectural features, and social functions of Peng Shi Da Zong Ci make it a key resource for understanding the history and culture of the Guangdong region and the broader South China area.

1.4.3 China after 1978

"China after 1978" refers to the period in Chinese history following the end of the Cultural Revolution and the beginning of the country's economic reform and opening-up policy. This era is marked by several key characteristics and developments:

Social and Cultural Changes: Along with economic reforms, Chinese society underwent significant changes. There was a gradual shift towards more personal freedoms and a diversification of cultural expression, although within the constraints of continued political control.

"China after 1978" is a term encapsulating the profound transformations in China's economy, society, Cultural, and international standing, initiated by the reform and opening-up policies and continuing into the 21st century.(2024)

1.4.4 Bodily Practices

Conceptual Explanation: Bodily practices refer to the ways individuals or groups express and experience social reality through bodily actions and habits. This concept emphasizes that the body is not only a biological entity but also a product of society and culture. It includes various physical activities in daily life, such as walking, eating, dancing, etc., all of which reflect cultural and social structures.

Theorist: This concept was not proposed by a single scholar, but gradually developed in the fields of sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies. The "Habitus" theory of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu(Jenkins, R. 2013) has had a profound impact on this area. He argued that habitus is a social structure embodied, maintained and transmitted through everyday bodily practices.

Applications: The concept of bodily practices is widely applied in sociology, anthropology, gender studies, and other fields, to analyze how identity, power relations, and social norms are expressed through bodily behavior.

1.4.5 Social Memory

Conceptual Explanation: Social memory refers to the shared memories and narratives about the past within a society or group. These memories are transmitted and maintained among members of society through culture, rituals, commemorative activities, and education. Social memory shapes the identity of a group, influencing their understanding of history and perspectives on the future.

Theorists: The concept of social memory was proposed and developed by several scholars, including psychologist Frederic Bartlett and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs. Halbwachs particularly emphasized the concept of collective memory, arguing that memory is socially constructed. (Halbwachs,2002)

Applications: Research on social memory is extensively applied in fields such as history, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies. It is particularly relevant in studies of national identity, historical conflicts, and collective identity.

1.5 Scope of Research

1.5.1 Area

This study focuses on the Peng Family Ancestral Hall, a Ming Dynasty folk temple located in the coastal regions of Guangdong.

Content

exploring its status in the GuangFu cultural history. The study will delve into the temple's architectural features, historical context, and its role in social structures. - Analyze the cultural elements within the temple, such as traditional murals, sculptures, and poetry, and how they reflect the Peng family's Continuation and identity of social memory. - Investigate the role of the temple in social memory and bodily practices, exploring how these activities manifest and are transmitted within the clan and in interactions with the external community.

The two activities proposed in this study aim to revitalize the ancestral hall space and reconnect modern society with its traditional culture, with a particular focus on the Peng Great Ancestral Hall as a case study. These activities are designed to attract members of the Peng clan across all age groups, thereby fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of their cultural heritage and history.

Mural Painting Activity: This activity invites members of the Peng clan of all ages to participate in mural painting, copying content from the murals within the ancestral hall. This approach not only allows participants to directly engage with the art and symbolism of their ancestors but also serves as a manual method to preserve and pass down traditional artistic skills and expressions. By immersing themselves in the process of replicating these murals, clan members can experience a tangible connection to their heritage, allowing them to explore the meanings and stories behind these artworks, thus bridging the gap between the past and present.

Poetry Appreciation and Calligraphy Writing: The second activity focuses on the appreciation of poetry written by ancestors of the Peng clan, reflecting their life experiences and philosophical insights. Participants of all ages are encouraged to engage with these poems not just as literary works but as expressions of their ancestors' journeys and values. Through calligraphy writing, clan members will have the opportunity to physically connect with these words, embodying the practice of traditional Chinese art while contemplating the virtues and teachings contained within the poetry. This activity not only promotes cultural literacy among clan members but also strengthens their sense of identity and continuity with their ancestral past.

By conducting these activities for Peng clan members of all age groups, it is possible not only to promote the inheritance of culture and the construction of social memory but also to strengthen the internal cohesion and intergenerational communication within the clan. These activities enable clan members of every age to play a role in protecting and inheriting their rich cultural heritage, collectively contributing to the dynamic transmission of this heritage and its adaptation to the contemporary era, making it a living, breathing aspect of daily life and a focal point of social memory.

1.5.2 Time Frame

Since the Ming Dynasty, the study focuses on a series of transformations since the economic reform and opening up. Taking the background of The Times as an opportunity, the adaptation and evolution of temples and their role as cultural heritage in social, political and economic changes, especially a series of reforms and changes that have taken place in the temples since 1978.

1.5.3 Scope of Research Content

Conduct a detailed study of how Peng Ancestral Hall manifests in local community life and cultural traditions, maintaining its cultural and historical values in modern society. - Investigate and analyze the social memory of Peng Ancestral Hall and its representation in daily life and ceremonial practices, exploring the temple culture's role in constructing social identities, power relations, and social norms. - Design and evaluate activities aimed at promoting the cultural inheritance of Peng Ancestral Hall, studying how these activities maintain and enhance the temple's cultural vitality and relevance in contemporary society, creating cultural value for future generations. This study aims to provide a comprehensive perspective on the historical trajectory, cultural impact, and the design and evaluation of cultural inheritance activities of Peng Zongci, to understand its significance and role in modern Chinese society and culture.

1.6 Research Methodology

Research methods for bodily practice and social memory :

Activity Planning and Implementation

Cultural Activity Design: Develop activities related to the cultural elements of the ancestral hall, such as mural appreciation and painting workshops, as well as poetry recitation events.

Community Participation: Actively promote the involvement of community members, particularly the younger generation, to foster cultural exchange across different age groups.

Data Collection Methods

Activity Observation: Record the process of cultural activities, paying close attention to the interaction and reactions of participants.

Interviews and Feedback: Conduct interviews with participants (including both the elderly and younger people) to understand their feelings about the activities and their identification with the ancestral hall culture.

1.6.1 Population and sample

KI; Director of Peng ancestral hall: specific activities held in the ancestral hall the daily life of the clan

Secretary of Pengwu Village Committee: The specific development of the village under the background of rural revitalization in modern China. How to build social memory based on clan connections and new connectivity patterns

CI; Pengwu Village villager A: the specific link between the descendants of the ancestral hall and the ancestral hall. The degree of recognition of the ancestral hall Artifact

CI; Pengwu Village

Children: usually 0-14 years old. Adolescents: This age group usually refers to people aged from 15 to 24 years old

GI: A traveling group to visit the Peng's great ancestral hall

1.6.2 Study tools (tools)

The research device includes mobile phones, cameras, and other recording devices with recording, recording, and photographic capabilities. The basic data recording tool is the camera and the recorder. The camera is used for image data collection and for image data collection and recording of ancestral temple cultural activities. The recorder is used to document formal or informal conversations for further data analysis and research.

1.6.3 Data Collection

Describe the data collection process, including the design of the interview questionnaire, and the selection of interviewers for the role interviews and the entire interview process. Explain the method of sample selection, and discuss its representativeness and reliability. Interview information was collected, including key informants and general informants.

1.6.4 Data Analysis

Use focus groups and participation observations, especially cultural activities and festival celebrations held at the Peng Great ancestral hall, to understand the attitudes and behaviors of community members towards ancestral temple culture.

Analysis after holding ancestral temple cultural activities:

The symbolic elements (such as murals, architectural style, poetry, etc.) in the Peng ancestral hall were used for cultural science, interview the focus crowd, and the follow-up feelings of the cultural publicity activities.

Effectiveness Analysis of Activities: Analyze how cultural activities enhance community members' identification with the ancestral hall culture and social memory.

Tourism Attraction Analysis: Study how these activities attract tourists and their potential impact on the local economy and cultural revitalization.

1.6.5 Research presentation

After completing the data analysis, will write a research report. The report will include the study background, methods, results, discussions, conclusions, and recommendations.

1.7 Literature Review

1.7.1 Chinese literature review

By reading the article on ancestral hall culture, I have come to the following conclusion.

In Professor Feng Jiang, published in 2010, the reclamation of the Ming and Qing dynasties, gathering and living and clan ancestral temple evolution research, the ancestral hall culture for the answered the basic questions about Guangzhou mansion clan ancestral hall, illustrates the many complex phenomena about Guangzhou mansion ancestral hall, think in the regional development, gradually formed a multi-level clan dominant blood village, clan and ancestral hall in the process of the common experienced three concentrated active period, building gradually formed to adapt to the regional characteristics of local, and ancestral hall memorial with the change of social reality constantly shift. (Feng Jiang, 2010)

In Wen-HaoZhang article published in 2019 on the clan organization of modern community governance function, I get the following results: clan organization is can rely on and use the important modern community governance and governance resources, in the rural community governance can play a variety of governance function, help solve rural governance imbalance, improve the management function of the new era of community. (Wen-HaoZhang, 2019)

By reading He WeiCai, Li fan, Yang Jianbo published in 2013, the rapid urbanization background of Foshan traditional ancestral temple culture landscape change and the construction of local identity, I get the following results:

Under the impact of rapid urbanization and globalization, Foshan traditional ancestral temple landscape also changes, is to construct local identity. The relationship between local and identity is not only permeated by the influence of exogenous culture, but also enhanced by the role of endogenous cultural identity, which makes the orientation of local identity diversified. So the new local identity is being reconstructed. (He WeiCai, Li fan, Yang Jianbo,2019)

The thesis "Clan Place Identity: A Place Identity Bound by Blood and Culture" delves into how clans' cultural and familial ties shape their connection to specific places. Using the Dai clan's migrations as case studies, it shows that place identity is a complex mix of symbols, collective memory, and practices rooted in blood ties and culture. This identity, reflecting the clan's history and cultural practices, is vital for understanding how clans perceive and value their ancestral lands, intertwining culture, history, and geography in the construction of place identities. (Bi tingDai,2018)

The document "The spatial production, cultural identity and interactive communication of characteristic towns" explores the dynamic interplay between the creation of space, cultural identity, and interactive communication within distinctive small towns. It highlights how these towns are not only physical spaces but also cultural spaces, shaped by the participation of diverse stakeholders including local residents, tourists, governments, and planners. The creation and recognition of cultural symbols, alongside the adoption of modern communication methods, play crucial roles in enhancing the towns' attractiveness and fostering a shared cultural identity. The text emphasizes the importance of interactive communication in promoting and preserving the unique cultural and spatial characteristics of these towns, thereby contributing to their sustainable development and cultural heritage. (He Zhiwu, Huang Dongli, Gong Shuying.2023)

1.7.2 English literature review

Paul Connerton - How Societies Remember (Connerton, P. 1989) (Themes in the Social Sciences)" is an insightful exploration of the concept of collective memory within societies. The book delves into how groups, ranging from small face-to-face communities to expansive societies, transmit and sustain their collective

memory. Connerton addresses the question of how memories are communicated and maintained, emphasizing the importance of ceremonies and bodily practices in this process. He argues that societal memory is not just about conscious recollection but also involves unconscious aspects that shape our experiences and identities. The book discusses the role of memory in legitimizing social orders and explores the intersections of memory with political power and unconscious factors. Connerton suggests that our understanding of the present is heavily influenced by our knowledge of the past, and this interplay shapes societal norms and structures. The book is a compelling examination of the mechanisms through which societies remember and forget, and how these processes shape cultural and social identity.

In "How Societies Remember," Paul Connerton examines the function of memory in societies through specific case studies. He discusses the role of rituals and celebrations in social memory, highlighting how these events are not just commemorations of the past but also re-affirmations of a community's identity. Connerton explores the concept of bodily memory, where non-verbal memories are transmitted through body actions and habits, exemplifying social and cultural representations. Additionally, he analyzes how societies shape collective identities through selective memory or forgetting of historical events. These case studies reveal that memory is not just a personal psychological process but a crucial component in the construction and maintenance of social structures and cultural identities.

Maurice Halbwachs' concept of collective memory is primarily discussed in his book "The Collective Memory" (*La Mémoire collective*, 1950). Halbwachs proposed that societies possess collective memories that depend on the social framework in which a group exists. This collective memory exists beyond individual memory and is shared among a group. An individual's understanding of the past is strongly linked to this group consciousness. Halbwachs emphasized that each group experiencing an event has its own unique collective memory, differing from other groups. This concept highlights the role of social structures and cultural perceptions in shaping collective memory.

"Outline of a Theory of Practice" by Pierre Bourdieu examines the relationship between social structures and individual practices. Bourdieu introduces the concept of habitus, emphasizing it as an internalization of individual history and social

structures, manifesting as embodied, often unconscious behaviors. The book also discusses concepts such as social, cultural, and symbolic capital, exploring how these forms of capital operate within different social fields (or fields). This work offers a profound analysis of social dynamics, particularly in understanding social inequalities, power structures, and individual behaviors. (Pierre Bourdieu, 1977)

The document, "Heritage, Memory, and Identity Politics: New Perspectives on Cultural Landscapes," edited by Niamh Moore and Yvonne Whelan, investigates the complex interrelations between identity, memory, heritage, and cultural landscapes. It addresses how landscapes serve as sites of memory and identity construction, reflecting on the ways collective memories and identities are shaped, contested, and commemorated within physical and cultural spaces. The text emphasizes the role of heritage and memory in the politics of identity, offering insights into the processes through which landscapes become imbued with significance and how they contribute to the formation of communal and individual identities. (Niamh Moore and Yvonne Whelan, 2007)

In the article "Reconstructing Pure Land Buddhist Architecture in Ancient East Asia," the author Young-Jae Kim discusses the architectural expression of Pure Land Buddhist thought, particularly how architectural design and layout reflect the concepts of the Pure Land. Through detailed studies of temples such as Bulguksa in Korea and Byodoin in Japan, the article demonstrates how these buildings function in actual religious practices to help believers experience the existence of the Pure Land in the real world.

Architectural Elements and Bodily Practice

1. Architectural Layout and Pure Land Rituals:

The layouts of Bulguksa and Byodoin temples are designed to reflect the concepts of the Pure Land through their spatial arrangements. The article points out that the buildings in these temples are connected by stairs, flat bridges, and arched bridges, with paths indicating the routes of rituals. Flat stone platforms play an important role in linking worship buildings and places.

Elements such as high-rise buildings, floating platforms, and lotus ponds are not just visual expressions but also guide the spiritual experience of believers through specific spatial arrangements and perspective handling. For example, in the Pure Land

murals of Dunhuang caves and Bulguksa, the layout of central buildings and lotus ponds employs a one-point perspective, allowing participants to concentrate on meditative visualization, thereby enhancing their sense of reverence for the Pure Land.

2. Spatial Depth and Religious Experience:

The article explores how the spatial depth achieved through architectural layout enhances the religious experience of believers. The placement of buildings, steps, and platforms allows believers to feel the presence and atmosphere of the Pure Land during worship. For instance, in Bulguksa, when Pure Land worship is conducted around the lotus pond, believers can view the magnificent terraced platforms and buildings through open roof corridors, enabling them to feel the happiness and blessings of the Pure Land.

The elevated platforms and elements designed to be far from the secular world make believers feel a transcendental atmosphere during religious ceremonies, further reinforcing the image of the Pure Land as an ideal realm.

3. Symbolic Significance of Architecture:

The symbolic design of buildings (such as high-rise towers, lotus ponds, and gem-adorned pavilions) is detailed in Buddhist scriptures. These designs not only reflect religious beliefs but are also associated with Taoist immortal abodes and symbols of rulers' authority.

Through these architectural elements, believers experience the atmosphere of the Pure Land in physical space, with the architecture itself becoming a tool and medium for religious experience.

In summary, the article thoroughly discusses the specific manifestation of Pure Land Buddhist thought in architecture and how architectural design and spatial arrangements enhance the religious experience and spiritual practice of believers.

In the article "The Creation of 'Sacred Place' through the 'Sense of Place' of the Daci'en Wooden Buddhist Temple, Xi'an, China," written by Minglan Zou and Azizi Bahauddin in 2024, it is pointed out that The architectural heritage of wooden Buddhist temples serves as a spiritual remedy for the sense of soul loss and the urgent awareness of "searching for roots" faced by people in contemporary urban life. An excellent Buddhist temple space can respond to people's emotional needs. This study

takes Daci'en Temple in Xi'an as a research and practice case to explore the creation of a "sacred place" through the "sense of place." The characteristics of wooden Buddhist temples are constructed through architectural structure, metaphorical symbols of architectural components, and perceptual characteristics of materials. The architectural heritage of Daci'en Temple represents not only a "sacred space" for spiritual healing but also inherits the philosophy of Chinese Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, encompassing collective memory and cultural identity. Wooden Buddhist temples have unique structural characteristics, surface properties, cultural affiliation, and religious significance. This study is a pioneering attempt to define the cultural and sacred atmosphere concerning the materials used in constructing Buddhist temples. This work contributes to understanding this type of architecture and creates the topic of "sacred places." The main conclusions drawn are as follows:

1. In wooden Buddhist temples, the authenticity of materials expresses the exquisite craftsmanship and philosophical culture of the architecture, and it will also become a key part of the inheritance of architectural heritage in the future.

2. Architectural heritage is a physical carrier of a "sense of place" and a witness to history. The architectural structures and components of wooden Buddhist temples reflect the specific social ethics, religious status, philosophical ideas, and national spirit of their locality.

3. Wooden Buddhist temples represent a specific historical process and religious culture through their unique architectural language and metaphorical symbolism. This architectural language can awaken people's religious consciousness, collective memory, local identity, and national self-confidence, all contributing to the core meaning of the architectural narrative.

4. In wooden Buddhist temples, the natural properties of wooden materials can form multi-dimensional sensory stimulations, including vision, hearing, touch, and smell, gradually evoking spiritual perceptions of comfort, safety, acceptance, and redemption. This helps form a sense of sacred belonging and place attachment.

5. The positive impact of wooden Buddhist temples on society is reflected in many aspects, from environmental protection and physical and mental health to cultural inheritance and even social harmony and stability. As a spiritual "sacred place," such temples can provide spiritual comfort and stress relief, thereby reducing

social conflict, enhancing community cohesion and cultural identity, and contributing to the overall well-being and sustainable development of society.

6. This study found that creating a "sacred place" through the "sense of place" in Buddhist temple architecture is based on the advantages of wooden materials. In developing and protecting Buddhist temple heritage, other architectural elements must also be considered to sufficiently maintain the local context and enhance the emotional experience of the sacred space.

1.8 Concept, Theory and Conceptual framework

Concept

The primary concept under investigation in this study is the interplay between cultural artifacts, specifically the GuangFu ancestral hall, and their roles in bodily practices and social memory within a community. This concept involves understanding how physical structures like ancestral halls not only serve as historical edifices but also actively participate in the shaping of social practices, memories, and identities.

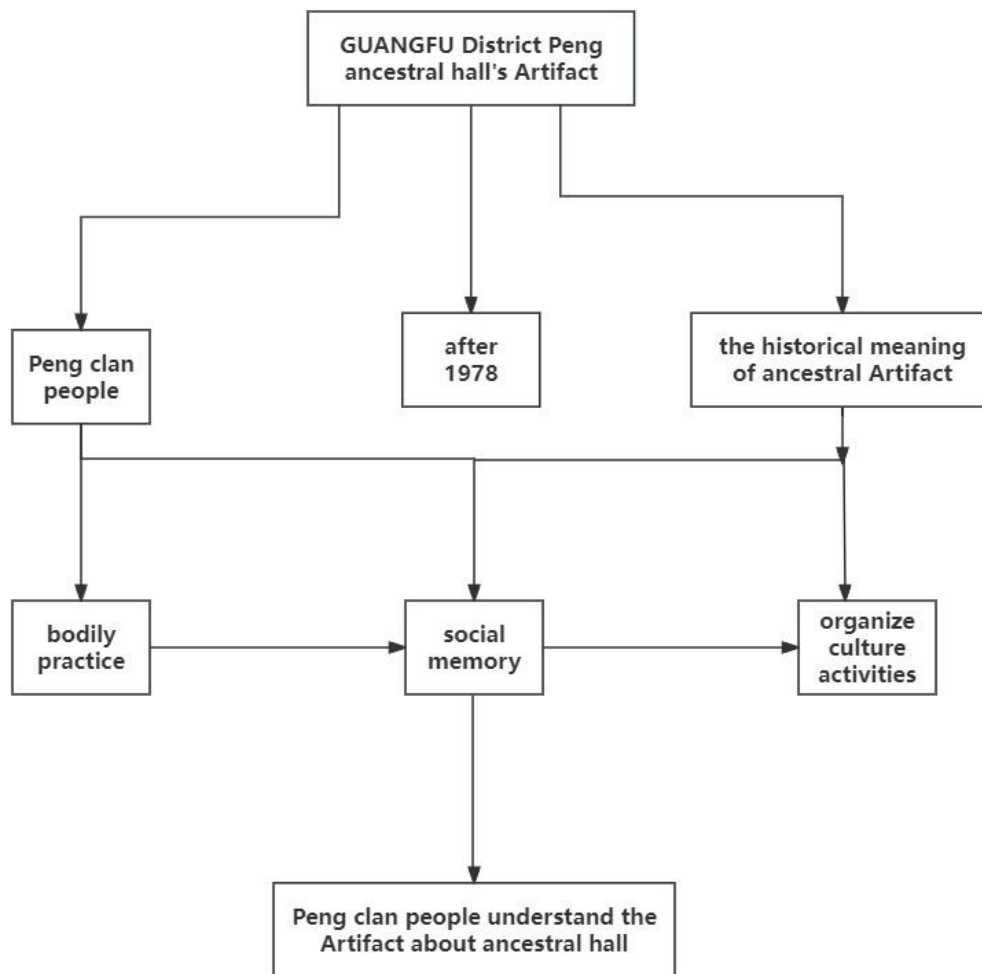
Theory

Two main theories underpin this research:

Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Practice: This theory posits that social practices (including bodily practices) are not just individual actions but are influenced by and reflective of the social structures and cultural norms within which they occur. Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' – the internalized societal norms that guide behavior and perception – is central to understanding how bodily practices are manifested in social settings like the ancestral hall. (Pierre Bourdieu,2013)

Maurice Halbwachs' Collective Memory: Halbwachs' theory focuses on how memory is not solely an individual cognitive process but is shared and constructed within social groups. This framework is crucial in examining how social memory is fostered and perpetuated in communal spaces like Guangfu ancestral hall, shaping collective identities and historical narratives. (Maurice Halbwachs,2002)

Conceptual Framework



The conceptual framework of this study integrates Bourdieu's Theory of Practice with Halbwachs' Collective Memory theory. The framework posits that the Guangfu ancestral hall is not only a physical space but also a symbolic arena where bodily practices and social memory intersect and interact. This interaction is seen as a dynamic process where the ancestral hall facilitates the embodiment of cultural values and collective memories, thereby influencing social identity and continuity within the community.

The framework aims to explore:

How bodily practices within the ancestral hall reflect and reinforce social structures and cultural norms (Bourdieu's perspective).

The role of the ancestral hall in constructing and maintaining collective memory and identity within the community (Halbwachs' perspective).

This integrated approach provides a comprehensive lens to examine how cultural artifacts like the Guangfu ancestral hall play a crucial role in the socio-cultural fabric of communities, embodying and perpetuating cultural traditions and collective memories.

1.9 Research plan

February - April 2024: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework Establishment

February: Review literature on bodily practices, social memory, Guangfu ancestral hall, and its cultural elements.

March: Analyze the gathered materials in depth to establish a theoretical framework, with a special focus on the cultural elements of the ancestral hall.

April: Complete the literature review, clarify research directions and hypotheses.

May - July 2024: Activity Preparation and Implementation

May: Plan the second mural painting and poetry appreciation activity. Begin systematic organization of the ancestral hall's cultural elements.

June: Conduct the second activity. Immediately post-activity, interview participants and start writing relevant sections.

July: Communicate with local government about the effectiveness of the activities, continue organizing cultural elements, and update research content.

August - October 2024: Further Research and Activity Development

August: Adjust the plan based on existing research results. Prepare for the third activity.

September: Carry out the third mural painting and poetry appreciation activity. Conduct interviews right after the event and write relevant sections.

October: Communicate with the government about the effects, begin organizing activity data, and prepare to draft the initial manuscript.

November 2024 - January 2025: Writing Initial Draft and Activity Summary

November: Complete the organization of the ancestral hall's cultural elements, integrate them into introduction materials, and write the main body of the thesis.

December: Complete the first draft of the thesis, conduct internal reviews, and communicate again with the government.

January: Revise the thesis and activity summary based on feedback, and prepare for the thesis defense.

February - March 2025: Final Revision and Submission

February: Complete the final revisions of the thesis, ensuring academic standards are met.

March: Submit the thesis, complete the defense, and summarize the research and activities' outcom

1.10 Chapter structure

Chapter 1: the historical development of Peng Ancestral Hall as Artifact.

1.1 The Ecology and Physical Space of Pengwu Village, Dongkeng Town, Dongguan City, Guangdong Province

1.2 The Ecology and Physical Space of Pengwu Village

1.3 Tracing the History and Artistic Value of Guangfu Ancestral Halls

1.4 The Importance of Ancestral Hall Cultural Research

1.5 Introduction to the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall

1.6 Cultural Elements in the Ancestral Hall Reflecting Bodily Practice and Social Memory

Chapter 2 Historical Development of Peng Ancestral Hall as Artifact

2.1 The Memory-Bearing Function of Traditional Imagery

2.2 The Evolution of Mural Themes and Techniques During the Republican Period

2.3 Overview of Ideological and Cultural Changes in the Lingnan Region After 1978

Chapter 3 To analytical study art techniques and functions of Peng Ancestral hall

3.1 The Relationship Between Functional Images and the Functions of the Ancestral Hall

3.2 The Functions of Images within Ancestral Hall Spaces

3.3 The Cultural Significance of the Doorstone

3.4 The Social Memory of Poetry

3.5 Couplets and Ancestral Hall Culture

Chapter 4 analyze the bodily practice and social memory of Peng Ancestral Hall

4.1 Case Study: Ancestral Worship Ceremony in the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall

4.2 Cultural Significance of the Lion Dance

4.3 Visual Art and Ritual Space: A Study of Door Gods and Murals in the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall

4.4 Ritual Activities in the Central Hall and Social Identity

4.5 Ancestral Worship Ceremony in the Ancestral Hall and Cultural Symbolism

4.6 Summary

Chapter 5: Create the inheritance cultural activity of Peng Ancestral Hall

5.1 Case Study Painting of Memory: Ancestral Worship Ceremony in the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall

5.2 Case Study Meaning of Painting and Literature: Practical Activities to Inherit and Preserve Ancestral Hall Culture

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Research Result Discussions

6.1 Major Research Findings

6.2 Explanation of Research Object Selection

6.3 Comparative Analysis of Related Studies

6.4 Innovations of This Study

6.5 Suggestions and Recommendations for Further Studies

6.6 Conclusion

พจนานุกรม ปณฺ ทิโต ชีเว

1.11 Benefit of Research:

Based on the conceptual framework and definitions previously provided, my research offers the following benefits:

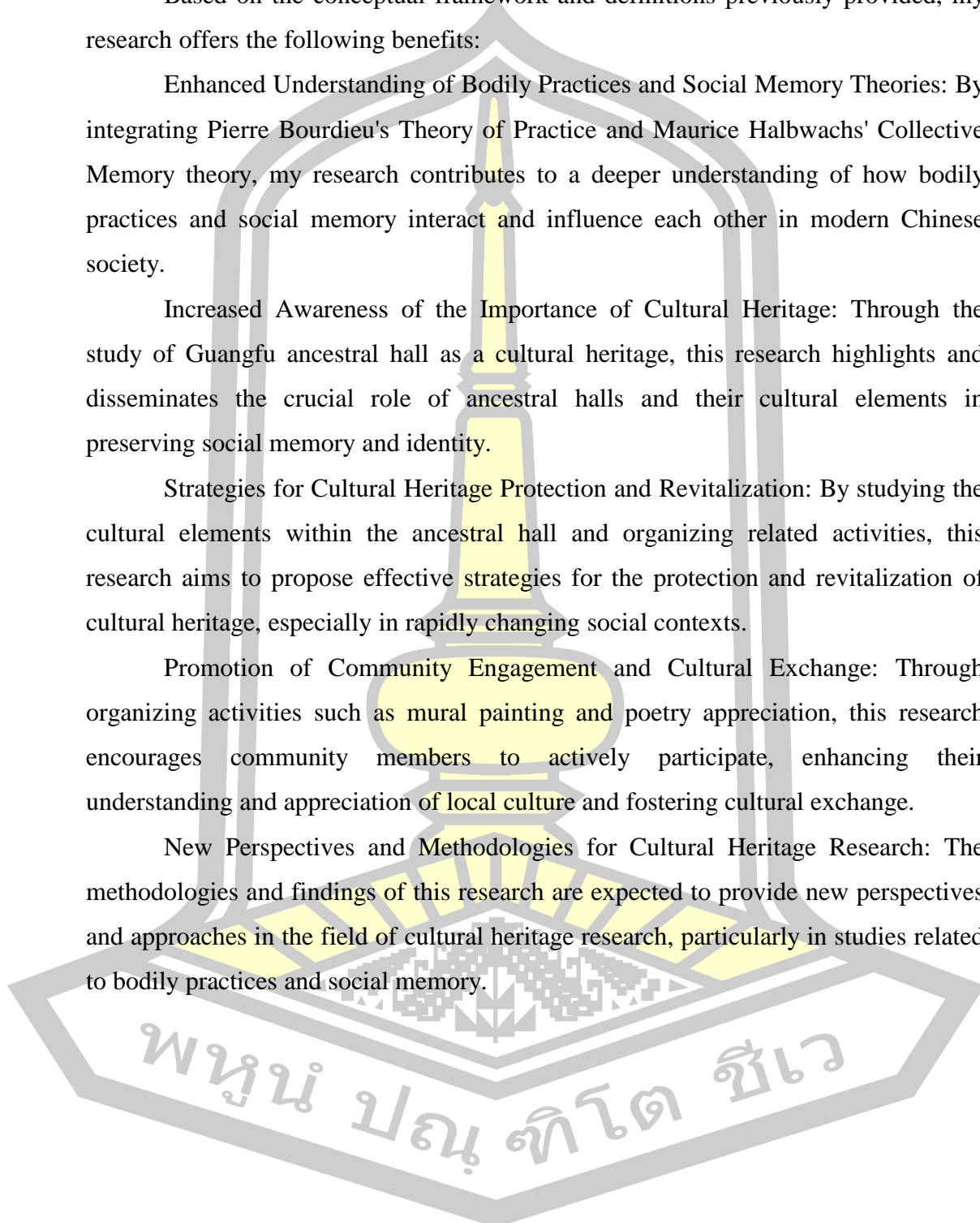
Enhanced Understanding of Bodily Practices and Social Memory Theories: By integrating Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and Maurice Halbwachs' Collective Memory theory, my research contributes to a deeper understanding of how bodily practices and social memory interact and influence each other in modern Chinese society.

Increased Awareness of the Importance of Cultural Heritage: Through the study of Guangfu ancestral hall as a cultural heritage, this research highlights and disseminates the crucial role of ancestral halls and their cultural elements in preserving social memory and identity.

Strategies for Cultural Heritage Protection and Revitalization: By studying the cultural elements within the ancestral hall and organizing related activities, this research aims to propose effective strategies for the protection and revitalization of cultural heritage, especially in rapidly changing social contexts.

Promotion of Community Engagement and Cultural Exchange: Through organizing activities such as mural painting and poetry appreciation, this research encourages community members to actively participate, enhancing their understanding and appreciation of local culture and fostering cultural exchange.

New Perspectives and Methodologies for Cultural Heritage Research: The methodologies and findings of this research are expected to provide new perspectives and approaches in the field of cultural heritage research, particularly in studies related to bodily practices and social memory.



CHAPTER II

The historical development of Peng Ancestral Hall as Artifact

Exploring the Cultural and Spatial Heritage of Pengwu Village and the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the ecology and physical space of Pengwu Village, Dongkeng Town, Dongguan City, Guangdong Province, and its impact on the cultural development of the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall. Through a detailed analysis of the geographical environment, ecological characteristics, and historical background of Pengwu Village, this chapter highlights the significance of ancestral hall culture within the rural social structure and the role these cultural elements play in social memory. In the famous scholar professor Feng Jiang's thesis pointed out that the state of the country, in the sacrifice and rong 1. Sacrifice has a very rich and complex meaning, but the sacred memorial often does not exist in isolation, but is accompanied by certain realistic needs and ideal demands. (Feng, Jiang.2010: PP296) . The chapter is divided into three main sections:

The first section provides an overview of the “ecology and physical space” of Dongguan City and Pengwu Village, exploring how geographical location, natural resources, and ecological environment have provided a unique physical and social foundation for the formation and transmission of ancestral hall culture.

The second section reviews the “historical development and artistic value” of ancestral halls in the Guangfu region, with a particular focus on the evolution of the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall. It analyzes how the cultural and artistic characteristics of ancestral halls have changed over different historical periods and the impact of these changes on the status and function of the ancestral halls within society.

The third section examines the “cultural elements and social memory” within the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall, with particular attention to how murals, couplets, and other cultural heritage within the hall transmit and sustain collective

memory and cultural identity through bodily practices within the family and broader society.

This chapter lays the foundation for subsequent chapters by clarifying the close relationship between the ancestral hall and its surrounding environment, thereby elucidating the ancestral hall's key role as a cultural and social space.

Section 1: The Ecology and Physical Space of Dongguan City and Pengwu Village

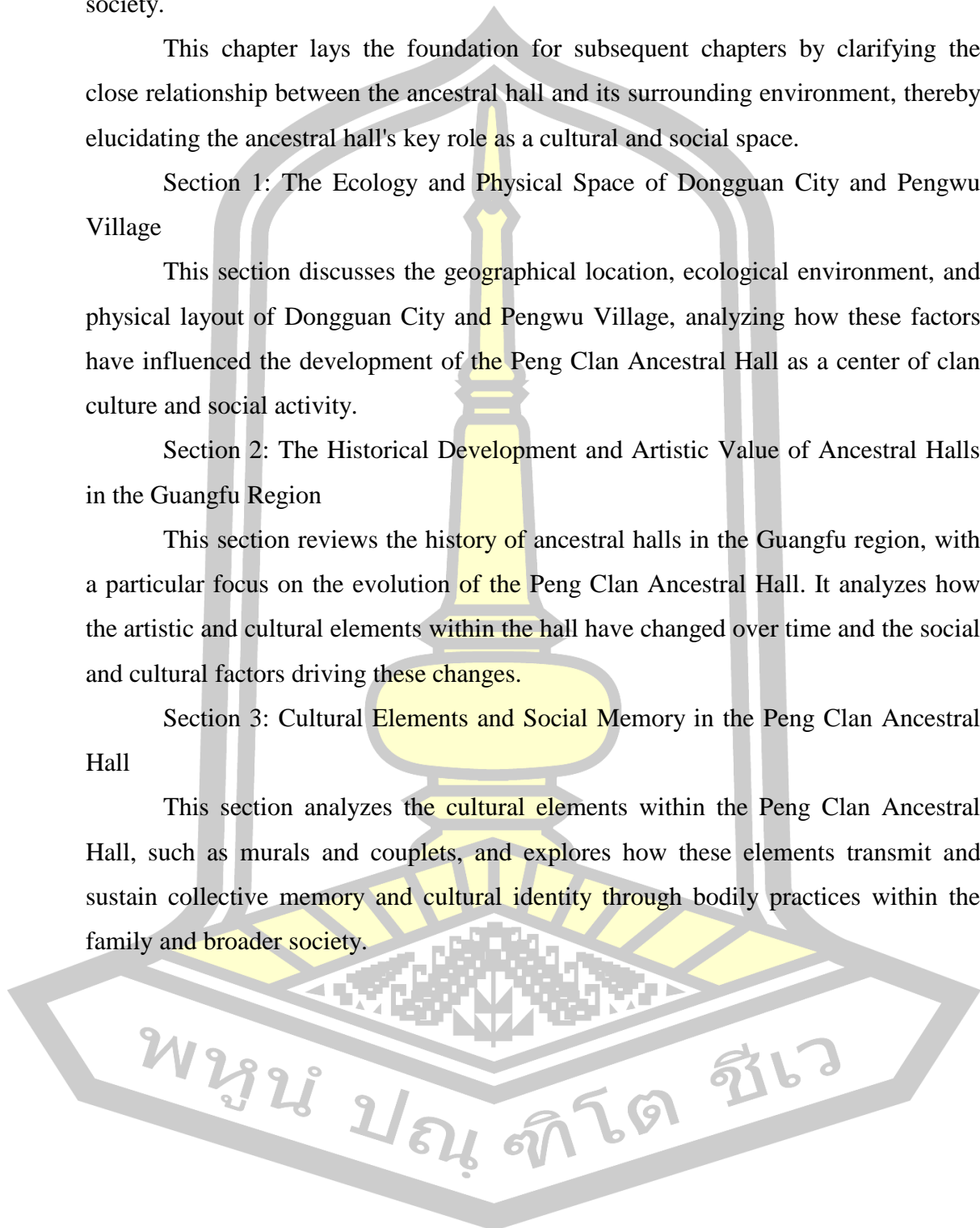
This section discusses the geographical location, ecological environment, and physical layout of Dongguan City and Pengwu Village, analyzing how these factors have influenced the development of the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall as a center of clan culture and social activity.

Section 2: The Historical Development and Artistic Value of Ancestral Halls in the Guangfu Region

This section reviews the history of ancestral halls in the Guangfu region, with a particular focus on the evolution of the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall. It analyzes how the artistic and cultural elements within the hall have changed over time and the social and cultural factors driving these changes.

Section 3: Cultural Elements and Social Memory in the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall

This section analyzes the cultural elements within the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall, such as murals and couplets, and explores how these elements transmit and sustain collective memory and cultural identity through bodily practices within the family and broader society.



2.1 The Ecology and Physical Space of Pengwu Village, Dongkeng Town, Dongguan City, Guangdong Province

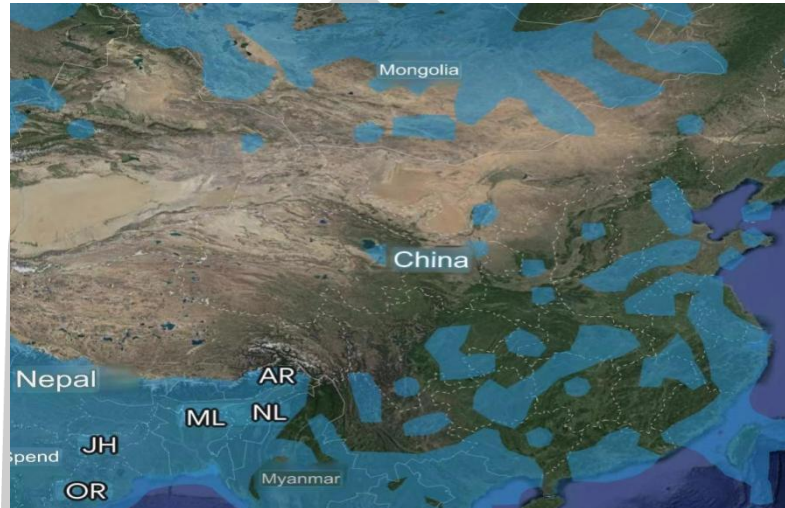


Figure 1. China map

Resource: <https://bajiu.cn/ditu/?id=2> [assessed on 23 December 2024]

Dongguan City is located in the south-central part of Guangdong Province, in the eastern region of the Pearl River Delta. (Figure 1) Its geographical location is advantageous, with Guangzhou to the north, Shenzhen to the south, Foshan to the west, and Huizhou to the east. It is only a few nautical miles away from Hong Kong and Macau. This favorable geographical position has made Dongguan one of the important transportation hubs and economic centers in Guangdong Province. (Peng, Wucun.2023)



Figure 2. DongGuan map

Resource: <https://bajiu.cn/ditu/?id=2> [assessed on 23 December 2024]

Dongguan City (Figure 2) covers a total area of approximately 2,465 square kilometers, with abundant natural resources and a good ecological environment. The terrain of Dongguan is mainly hilly and flat, with elevations gradually transitioning from the high mountains in the north to the plains and coastal areas in the south. Major rivers, such as the Dongjiang River and Dalingshan River, run through the city, providing abundant water resources and good irrigation conditions.



Figure 3. Bar chart of the development of Dongguan GDP over the years

Resource: www.askci.com [assessed on 23 December 2024]

The Songshan Lake (Figure 4) Ecological Park within Dongguan is an important ecological and technological demonstration area, with a total planned area of 103 square kilometers. Songshan Lake is not only an ecological conservation area but also a national-level high-tech industrial development zone, attracting numerous high-tech enterprises and promoting the rapid development of the regional economy. The park includes large areas of lakes, wetlands, and green spaces, providing residents with excellent recreational and leisure opportunities.

In terms of industry, Dongguan is known as the "World's Factory," with over 150,000 industrial enterprises, including 31 Fortune 500 companies such as Samsung, Walmart, and Nikon. Dongguan has been transitioning from traditional labor-intensive manufacturing to high-tech electronics industries, striving to become an

innovation and technology hub in Guangdong Province. In recent years, Dongguan has developed a number of industrial machine manufacturers; meanwhile, industrial digital transformation is accelerating. This "hard" and "soft" new change is like the two huge gears of the industrial base, accelerating the "world factory" to new, advanced upgrade. (Che,Xiaohui and Huang,Haoyuan.2024:PP1)

In summary, Dongguan City has made significant achievements in ecological environmental protection and economic development. Its advantageous geographical location, abundant natural resources, and good ecological environment not only provide a livable environment for residents but also lay a solid foundation for sustainable economic development.

2.2 The Ecology and Physical Space of Pengwu Village



Figure 4. PengWu map

Resource: <https://bajiu.cn/ditu/?id=2> [assessed on 23 December 2024]

Pengwu Village (Figure 5), though covering only 2 square kilometers with a permanent population of less than 2,000 people, is renowned throughout Dongkeng Town and even Dongguan City for its deep cultural heritage and the villagers' commitment to cultural preservation. In Dongkeng, almost everyone knows Pengwu Village, which is known as the place that has produced the most talented individuals. This reputation is not only due to the village's education and talent cultivation but also because of its well-preserved traditional culture and rich intangible cultural heritage.

Pengwu Village boasts more than five cultural heritages at or above the municipal level, highlighting the village's efforts and achievements in cultural protection and preservation. The Peng Clan Ancestral Hall within the village is an important site for cultural and clan activities. The murals, sculptures, and other artworks within the ancestral hall not only record the history and glory of the Peng Clan but also serve as symbols of collective memory for the villagers. In the process of protecting and preserving these cultural heritages, the villagers actively participate, ensuring that the wisdom and spirit of their ancestors are passed down through various cultural activities and rituals.

Ecologically, Pengwu Village emphasizes environmental protection, with a high green coverage rate and a beautiful natural environment. The fields and small rivers surrounding the village provide a good ecological environment for the villagers and serve as important resources for their leisure activities and agricultural production. Amidst the rapid development of modern society, Pengwu Village has maintained the tranquility and natural beauty of the countryside, providing a livable environment for its residents.

In summary, Pengwu Village, with its convenient transportation, deep cultural heritage, and beautiful natural environment, has become a cultural gem of Dongguan City. In the context of globalization and modernization, Pengwu Village strengthens cultural identity and cohesion among the villagers by protecting and preserving traditional culture, providing valuable experience and references for the cultural protection and development of other rural areas.

2.3 Tracing the History and Artistic Value of Guangfu Ancestral Halls

The Definition of Guangfu Culture and the Cultural Positioning of the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall

Guangfu culture, as a historical, geographical, and socio-cultural concept, encompasses both ethnic significance and unique cultural values. In the 1930s, Professor Luo Xianglin first introduced the term "ethnic group" in his Introduction to Hakka Studies to describe the Han ethnic group in the Lingnan region who speak Cantonese. Sitou Shangji proposed the principle of naming cultural regions based on "geographical location + ethnic group + administrative hierarchy," defining the

Guangfu Cultural Region as the Central Guangdong Guangfu Cultural Area. This includes the Pearl River Delta as its core and its cultural radiation zones, such as the Xijiang and Gaoyang subregions. Specifically, the core Guangfu cultural area of the Pearl River Delta includes Guangzhou, Foshan, Dongguan, Zhongshan, Zhuhai, Shenzhen, Hong Kong, Macau, Jiangmen, and parts of Huizhou and Qingyuan. The Peng Clan Ancestral Hall, located in Dongguan, falls within this core cultural region.

The Historical Roots and Definition of Guangfu Culture

In his book *Wide Mansion Culture*, Chen Zehong defines Guangfu culture as originating from the Guangzhou Mansion during the Ming Dynasty. He describes it as a culture characterized by "a specific political center, geographical location, and the influence of historical processes, displaying practical cultural traits adaptable to change" (Chen Zehong, 2007). Based on this definition, the cultural attributes of Pengwu Village align closely with Guangfu culture.

The Historical Evolution of Guangfu Ancestral Hall Culture

The tradition of ancestor worship in China dates back to the Paleolithic and Neolithic eras, when communal strength ensured survival and continuity. In the Guangfu region, the earliest documented records of ancestral halls date back to the Ming Dynasty. The *Gazetteer of Guangzhou Prefecture* (1879) provides detailed descriptions of Guangzhou Prefecture's geography, history, culture, and social conditions at the time, including records of ancestral halls in the Guangfu region. This text highlights the prominent role of ancestral halls in the social life of the period.

The Prosperity of Ancestral Hall Culture During the Ming and Qing Dynasties

As noted by Dr. Feng Jiang in his doctoral dissertation: "In Guangzhou Prefecture during the Ming and Qing dynasties, ancestral halls were constructed with meticulous care; every piece of wood and stone was carefully selected to achieve grandeur and solemnity, honoring ancestors and reflecting their virtues" (Feng Jiang, 2010, PP12). Various local gazetteers, such as *The Customs of the Loyal and Righteous Township of Foshan*, document the architectural features, deities and ancestors worshipped, historical origins, and societal roles of these halls. These records demonstrate that ancestral hall culture in Guangfu reached its zenith during the Ming and Qing periods.

Integration of Art and Cultural Values

Guangfu ancestral halls are not only spaces for ancestor worship but also repositories of achievements by ancestors and descendants, along with poetry, calligraphy, and other literary works. Over time, the decorations in these halls evolved. For instance, during the late Qing and early Republican periods, the flourishing foreign trade in coastal areas introduced Western art techniques into the decoration of Guangfu ancestral halls. This integration enhanced the halls' contemporaneous appeal within their clans. Ancestral halls have become akin to small art galleries, showcasing unique folk-art forms from the Guangfu region, such as ridge tiles, murals, paper-cutting art, stone carvings, wood carvings, and gray sculptures. These silent art treasures narrate the spiritual pursuits of people from different eras while reflecting the historical transformations over time.

2.4 The Importance of Ancestral Hall Cultural Research

With the transition and development of China's modernization process, various traditional links in the countryside have been continuously broken and rebuilt. Diversity and mobility have become basic characteristics of modern society, with population movement and identity change becoming the norm, leading to increasing discontinuities between the past and present. In contemporary China, the question of how to allow ancestral halls, as ancient structures, to play their unique role in linking clans of the same surname and enhancing the cohesion of these clans amidst the continuous flow of the times is an issue that urgently needs exploration.

Especially in this era of economic development, many ancestral halls in the Guangfu region have experienced different levels of change and development. Regarding the use of ancestral halls, some are located on urban planning land, where the local villagers have received substantial compensation through relocation, thus maintaining strong links with ancestral hall activities, and cultural activities are thriving. However, some ancestral halls have gradually fallen into disuse. In terms of age, the younger generation, in particular, has weaker ties to ancestral halls, and their knowledge of their clan's ancestral hall and history is limited.

The function of the ancestral hall is not only as a public space for villagers of the same surname to perform ancestral worship but more importantly, it constructs the

social memory of the clan, which is a vital force in bonding the rural society. This dissertation intends to take the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall in Pengwu Village, Dongkeng Town, Dongguan City, as a case study to explore how ancestral halls construct collective memory about family, life, and space. Against the backdrop of global economic integration and cultural homogenization, how to discover the unique cultural features of ancestral halls and promote and publicize them as local cultural heritage through bodily practices is a key focus of this study.

Cultural Transmission and Change:

By specifically analyzing the selection of mural content in ancestral halls, we can observe the content choices of people from different periods and how preferences have changed due to shifts in the times. Although ancestral halls are monumental buildings bound by many ritualistic norms, the advantageous background of overseas trade in the Guangfu region has also influenced ancestral halls, with each forming a distinctive artistic style according to its own cultural heritage.

Pillar Culture:

The cultural messages on the pillars of ancestral halls are primarily centered on bringing honor to the family. These pillars serve as visible reminders to future generations, alerting them to the core values of the ancestral hall. They also offer blessings for the ancestral hall, representing how traditional Chinese culture continually influences and passes down to future generations through the construction of such buildings. The cultural transmission and preservation of ancestral hall culture and family memory will never be interrupted, though it may vary in strength at different times.

Current Situation:

After visiting various ancestral halls in the Guangfu region, I found that many ancestral halls with high usage rates have become centers for elderly activities, where people engage in leisure activities such as playing mahjong and table tennis. As for the history and culture of the ancestral halls, once the elderly who know the history and culture of the halls gradually pass away, the history of these halls may be entirely forgotten.

2.5 Introduction to the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall



Figure 5. Peng Clan Ancestral Hall
Source: Guang hui, Dec. 10, photographed

Dongguan City, Guangdong Province, is located in southern China and is one of the most important manufacturing bases in China, also recognized globally as a major manufacturing city. The following is a basic introduction to Dongguan City:

Geographical Location: Dongguan City is located in the south-central part of Guangdong Province, bordered by Shenzhen to the east, Guangzhou to the west, the Pearl River Estuary to the south, and Huizhou to the north. It is situated at the center of the Pearl River Delta Economic Zone.

The Peng Clan Ancestral Hall is located in Pengwu Village, Dongkeng Town, Dongguan City, Guangdong Province, China. The hall was built during the 25th year of the Jiajing Emperor's reign in the Ming dynasty (1547) and completed in 1557, under the supervision of the Imperial Censor Peng Shichao, following the plans of his uncle, Peng Li, a scholar. The hall covers an area of over 1.3 acres and is divided into three sections. The first section has a plaque with the inscription "Peng Clan Ancestral Hall," with a red stone courtyard in front and a pair of red stone lions perched on either side of the enclosing wall. Upon entering the main gate, there is a courtyard, flanked by pavilions used for spring and autumn rituals and celebratory music performances during the Peng Clan's ceremonies. The central section contains a pavilion dedicated to ancestor worship, with a couplet at the entrance reading: "One step forward, stand upright and solemn; ascend three levels, bow with grace and

dignity." The inner hall is used for receiving guests and holding clan meetings. The third section contains the ancestral shrine, where ancestral tablets are enshrined, with a pair of ornamental couplets reading: "Bats and plums, qilins and chrysanthemums; deer and willows, bears and lotuses." The hall was renovated during the Qing dynasty, in the ninth year of the Republic of China (1920), and again in 1984. In 2004, it was designated as a municipal-level cultural relic protection unit, and in 2019, it was listed as a provincial-level cultural relic protection unit. The entire hall is supported by thirty-six wooden and stone pillars, made of high-quality materials, with exquisite structure and a quaint appearance, as described in the "Peng Clan Ancestral Hall Genealogy."

2.6 Cultural Elements in the Ancestral Hall Reflecting Bodily Practice and Social Memory

Bodily Practice:

Bodily practice is the process of experiencing and expressing cultural and social values through physical actions and interactions. In religious, ritualistic, and daily life contexts, bodily practice plays a significant role. Through bodily practice, individuals and groups can experience and reconstruct social memory in specific spaces and times. Bodily practice includes not only ritual activities such as worship and ceremonies but also daily interactions and participation, such as mural painting and poetry recitation. (Pierre Bourdieu,2013)

Social Memory:

Social memory refers to the shared memories and narratives of the past within a society or group. These memories are transmitted and maintained among social members through culture, rituals, commemorative activities, and education. Social memory shapes a group's identity, influencing their understanding of history and their perspectives on the future. The concept of social memory has been developed by several scholars, including psychologist Frederic Bartlett and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs. Halbwachs particularly emphasized the concept of collective memory, arguing that memory is socially constructed. (Maurice Halbwachs,2002)

Cultural Elements in the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall Murals and Bodily Practice:

Within the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall, murals serve not only as decorative art but also carry rich cultural symbolism and social functions. By analyzing the murals, poetry, couplets, and other cultural elements in the hall through the concepts of bodily practice and social memory, we can better understand the critical role these cultural elements play in the transmission of family culture.

History and Cultural Symbolism of the Murals:

The murals in different areas of the ancestral hall and under various historical contexts each have unique cultural symbolic meanings. For example, the Eight Immortals mural at the main entrance not only depicts the images of Taoist deities but also conveys Taoist concepts of longevity and moral goodness. The murals in the central hall mostly feature Confucian classics, such as "Wang Xizhi Feeding the Geese," which conveys family values of loyalty, filial piety, and righteousness. By categorizing and analyzing these murals, we can understand the intentions behind the builders' choices of mural themes and the continuation of social memory.

Value Transmission through Couplets:

The couplet culture of the ancestral hall primarily focuses on the transmission of values. As a traditional Chinese culture is important The constituent couplets are "unique products of Chinese culture" and "yes The most representative form of the visual symbol in Chinese culture ".(Tian,zhaoyuan,2018:pp11).Couplets are not just decorative items but serve as visible reminders of the family's core values, such as "benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness." These couplets, while reminding future generations, also continuously influence and pass down family culture, reflecting the continuation of social memory.

Historical Continuity of Threshold Stones:

Door pillow stone, also known as the door pier, holding the drum stone. First appeared in the han dynasty courtyard formation period, at first only for bearing door axis stone, after the door outside carved decorative design for beautiful, experience the evolution, door pillow stone outside, and carved auspicious design indicates good vision, and with the spread of the Confucian ideas, reflect the ancients hierarchy on modelling, reached its peak in the Ming and qing dynasties. (Lu,bing.2022:pp96)

The threshold stones of the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall have their own unique historical continuity and patterns. By analyzing the stories conveyed through the threshold

stones, as well as the carvings and patterns on them, one can learn about the ancestral hall's history and family memory. These patterns are not only aesthetic expressions but also symbols of family history and culture, embodying the materialization of social memory.

Cultural Transmission and Bodily Practice through Poetry:

The poems displayed in the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall are mostly works created by ancestors of the Peng Clan, representing personal journeys. These poems record the lives, thoughts, and emotions of the ancestors, forming an essential part of family history. By organizing these poems and interpreting and reciting them during cultural activities, bodily practice allows more descendants to understand and pass on this cultural heritage. For example, poetry recitation events held in the ancestral hall not only commemorate and honor the ancestors' works but also pass down the family's cultural memory to the next generation through bodily practice.

Bodily Practice through Cultural Activities:

The cultural activities I organized in the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall, such as mural appreciation and painting, as well as poetry recitation, are important forms of bodily practice. Through these activities, participants can personally experience and participate in the transmission of family culture, enhancing their sense of identity with the family's history and values. During mural appreciation and painting activities, participants can not only admire the exquisite murals but also experience their artistic charm and cultural connotations by painting them. Poetry recitation events allow participants to experience the deep cultural heritage of the family through the sounds and rhythms of the ancestors' works.

Integration of Bodily Practice and Social Memory:

Through the above analysis, we can see the crucial role of bodily practice and social memory in the transmission of ancestral hall culture. The murals, couplets, threshold stones, and poetry in the ancestral hall continuously transmit and reinforce the family's social memory through specific bodily practice activities such as worship, mural painting, and poetry recitation. These activities not only physically engage family members in cultural transmission but also resonate with and identify them emotionally and psychologically, forming a strong cultural cohesion.

Conclusion:

By analyzing the cultural elements within the ancestral hall, we can see the essential role of bodily practice and social memory in the transmission of family culture. The murals, couplets, threshold stones, and poetry in the ancestral hall continuously transmit and reinforce the family's social memory through specific bodily practice activities. This not only enhances the cultural identity and sense of belonging among family members but also provides strong support for the continuous transmission of family culture. In modern society, these cultural activities can better protect and transmit traditional culture, allowing the family's history and values to be continued and developed in the new era.

2.7 Summary

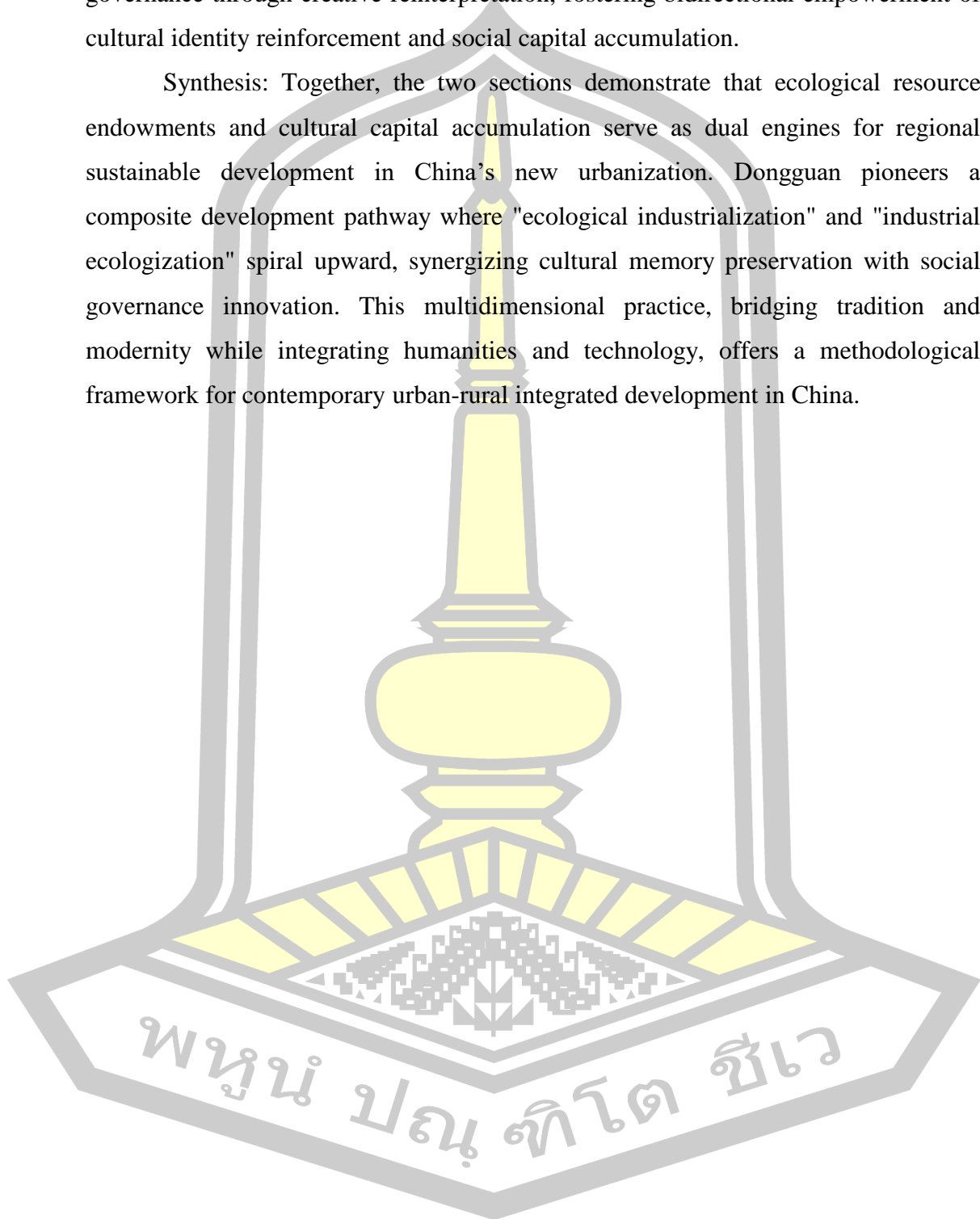
This chapter systematically explores the human-geographical logic of sustainable development in Dongguan through dual perspectives of ecological economic growth and the perpetuation of traditional cultural heritage.

Section 1 examines urban development, revealing how Dongguan leverages its geographical advantages as a hub in the Pearl River Delta to establish a green development model under the "mountain-water-forest-farmland-lake" ecological community framework. By integrating ecological spatial planning with industrial transformation and upgrading, the city has not only crafted the urban image of "Bay-Area Metropolis, Shanshui Dongguan (Eco-City Dongguan)" but also innovatively implemented a development paradigm that deeply merges ecological civilization principles with the real economy. This provides a demonstrative model of "ecologization of the economy" for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area urban cluster.

Section 2 focuses on Pengwu Village as a microcosm, employing cultural anthropology to deconstruct the cultural reproduction mechanisms within ancestral hall spaces. The study identifies a three-dimensional cultural code system—comprising bodily practices, material carriers, and collective memory—that forms a dynamic transmission network for cultural DNA through ritual activities (ancestral worship, festivals), symbolic artifacts (couplets, murals), and narrative texts (genealogies, poetry). This embodied cognition-based cultural inheritance model constructs a resilient protection mechanism for "local knowledge" in the context of

globalization. It enables traditional value systems to engage in modern rural governance through creative reinterpretation, fostering bidirectional empowerment of cultural identity reinforcement and social capital accumulation.

Synthesis: Together, the two sections demonstrate that ecological resource endowments and cultural capital accumulation serve as dual engines for regional sustainable development in China's new urbanization. Dongguan pioneers a composite development pathway where "ecological industrialization" and "industrial ecologization" spiral upward, synergizing cultural memory preservation with social governance innovation. This multidimensional practice, bridging tradition and modernity while integrating humanities and technology, offers a methodological framework for contemporary urban-rural integrated development in China.



CHAPTER III

Historical Development of Peng Ancestral Hall as Artifact

3.1 The Memory-Bearing Function of Traditional Imagery

In my research, it was found that the traditional mural decorations in ancestral halls were based on popular painting manuals such as the "Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting" (Figure 6). The mural themes of ancestral halls during the Ming and Qing dynasties can generally be categorized into four types. The first type includes patterns with traditional auspicious meanings or those that derive their significance from puns. For example (Figure7): the painting depicts an ancient pine tree and two white cranes, symbols of longevity in Chinese folklore, hence the title "Pine and Crane Longevity." In the Lingnan region, special fruits often serve as subjects due to their auspicious forms and homophonic meanings. For example (Figure8): oranges symbolize good fortune, and the Buddha's hand citron resembles a Buddha's hand, symbolizing blessings and longevity. The second type depicts narrative folk stories, historical allusions, or theatrical works to express ideals like academic success or loyalty to the emperor. The most commonly chosen themes include "Su Wu Herding Sheep," "The Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars," "The Three Heroes of the Wind and Dust," "The White Goose Exchange Poem," and "Fishing, Woodcutting, Farming, and Studying" (Figure 9). The third type consists of traditional literati landscape painting themes (Figure 10), which are executed in traditional Chinese ink and wash styles, often using poetry, calligraphy, painting, and seals as templates. Highly skilled artisans would innovate upon these models, subtly infusing the paintings with the aesthetic and sentiments of literati art. Some murals, with sophisticated artistic techniques, reach the realm of "deliberate composition with an unrestrained form" in their expression. The fourth type encompasses miscellaneous subjects, such as antiquities, painting tools, and more.



Figure 6. The pattern of flowers and birds in the mustard garden painting score
Source: Mustard Garden painting book books, PP46,2021



Figure 7. The painting depicts an ancient pine tree and two white cranes, symbols of longevity in Chinese folklore, hence the title "Pine and Crane Longevity."

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed



Figure 8. This picture depicts the traditional plants and fruits from the Lingnan region

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed



Figure 9. This picture depicts the traditional Chinese allusion of "Wang Xizhi feeding a goose" Wang Xizhi, a revered calligrapher from China's Eastern Jin dynasty, drew inspiration for his famous running script from observing the elegant movements of geese in his courtyard. Captivated by their graceful neck stretches while pecking, he incorporated this fluid motion into his calligraphy, enhancing the beauty and flow of his writing.

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed



Figure 10. This painting showcases a Chinese landscape style, featuring a large tree and distant mountains. The overall style is minimalist, rendered in light ink to create a serene natural scene.

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

3.2 The Evolution of Mural Themes and Techniques During the Republican Period

This section provides an overview of the cultural and ideological shifts in the Lingnan region during the late Qing Dynasty and Republican periods, focusing on the transformation of art, education, and clan culture.

1. Cultural and Ideological Shifts: The late Qing Dynasty saw significant changes in Chinese society, particularly in the Lingnan region, where Western realism began to influence traditional Chinese painting. Kang Youwei advocated for reform by integrating Western techniques, aiming to revive the Song dynasty's focus on form and spirit in art. This movement reflected broader social stratification changes as traditional literati arts began to permeate common life.

2. Changes in Educational Institutions: The late Qing educational reforms marked a shift from the traditional clan-based system to Western-style schools, driven by the policy of "Chinese learning as the foundation, Western learning for practical use." The abolition of the imperial examination system in 1905 and subsequent reforms in clan schools paved the way for modern education, which included the introduction of art education that blended Chinese and Western styles.

3. Guangdong Art Scene: The Lingnan School of Painting, led by figures like Gao Jianfu, Gao Qifeng, and Chen Shuren, emerged as a significant force in the Guangdong art scene during the Republican period. Their approach combined

Chinese and Western techniques, promoting realism in art as a means of public enlightenment and national salvation.

4. Clan Culture and Mural Art: During the Republican period, clans sought to adapt to the new societal trends while maintaining their traditional roles. Mural art within clan halls reflected these changes, incorporating Western realism and new materials, which marked a departure from the traditional scholarly styles of the Ming and Qing periods. These murals, such as those depicting lions, symbolized a blend of traditional and modern values, aligning with the growing sense of nationalism and the evolving identity of clan culture.

In summary, this section illustrates the interplay between cultural transformation, educational reform, and artistic innovation in the Lingnan region, highlighting the fusion of Chinese and Western elements in art and the adaptive strategies of clan culture during a period of profound social change.

3.2.1 Overview of Cultural and Ideological Shifts in the Lingnan Region During the Late Qing Dynasty

Since the late Qing Dynasty, Chinese society has undergone significant ideological and spiritual transformations, especially in the Lingnan region. In 1918, Kang Youwei compiled the "Catalogue of Paintings Collected at the Wanmu Cottage," which was published in Shanghai. In the preface, Kang Youwei stated, "Adopt the precision of European painting in depicting form to compensate for the shortcomings of our country's art." Kang's advocacy for reforming Chinese painting by learning from the realism of the West aimed to revive the Song dynasty court painting style, characterized by a focus on form and spirit, in contrast to the dominance of literati freehand painting that had prevailed for centuries. (Li Ning, 2006) Kang Youwei's core philosophy was "restoring antiquity to reform," which is why he highly regarded Giuseppe Castiglione's painting techniques, considering him a pioneer in the fusion of Chinese and Western painting methods. As a result, seeking a blend of Chinese and Western art, and introducing Western realism to improve Chinese painting, became a significant artistic trend during the Republican era. Moreover, Kang lamented, "Since the younger generation cannot all become refined scholars, how can they place themselves above the commoners?" (Kang

Youwei,1918) This also reflected the social stratification shift, where ink painting, once reserved for the literati class as a means of poetic exchange, began to permeate the lives of common people.

3.2.2 Changes in Educational Institutions

In terms of education, the Qing Dynasty implemented the policy of “Chinese learning as the foundation, Western learning for practical use,” maintaining the traditional clan system to preserve feudal morals and autocratic rule while abolishing the imperial examination system and establishing a new educational system. This new system began to accept and, in turn, instill in students the advanced modern scientific and technical knowledge from the West, aiming to cultivate versatile talents and technically skilled personnel for the state. Although these reforms during the late Qing were largely piecemeal improvements, they initiated changes in the guiding philosophy, goals, and methods of talent cultivation. This shift impacted the educational system and content, leading to the inevitable decline of traditional clan education, including clan schools, which were gradually replaced by modern education systems largely based on Western models. (Cheng Weirong,2008) Thus, the clan schools also began to reform. In 1905, the imperial examination system, which had lasted for over a thousand years, was abolished, leading to the establishment of numerous Western-style schools across the country. The "Private School Reform Movement" in 1906 and the "Private School Reform Regulations" in 1910 further promoted the transition of traditional clan schools, academies, and charitable schools into modern schools, leading to their eventual demise. (Cheng Weirong, 2008) In 1917, Cai Yuanpei proposed "replacing religion with aesthetic education," leading to the establishment of a series of art academies that saw rapid development in both Chinese and Western painting, as well as sculpture. For instance, in 1922, the Guangzhou Municipal School of Fine Arts was founded. In these new-style schools, art departments were often established, contributing to the spread of new visual forms among the populace.

3.2.3 Overview of Changes in the Guangdong Art Scene

During the Republican period, the Guangdong art scene was significantly influenced by three prominent figures—Gao Jianfu, Gao Qifeng, and Chen Shuren—known as the "Two Gaos and One Chen." [The "Two Gaos and One Chen" were Gao

Jianfu, Gao Qifeng, and Chen Shuren, all of whom were students of Ju Lian. After studying in Japan, Gao Jianfu returned to China, became involved in education, and founded the Chunshui Academy of Art, which had a profound influence on the Lingnan art scene. The three are considered the founders of the Lingnan School of Painting.] Indirectly influenced by the ideological changes of the time, they proposed a painting philosophy that sought a "synthesis of Chinese and Western, ancient and modern." All three had studied in Japan, and their painting styles and techniques were deeply influenced by their educational backgrounds. Under the influence of Japanese painting, Gao Jianfu proposed the concept of "New Chinese Painting." Gao hoped to introduce Western realism to make painting a tool for enlightening the public and achieving national salvation. The Lingnan School of Painting emphasized new painting subjects and the natural setting for sketches. Moreover, improvements in transportation expanded the opportunities for people to travel and paint from life. Early on, art publications and art groups founded by progressive intellectuals also promoted the enlightenment of social thought and culture. For example, in September 1905, Gao Zhuoting launched "Current Affairs Pictorial" in Guangzhou. [Kong Lingwei, 2008] These new ideas and progressive figures gradually permeated society, deeply influencing various aspects of social culture during the late Qing and Republican periods.

3.2.4 The Quest for Self-Transformation in Clan Culture During Special Historical Contexts

In terms of clans, "from the 16th to the 18th centuries, the political foundation of Neo-Confucianism, based on clan values, spread into local society, creating a link between local society and the imperial state. In the 20th century, nationalism became the dominant political theory, focusing on the establishment of a centralized state. Consequently, local society had to adjust itself. However, since the centralized state remained a poorly executed experiment, it never truly materialized. Therefore, when local society adjusted itself, it did not significantly disturb the clans. On the contrary, the clans mastered 'constitutionalism, republicanism, and other new terms, despite the growing skepticism about clan activities' usefulness to the new state from urban-centered republican political theorists." (David Faure, 2010) During this period, clans continued to participate in and manage local affairs, such as local economies, land

management, and organizing armed groups to protect clan interests. Clan halls remained the meeting places for such matters. (David Faure, 2010) Although the forms of clans changed, those that controlled land power continued to operate normally, albeit with a new language. Clans were seeking their place within the new societal trends, and the clan hall buildings, as the carriers of this change, played their role. Some of the murals painted during this period subtly reflected these changes under the special historical context. During the turbulent Republican period, when Chinese traditional ideology faced challenges from Western values, new visual images were needed to reflect people's determination to overcome backwardness and achieve reform. In this context, for clan halls to survive and thrive, they needed to adapt. Thus, the mural themes that had been established over centuries also became subject to the influences of the times.

3.2.5 The Exploration and Inner Appeal of "Fusion of Chinese and Western" in Clan Hall Murals

After the Republican era, especially in coastal regions like Guangdong, the development of a commercial society also introduced new construction techniques and painting materials, such as the use of highly saturated colors like blue, yellow, and white, which were rarely seen in clan hall architecture before the Qing dynasty. (Xie Yantao, 2018) Inevitably, the profound impact of societal changes also influenced the themes and techniques of some Lingnan landscape murals. The significant social changes and material innovations during this period, and the resulting innovations in painting techniques, brought a departure from the stale, scholarly style of the Ming and Qing periods. Landscape painting themes began to incorporate elements of sketching from life, making them more closely related to real life. At the same time, many artists began to incorporate Western techniques of modeling and color, using traditional Chinese brushwork to depict local themes in their sketches.

3.2.6 Specific Work Analysis

Landscape painting improvement and innovation

In the murals of the Peng Clan Hall, I also observed this trend. For example, the work in (Figure 11) employs modified techniques for sketching from life. These works reflect how mural craftsmen adapted to changing times and the needs of their patrons by learning new mural themes. The core of Chinese painting lies in its

emphasis on artistic conception, so when craftsmen used traditional models, they often captured the essence, imitated the brushwork, and focused on creative expression rather than strict likeness. (Xie Yantao, 2018)



Figure 11. This painting displays a traditional Chinese landscape style, featuring a pavilion, mountains, and flowing water. The overall style is fresh and natural, emphasizing a serene and harmonious beauty.

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed



Figure 12. This painting depicts a majestic lion standing on a rock, with a traditional Chinese landscape as the background. The lion appears dignified, with its tail raised, conveying a sense of strength and nobility. The overall composition combines an animal figure with traditional landscapes, presenting a unique artistic style.

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Animal painting improvement and innovation

The mural (Figure12) depicts a male lion standing on a rock. The lion's form, dynamic posture, and fur depiction clearly reflect Western painting techniques, exhibiting a strong influence of Western realism. The mural is rendered from a low-angle perspective, emphasizing the lion's majestic presence. The low rocks and left-side blank space highlight the visual focus and the dominance of the depicted subject. The lion's bristling mane and wide-open mouth suggest its inner rage.

In contrast, traditional depictions of lions in Chinese culture, such as those in the "Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting," (Figure 13) typically portray the lion as a guardian figure, often shown playing with cubs and rolling an embroidered ball, a traditional motif symbolizing "progeny prosperity." (Xu Lihong and Liang Hui, 2017) Traditional lion motifs in Chinese painting are typically flat in their visual and spatial expression, lacking the movement and tension that characterize this mural. In conveying ideological content, traditional Chinese painting often employs metaphorical techniques, requiring time-honored transmission and historical accumulation for the public to understand its profound meanings. In contrast, Western realism excels in directly conveying individual concepts to the public in an intuitive manner.

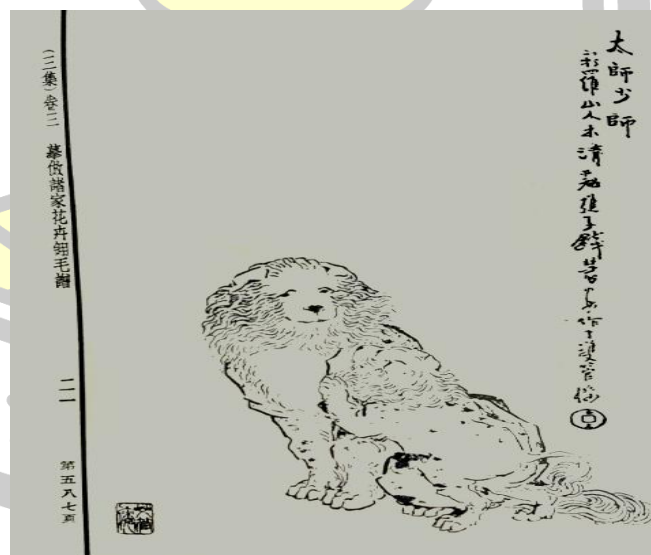


Figure 13. The lion image of traditional China

Source: "Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting" .2016: pp587

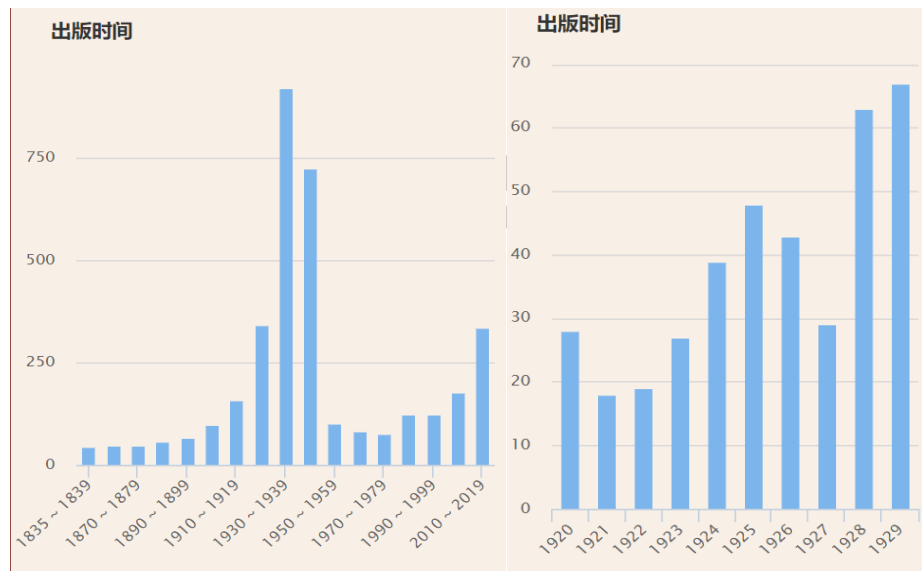


Figure 14 The Frequency of the Term "Lion" in National Newspaper Index by Year

Source: National Newspaper Index. [Http://www.cnki.net/](http://www.cnki.net/)



Figure 15. The Lion image in 1909

Source: Anonymous, "Wushen Year Pictorial," 1909, Issue 15, Vol. 5, p. 5

During my research in the National Periodical Index, I found that mentions of the term "lion" began to rise steadily from 1920, peaking in the decade from 1930 to 1939. The depiction of lions as a visual image was relatively rare from 1835 to 1919, with individual works or those introduced from the West and Japan being scarce. They mainly appeared in publications like the 1909 "Wushen Year Pictorial," (Figure 14) featuring a pen sketch introduced from the West and in the "Mustard Seed Garden

Source: Xu Beihong, 1926, Vol. 17, Issue 6, PP. 4

Meanwhile, the Lingnan School painter Gao Qifeng's (Figure 18) painting of a roaring male lion, "Supreme Sovereignty" (1915), displayed in the Beijing "Sanjianfang" (Beijing Arts and Crafts Import and Export Corporation), vividly depicts a roaring male lion standing atop a mountain. The technique used in this work clearly shows the influence of the artist's studies in Japan.



Figure 18. Lingnan School painter Gao Qifeng's 1915

Source:

GaoQifeng.https://k.sina.cn/article_6179609353_p170555b0902700rmhc.html?from=c&wm=3049_0032

The rise of lion imagery as a predator can be traced back to the late Qing revolutionaries who fabricated a quote attributed to Napoleon: "China is a sleeping lion. When it awakens, it will astonish the world." This fictitious quote, combined with the powerful visual characteristics of the lion, quickly gained popularity and acceptance among the public during the Republican period. Consequently, artists from the Lingnan School and others, aligning with Sun Yat-sen's advocacy for national revolution, created numerous paintings featuring lions, tigers, and other predators.

The spread of lion imagery in Guangdong may also reflect the growing concept of the nation-state at the time, as it penetrated the public consciousness

through various means and media, becoming a core element of national cohesion. The fact that this lion image could be painted in a clan hall building also reflects how clan culture during the Republican period was attempting to align with new concepts of nationalism and ethnicity, seeking its path of transformation.

3.3 Overview of Ideological and Cultural Changes in the Lingnan Region After 1978

After China's reform and opening-up in 1978, the Lingnan region underwent profound ideological and cultural changes. The advancement of the market economy led to the gradual decline of traditional clan culture and Confucian rites, but in the process, ancestral halls also explored new paths for survival and development.

3.3.1 The Impact of Economic and Social Changes on Ancestral Hall Culture

After the reform and opening-up, Guangdong Province, as the vanguard of China's opening to the outside world, quickly entered a phase of rapid economic development. The prosperity of the commodity economy, the influx of foreign culture, and the spread of modern lifestyles posed unprecedented challenges to clan culture in the Lingnan region. The traditional functions of ancestral halls gradually diminished, and their symbolic significance also underwent transformation. Despite these challenges, as the economy developed and society progressed, ancestral halls in the Lingnan region were gradually endowed with new cultural and social functions. Some ancestral halls began to serve as community cultural centers, becoming important venues for local cultural activities, education, and even tourism promotion. During this process, the architecture and murals of ancestral halls, while preserving traditional culture, also began to incorporate modern elements, reflecting the cultural needs of the new era.

3.3.2 The Modernization of Ancestral Hall Murals

As time progressed, the murals of ancestral halls in the Lingnan region gradually shifted from traditional religious themes and family history narratives to more diversified forms of expression. After 1978, the content of ancestral hall murals in Lingnan was no longer limited to Taoist myths or ancestral stories but began to incorporate modern social themes, local customs, and even popular culture. This change represents both a continuation of traditional culture and an active assimilation

and recreation of modern culture. In terms of color and technique, post-reform Lingnan ancestral hall murals adopted richer colors and modern painting techniques. The use of modern building materials and pigments made the murals more vibrant, with more vivid colors and greater durability. Additionally, with the spread of art education and the introduction of modern painting techniques, mural creation gradually moved away from single-line drawing styles, presenting more three-dimensional and diverse visual effects.

3.3.3 The Exploration of “Fusion of Chinese and Western” in Ancestral Hall Murals

After the reform and opening-up, as the Lingnan region’s connections with the outside world became increasingly close, the fusion of Chinese and Western painting styles gradually permeated ancestral hall murals. While maintaining the artistic conception of traditional Chinese painting, Lingnan ancestral hall murals began to absorb Western techniques of realism, color usage, and composition concepts. This fusion not only made the mural works more visually impactful but also made them more in line with contemporary aesthetic and spiritual needs. For instance, some ancestral hall murals have adopted techniques that emphasize light and shadow effects and accurate perspective, while also introducing modern life scenes and social issues into their content. This “fusion of Chinese and Western” painting style reflects how clan culture in the Lingnan region has been adjusting and innovating in the process of modernization.

3.3.4 Limitations and Background Analysis of Mural Themes

Despite significant advancements in techniques, the subject matter of ancestral hall murals has remained relatively conservative, mainly focusing on floral and landscape themes. The reasons for this can be analyzed as follows:

1. Impact of the Cultural Revolution

The Cultural Revolution caused enormous damage to traditional cultural heritage, especially to Confucian-related figures and landscapes. During the recovery period after the Cultural Revolution, new mural themes avoided potentially controversial historical figures or scenes, instead turning to more neutral floral and landscape subjects.

2. Priority of Economic Interests

After the reform and opening-up, economic development became the primary goal. Ancestral halls gradually shifted to become venues for tourism and cultural exhibitions. Decorative floral and landscape murals were seen as both space-enhancing and politically neutral, making them the most suitable choice.

3. Introduction of Western Techniques

As China's reform and opening-up deepened, Western artistic techniques were gradually introduced into the creation of ancestral hall murals. Compared with traditional painting styles, modern murals emphasized three-dimensionality and color richness, aligning with the aesthetic preferences of the time.

4. Transformation of Social Functions

Ancestral halls gradually lost their role as the sole venue for clan unity and worship, taking on more of a function for tourism and exhibition. As a result, mural themes shifted towards content that could attract visitors, with floral and landscape subjects becoming the preferred choice due to their universal aesthetic appeal.

3.4 Summary

From the late Qing Dynasty through the post-1978 period, Lingnan mural art experienced profound transformations driven by cultural, educational, and social changes. Initially influenced by Western realism, artists like Kang Youwei advocated integrating European precision with traditional Chinese aesthetics. Educational reforms replaced clan-based institutions with Western-style schools, fostering artistic innovation through blending Chinese and Western techniques. The Lingnan School, led by Gao Jianfu, Gao Qifeng, and Chen Shuren, promoted realism to enlighten society and enhance national awareness. Clan culture adapted by integrating modern themes, exemplified in realistic depictions of animals like lions, aligning traditional identities with contemporary nationalism. Post-1978, ancestral hall murals diversified further, embracing modern materials and broader social themes, yet maintained conservative, decorative floral and landscape motifs tailored for tourism and cultural showcases.

CHAPTER IV

To analytical study art techniques and functions of Peng Ancestral hall

4.1 The Relationship Between Functional Images and the Functions of the Ancestral Hall

In the overall layout of the Guangfu ancestral halls, the core position and basic form of the "Gate-Hall-Shrine" configuration remain consistent, with only minor variations in specific details. The murals painted on the walls, door lintels, and other parts of the ancestral hall not only beautify the space but also subtly convey the values upheld by the hall. Generally speaking, the ancestral hall in Guangzhou government is composed of single buildings covered with the roof and outdoor elements. Single buildings include head door, pavilion, main hall, bedroom, back seat, lining temple, kitchen, side corridor, side hall, etc., the main buildings are collectively known as hall, in addition, some ancestral halls will use the wall and archway; common outdoor elements include water surface, Yin, street, courtyard, courtyard, patio, Qingyun lane, well, flagpole, etc., some ancestral halls with gardens. The hall is the main single building of the ancestral hall, including the head door, the middle hall, worship pavilion, bedroom, back seat, side hall and so on.(Feng,jiang.2010pp158)

All images within the ancestral hall are arranged symmetrically, with similar themes depicted on the left and right sides. For example, the main gate features the Eight Immortals of Taoism, with four deities painted on each side; the central area where discussions take place is adorned with paired images such as Tang dynasty sword-dancing women, lions, and elephants; while the inner hall primarily showcases auspicious plants and birds, with only one painting of Peng Zu. Regarding the identity of Peng Zu, The Biography of Li Xian is roughly the same as Gan Bao's Search for God, that is, " Peng Zu, with his first name and Doctor Yin. The grandson of Emperor Zhuangxi, the neutron of Lu Zhong. At the end of the summer solstice, he was more than eight hundred years old. Often eat Guizhi, good guide line gas. The images of Peng Zu in the temple are according to the people because they regard him as their starting ancestor. (Yang,tianya.2024PP73)

Through a detailed analysis of the murals in the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall, we can see that these functional images not only beautify the space but also carry profound cultural significance. They commemorate ancestors, educate descendants, symbolize family prosperity, and display cultural refinement, thereby serving as a vital link and component of collective memory among clan members.

This section will provide a detailed and specific analysis of the relationship between functional images and the functions of the ancestral hall, using the specific murals in the "Gate-Hall-Shrine" layout as examples.

Visitors must look up to view these murals, naturally tilting their bodies backward, which makes their posture more solemn and respectful. This viewing angle not only enhances the ritualistic feeling of observing the murals but also psychologically instills a sense of reverence, making it easier for viewers to appreciate the cultural and historical significance conveyed by the murals.

4.1.1 Analysis of Portrait Murals: Commemorative and Educational Functions

Commemoration of Ancestors:

Ancestral halls are typically places where clan members gather, and the selection of themes and techniques for portrait murals often focuses on commemorating ancestors and conveying the core values of the family. The choice of historically significant and educational stories for these murals can strengthen the consensus among clan members and foster respect for their ancestors. For instance, in the murals of the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall, images of historical figures and family heroes are common, it aims to remind future generations to remember the family beliefs that their ancestors want to convey.

Educational Function:

Murals serve as a medium to impart moral and ethical values, helping family members, especially the younger generation, to understand and inherit the core values of the clan. These murals not only enhance the aesthetic appeal of the ancestral hall but also function as important educational tools within the family.

4.1.2 Symbolism and Metaphor in Landscape and Flower-and-Bird Murals

Landscape Imagery:

In Chinese culture, natural elements often carry symbolic meanings. For example, mountains represent stability, nobility, and longevity; water symbolizes

wealth, circulation, and change; pine trees signify resilience and immortality; and cranes symbolize longevity and the pursuit of the Dao. Therefore, the landscape imagery depicted in murals might symbolize the prosperity and longevity of the family, conveying wishes for harmonious relationships among family members and a thriving future.

Floral and Avian Themes:

Floral and avian-themed murals often depict auspicious symbols such as magpies, phoenixes, and roosters, expressing aspirations for a prosperous life and blessings for the family's future. These images are not only decorative but also convey profound cultural meanings.

In Dr. Xie Yantao's thesis, it is also pointed out that the theme of flower and bird painting in traditional architectural murals in Guangfu has a variety of aesthetic tendencies: 1. With the use of language homophonic, derived from folk customs: good to get a "mouth color" 2. With the help of the different ecological attributes of various kinds of animals and plants in nature, it can use things and attach symbols. 3. The flower and bird paintings in the cultural painting 4. Lingnan good fruits, characteristic flowers and Jirui insects are painted. These characteristics are also reflected in the flower and bird theme murals of the Peng great ancestral hall. (Xie,yantao,2018:PP15-16)

4.2 The Functions of Images within Ancestral Hall Spaces Introduction

Murals hold an important position in the development of early Chinese art. Historically, academic research on "architectural polychrome painting" and "architectural decorative painting" has often overlapped with the concept of "murals." In some architectural records, the term "polychrome painting" is also used to refer to murals, such as in the phrase "polychrome painting adorning walls," which specifically refers to murals. However, in historical records, "polychrome painting" more often refers to decorative painting on structural components, including decorations on boats, carriages, coffins, and utensils.

Murals (wall paintings) are defined as paintings created on plastered walls. Broadly speaking, this term includes patterns painted on walls of buildings, rocks, or caves. Murals are one of the oldest decorative arts in the world. The history of

decorative interior painting in China can even be traced back to the Neolithic period, and their distribution is extraordinarily wide, reflecting their profound cultural and artistic significance.

In the 1930s, Zheng Wuchang initiated the study of Chinese mural history, highlighting the irreplaceable status of murals in the development of painting both in China and abroad. In the grand narrative of ancient and modern artistic development, murals represent a stage that cannot be ignored. Zheng Wuchang's research demonstrated the importance of analyzing murals to understand their historical and artistic value (Zheng Wuchang, 1930).

Murals serve as carriers of information from their era within architectural contexts. They contain profound connotations and are reflections of the integration and collision of society, culture, architecture, religion, and even ethnic groups. According to Xie Yantao's research, murals embody the complex interactions of these diverse elements, providing a window into understanding the historical and cultural atmosphere of their time (Xie Yantao, 2018, p. 11)

4.2.1 Overall Mural Composition: Aesthetics and Enjoyment

Visual Pleasure:

Murals provide a source of visual enjoyment, enhancing the aesthetic value of the ancestral hall and creating a pleasant environment for clan members. Beautiful murals are also symbols of the family's wealth and taste, showcasing the cultural refinement and social status of the family.

Cultural Identity:

Murals are integral to the cultural identity of the family, transmitting the family's values and beliefs through specific patterns and symbols. In the ancestral hall, a space dedicated to collective memory, murals deepen the clan members' sense of identity and belonging to their cultural roots.

4.2.2 Analysis of the mural content of the head gate

The head gate is the first standalone structure of the ancestral hall, and its architectural form is relatively fixed. The entrance is a crucial area for welcoming guests to the ancestral hall. Placing murals rich in historical and cultural stories at this point can leave a strong first impression on visitors, showcasing the cultural depth of

the hall. The symmetrical arrangement of the murals not only provides a sense of balance visually but also reinforces the cultural atmosphere of the hall by having two similar themes echo each other. 14 murals are displayed at the front door of the Peng ancestral hall, which will be analyzed in detail next:

Analysis of Taoist-themed Murals:

On either side of the head gate's entrance lintel, there is a mural depicting the Eight Immortals, with each mural illustrating four of the eight deities.



Figure 19. The four immortals in the picture of eight immortals (WU, Y.2007)

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

Mural One

Theme and Characters: This mural depicts four of the Eight Immortals from Taoist mythology, including Han Xiangzi, Tieguai Li, Zhang Guolao, and Lan Caihe. Each deity has a unique personality and symbolic meaning:

Han Xiangzi (left1): A scholar, symbolizing art and literature, usually depicted playing a flute.

Tieguai Li(left2): A beggar, symbolizing healing and salvation, often shown with an iron crutch and gourd.

Zhang Guolao(right2): A hermit and alchemist, typically riding a donkey backward and holding a fish drum.

Lan Caihe(right1): A figure of indeterminate gender, symbolizing freedom from worldly constraints, often holding a flower basket.



Figure 20. The four immortals in the picture of eight immortals

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

Mural Two

Theme and Characters: This mural features another group of the Eight Immortals, including Lü Dongbin, He Xiang, Cao Guojiu, and Han Zhongli. Each of these immortals also carries specific symbolic meanings:

He Xiang(left1): The only female immortal, usually holding a lotus flower, symbolizing purity and longevity.

Han Zhongli(left2): Often depicted with a banana leaf fan, symbolizing exorcism and wealth accumulation.

Lü Dongbin(right1): A swordsman and poet, often depicted with a sword and gourd, representing disaster prevention and longevity.

Cao Guojiu(right2): The emperor's brother, depicted in court attire, holding jade tablets, symbolizing nobility and a spotless reputation.

The Symbolic Significance and Educational Value of the Eight Immortals Mural:

The story of the Eight Immortals crossing the sea is deeply rooted in Chinese culture. The fundamental belief of Taoism is the belief in "Tao" and the achievement of Taoism is Taoism The basic content is also the ultimate goal of Taoism's pursuit. The Taoist fairy belief and fairy world and many fairy legends gave the literati the inexhaustible creative resources and artistic nutrition, which greatly enriched and developed the traditional Chinese painting art. (Zhang,mingxue.2007:pp1)

Through these allegories, the ancestral hall subtly imparts moral concepts such as kindness, wisdom, and altruism to the family members. As a native Chinese religion, the use of Taoist figures in the ancestral hall strengthens the psychological and emotional bonds among clan members. In ancestral worship and other religious ceremonies, Taoist elements not only elevate the solemnity and sanctity of the rituals but also enhance the sense of belonging and identity among family members.

These Taoist murals not only beautify the space of the ancestral hall but also convey, through metaphor, the core values, cultural aspirations, and social status of the family, making them an integral part of the hall's function. The symmetrical layout of the murals and the balance between dynamic and static elements subtly educate and influence clan members, thereby enhancing the cohesion and cultural identity of the clan.

Color and Technique Analysis of the Eight Immortals Mural

Color Analysis

Colors of the Figures: Each immortal in the Eight Immortals mural is depicted with unique colors to highlight their personalities. The iron crutch and gourd of Tieguai Li are rendered in deep brown, while Zhang Guolao's fish drum is alternately red and white. These colors not only enhance the visual impact of the mural but also strengthen the expression of each character's personality through symbolic color choices.

Background Colors: The background employs soft colors and ink wash landscapes to create a harmonious atmosphere, making the figures stand out more prominently.

Technique Analysis

Meticulous Brushwork and Heavy Color Technique: The mural uses fine lines and precise, vivid character modeling. This technique emphasizes detailed depiction and layered color application, making each immortal's expression and movement lifelike.

Line Drawing and Shading: The combination of fine line drawing and color shading enhances the sense of depth and three-dimensionality in the mural.

Depiction of the Eight Immortals: Each immortal is rendered with intricate lines, showcasing their unique personalities and symbolic significance. For example,

Han Xiangzi's flute, Tiegua Li's iron crutch, Zhang Guolao's fish drum, and Lan Caihe's flower basket are all meticulously detailed, reflecting their distinct identities and roles.

Confucian-Themed Story Murals

Left Side: Jiang Ziya Fishing



Figure 21. Jiang Taigong fishing map

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts the famous Chinese historical allegory of "Jiang Ziya Fishing" [Jiang Ziya, also known as Lü Shang or Taigong Wang, was a renowned military strategist and politician in ancient China. He is said to have fished by the Wei River while awaiting a worthy person, eventually encountering King Wen of Zhou, who enabled him to realize his political ambitions by assisting King Wen in overthrowing the Shang dynasty and establishing the Zhou dynasty. (Si,maqian,1996) This story is widely known in China and is often used to describe wise men who bide their time waiting for the right moment to act. The inscription on the mural adds a poetic and evocative element to the artwork.

In the mural, Jiang Ziya is depicted sitting by the Wei River fishing, with mountains, water, and lush forests in the background. In the distance, a shepherd leads a cow, presenting a tranquil pastoral scene. The inscription on the wall, "Wei River," clarifies the historical setting of the painting.

The Symbolic Significance and Educational Value of the Jiang Ziya Fishing Mural

The story of Jiang Ziya fishing conveys the wisdom of "patience and waiting for the right moment." Through this mural, the ancestral hall reminds future generations of the family to learn from Jiang Ziya's patience and wisdom in facing life's challenges and to act at the appropriate time. This educational significance profoundly influences the behavior and philosophy of the clan members.

The mural of Jiang Ziya fishing symbolizes the combination of wisdom and strategy. Placing this story at the entrance of the ancestral hall is not only a tribute to the ancestors' wisdom but also an encouragement to future generations, urging them to inherit and carry forward these excellent qualities in their lives.

Right Side: The Three Visits to the Thatched Cottage



Figure 22. Three visits to the thatched cottage
Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts the famous story of Liu Bei's three visits to the thatched cottage during the Three Kingdoms period, where Liu Bei, in his effort to persuade Zhuge Liang to join his cause, visited him three times at his humble abode. The mural is located on the right side of the ancestral hall's main entrance, echoing the "Jiang Ziya Fishing" mural on the left, creating a complete cultural narrative. (Chen Shou. 1999)

The Symbolic Significance and Educational Value of the Liu Bei's Three Visits Mural :

The story of Liu Bei's three visits to the thatched cottage is well-known throughout China. Originating from the Three Kingdoms period, the story conveys the ideals of respecting the wise and being sincere to others. The mural portrays the scene of Liu Bei's three visits to Zhuge Liang, reminding the family members to be humble, sincere, and respectful to others. Through this mural, the ancestral hall subtly imparts these traditional virtues to every clan member.

The mural forms a symmetrical layout with the "Jiang Ziya Fishing" mural on the left, not only providing visual balance but also reinforcing the cultural atmosphere of the ancestral hall through the interplay of the two stories. Together, these murals convey the two important family values of wisdom and humility.

Color and Technique Analysis of the Confucian Story Murals

Color Analysis

The Two Portrait Murals: The two murals use soft tones, with the background of "Jiang Ziya Fishing" rendered in warmer colors, while the background of "The Three Visits" is predominantly light green and pale blue, creating a calm and natural atmosphere. The dynamic postures highlight the enthusiasm and sincerity of the figures. The contrast in colors successfully conveys the emotions and themes of each mural.

Technique Analysis: Both murals utilize meticulous brushwork and heavy color techniques, with fine lines and accurate, vivid character modeling. The detailed brushwork brings each figure's expression and movements to life. Additionally, the combination of line drawing and shading enhances the sense of depth and three-dimensionality, with each character's unique personality and symbolic meaning perfectly presented through the delicate lines.

These two murals, through their clever layout, color, and technique application, not only enhance the space of the ancestral hall but also successfully convey the family's core values and cultural heritage. By increasing the cultural identity of the family members, they also strengthen the cohesion of the clan.

The Two Traditional Chinese Landscape Paintings at the Head Gate Mural One



Figure 23. Traditional Chinese landscape map
Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural is located on the left side of the ancestral hall and depicts a serene landscape scene with tall trees and a river in the distance, along which a small boat is sailing, showcasing the traditional style of Chinese landscape painting. The moving boat on the river creates a sense of dynamism, while the mountains and trees stand quietly, forming a balanced composition of movement and stillness.

The landscape painting, through its depiction of nature's beauty, expresses a reverence and love for nature. The combination of high mountains, flowing water, lush trees, and a gently gliding boat provides a sense of peace and harmony, reflecting the tranquility and harmony of nature.

Landscape painting, as a significant component of traditional Chinese art, has a long history, reaching its peak during the Song dynasty, and subsequently became an important decorative element in ancestral hall murals. By showcasing natural scenes, landscape paintings enhance the artistic atmosphere and cultural connotation of the ancestral hall, making the entire space appear more elegant and solemn.

In Chinese traditional culture, landscape painting symbolizes the noble character and reclusive lifestyle of hermits. Displaying such artwork in the ancestral

hall also symbolizes the family's pursuit of noble virtues and a life of seclusion, hoping that future generations will inherit these excellent cultural traditions. This attitude is also mentioned in the poetry of the Peng ancestors, who constructed the hall.

Visitors to the ancestral hall can also experience the tranquility and harmony of the landscape painting, alleviating any tension they may feel and allowing them to feel a sense of peace and acceptance within the hall.

Mural Two



Figure 24. Traditional Chinese landscape map
Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural is located on the right side of the ancestral hall and depicts another lively and serene landscape scene, featuring tall trees, steep mountains, and a winding river.

The right-side landscape painting showcases more rugged mountains and a winding river, enhancing the sense of depth and space in the mural. The vitality and serenity depicted in the landscape provide psychological peace and hope for viewers. The visual enjoyment of these colors can inspire positive emotions in visitors, allowing them to feel a sense of hope and strength within the ancestral hall.

Through the comparison and analysis of these two landscape paintings, it is evident that they not only create visual symmetry and balance but also convey

different cultural symbols and psychological implications through the depiction of various natural scenes, adding rich cultural connotations and artistic value to the space of the ancestral hall.

Landscape paintings are more than just depictions of natural scenery; in China, they also embody the philosophical concept of "harmony between heaven and man." By portraying natural scenes, landscape paintings emphasize the harmonious coexistence between humans and nature, reflecting the spiritual pursuits of Daoism and Confucianism.

As an essential part of traditional Chinese art, landscape paintings in the ancestral hall not only beautify the environment but also play a role in preserving and promoting Chinese culture. Through the natural scenes depicted in the murals, family members and visitors can appreciate the profoundness and aesthetic appeal of Chinese culture.

Color and Technique Analysis of the Two Landscape Murals

In these two murals, the artist employed delicate colors and exquisite techniques to successfully create a harmonious and profound atmosphere within the paintings.

Color Analysis:

The overall color tone of the two landscape murals is soft and natural, dominated by green, yellow, and gray-blue hues, which depict the trees, mountains, and rivers. The clear treatment of color gradations successfully constructs a sense of depth in the paintings. The distant mountains and trees are rendered in light colors, creating a slightly blurred effect that enhances the sense of space, while the trees and rocks in the foreground are depicted in more saturated colors, making them stand out more prominently in the composition.

The contrast of light and dark colors emphasizes the light and shadow effects, particularly in the depiction of trees and rocks, where the gradient treatment of colors is meticulous, reflecting the variations of natural light. The combination of light and shadow creates a strong sense of depth and a serene atmosphere, enhancing the viewer's visual experience.

The use of red, green, brown, and other colors interwoven in the mural enriches the scene and makes it more vibrant. The choice of colors is not only for

aesthetic purposes but also to convey the artist's emotional expression, such as tranquility and harmony, which are subtly passed on to the viewer through the clever use of colors.

Technique Analysis:

Meticulous Brushwork and Heavy Color Technique: The mural employs meticulous brushwork and heavy color techniques, where the success of the composition lies in the detailed line drawing and the layered application of color. The artist meticulously outlines the veins of the leaves and the texture of the rocks, capturing the complex structure and texture of natural elements. Whether it is the intricate lines of the tree leaves or the texture of the rocks, every detail is carefully portrayed.

The combination of line drawing and color enhances the structure of the painting, with the line drawing providing a solid foundation, while the color application adds layers and depth, making the mural visually striking and conveying a realistic sense of the natural landscape.

Through the skillful combination of color and technique, these two murals not only enhance the visual appeal of the ancestral hall's space but also convey profound cultural connotations through their artistic expression, further strengthening the cultural identity and cohesion of the clan members.

The Two Landscape Murals Inside the Head Gate

Mural One



Figure 25. Traditional Chinese landscape map
Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts a landscape scene full of tranquility and harmony. On the left side of the painting, there are rocks and vegetation, with trees and shrubs growing lushly on top of the rocks, showcasing the vitality of nature. On the right side of the painting stands a towering tree, with dense foliage and a sturdy trunk, giving a sense of stability and strength. The ground beneath the tree is covered with some shrubs and low vegetation, adding to the sense of layering in the painting.

In the distance, there are faintly visible mountain ridges, creating a hazy background effect that increases the depth and spatial perception of the painting. The sky and water in the background are rendered in soft colors, setting off the trees and rocks in the foreground, making them stand out more prominently. The entire composition uses very gentle colors, providing a calm and comfortable visual experience.

Through delicate brushwork and natural colors, the mural presents the aesthetic beauty of traditional Chinese landscape painting, offering a sense of serenity and remoteness that seems to transport the viewer into this peaceful natural world.

Mural Two



Figure 26. Traditional Chinese landscape map

Source: GuangHui, July, 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts a typical Chinese landscape painting, featuring tall mountains, towering pine trees, and solid rocks.

On the left side of the painting, an ancient pine tree occupies the central position. The pine tree's trunk is thick, and its branches are robust, symbolizing resilient vitality. The rocks next to the pine tree are solid and angular, giving a sense of stability and security.

The right side of the painting depicts lofty mountains, with ridges rising and falling, creating a majestic and layered composition. The mountain peaks are covered in a thin mist, enhancing the sense of depth and distance. The distant mountains are portrayed with fine brushstrokes, reflecting the grandeur and magnificence of nature, evoking a sense of the vastness and tranquility of the natural world.

The overall color scheme of the painting is subdued, primarily using gray, green, and brown tones. This color combination creates a sense of antiquity and timelessness. The pine trees and mountains are depicted with clear lines and harmonious color contrasts, demonstrating the artist's detailed observation and deep understanding of natural elements.

This mural not only provides visual enjoyment but also conveys a spirit of resilience and reverence for nature through its depiction of majestic pine trees and mountains.

Color and Technique Analysis of the Two Interior Landscape Murals

First Mural Color Analysis:

This mural primarily uses soft colors, with gray, green, and brown as the main tones. The use of gray and green adds a calm and peaceful atmosphere to the painting, highlighting the tranquility and harmony of the natural landscape. Brown is used to depict the tree trunks and rocks, making these natural elements appear more solid and sturdy, enhancing the stability of the composition.

Technique Analysis:

Meticulous Brushwork: The pine trees and rocks in the painting are depicted with fine brushstrokes, with smooth lines and clear structures. The branches and leaves of the pine trees are portrayed with meticulous lines, expressing the vitality of the trees. The texture and structure of the rocks are also carefully detailed, making them look very realistic.

Layered Shading: The mountains and background in the painting are rendered with varying shades of ink, creating a strong sense of depth. The layering of the

mountains is enhanced by the treatment of near and distant scenes, making the composition more three-dimensional and deepening the visual experience.

Use of White Space: The mural uses white space between the mountains and the sky, which not only makes the composition more transparent but also leaves more room for the viewer's imagination, reflecting the common Chinese painting technique of "using white as black."

Second Mural

Color Analysis:

The color usage in this mural is also soft but slightly richer than in the first. The composition employs green, brown, gray, and light yellow. The green of the pine trees contrasts sharply with the brown of the rocks, highlighting the vitality and strength of nature. The distant mountains are depicted in gray tones, with light mist added to the peaks, creating a misty and atmospheric effect.

Technique Analysis:

Emphasis on Depth: Landscape painting emphasizes spatial composition with far, near, high, and low elements. This mural achieves depth and layering by contrasting light and heavy ink. The mountain contours are outlined with heavy ink, while distant mountains are shaded with lighter tones, highlighting the layering.

Detailed Tree Depiction: The pine tree is depicted with great detail, with the trunk and branches rendered with fine lines to show its resilience. The leaves are depicted using the stippling technique, making the pine tree appear vibrant and full of life.

Texture of Rocks: The texture of the rocks is emphasized through alternating light and dark lines and stippling, making the texture of the rocks more pronounced. The outline of the rocks contrasts sharply with the detailed depiction of the pine tree, enhancing the visual impact of the painting.

Use of White Space in the Sky: Similar to the first mural, the sky in this mural is left with some white space, making the entire composition appear airier and more natural, consistent with the traditional Chinese painting focus on capturing the spirit of the subject.

Conclusion:

These two murals have their unique features in terms of color and technique. The first mural focuses more on creating an overall atmosphere, with soft colors and a peaceful composition; the second mural, through richer colors and detailed brushwork, emphasizes the vitality and strength of nature. Both murals reflect the characteristics of traditional Chinese landscape painting techniques, and through different color applications and technique combinations, they create distinct artistic effects.

Two Animal Images

Left Side



Figure 27. The deer figure

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural, located on the left side of the ancestral hall, depicts a deer standing in a natural environment, with trees and grassland in the background. The depiction of animals in traditional Chinese art carries rich symbolic meanings. The deer in this mural is portrayed in a standing position, with a slender body and clearly defined spots. The deer's posture is graceful, with its head slightly raised, exuding a sense of agility and vitality. The background, featuring lush trees and grassland, creates a serene natural setting. The overall composition is harmonious, with vibrant colors.

Symbolic Significance and Educational Value of the Mural

In Chinese culture, the deer is often regarded as a symbol of good fortune. The word for "deer" (鹿) is a homophone for "prosperity" (禄), symbolizing wealth, longevity, and happiness. The image of the deer is considered auspicious and is frequently used in contexts that wish for longevity and prosperity. Displaying the image of a deer in the ancestral hall conveys a wish for the family's well-being, hoping that family members will enjoy long life and happiness.

Right Side



Figure 28. The eagle figure

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts an eagle perched on a pine branch, with a round sun in the background, creating a scene full of strength and vitality. The eagle stands on the pine branch, its eyes sharp, wings slightly spread, embodying a posture of majesty and confidence. The round sun and the robust pine branches create a powerful and magnificent natural environment. The composition is bold and straightforward, with vibrant colors. In the bottom right corner of the mural, the inscription "Heroic Overlord" symbolizes nobility and authority.

Symbolic Significance and Educational Value of the Mural

The image of the eagle represents fearlessness and foresight. In Chinese culture, the pine tree symbolizes longevity and resilience, often used to express

admiration for vitality and strong will. The combination of the pine tree and the eagle symbolizes tenacity and the spirit of advancing forward with courage.

The sun in the background symbolizes brightness, hope, and renewal. The rising sun adds a sense of dynamism to the composition, symbolizing the family's prosperity and a thriving future.

Color and Technique Analysis of the Two Animal Murals

The Deer Mural

Color Analysis:

The colors used in the deer mural are relatively soft, with light yellows and browns highlighting the deer's gentleness and elegance. The green vegetation and trees in the background are rendered in more saturated greens, contrasting with the deer's colors while remaining harmonious. This color scheme reflects the deer's natural environment and makes the entire composition lively and natural.

Technique Analysis:

This mural employs meticulous brushwork with vibrant colors, using fine lines and accurate, vivid depictions. The deer's form is portrayed with precision, particularly in the detailed treatment of its antlers and fur, where fine lines and layered rendering techniques are used to enhance the deer's texture. The background trees and plants are similarly detailed, creating a harmonious relationship with the deer, resulting in a unified composition.

The Eagle Mural

Color Analysis:

The colors in the eagle mural are more intense. The eagle's feathers are rendered in deep brown, contrasting sharply with the bright orange-yellow of the sun in the background, emphasizing the eagle's power and strength. The green of the pine branches is more subdued, creating a natural transition with the dark feathers of the eagle, giving the composition a solemn and dignified feel.

Technique Analysis:

The eagle mural also uses meticulous brushwork, but with more bold color application. The eagle's feathers are depicted with a rich texture, especially in the wings, where the detailed lines and color gradations convey the feathers' thickness.

The pine tree in the background is outlined with simple brushstrokes, contrasting with the detailed rendering of the eagle, focusing the viewer's attention on the bird.

Comprehensive Comparison

Both murals employ meticulous brushwork, but there are significant differences in their color use. The deer symbolizes peace, tranquility, and good fortune, reflected in the softer, harmonious colors of the deer mural. The eagle, symbolizing strength, courage, and freedom, is depicted with bold color contrasts, emphasizing its power and authority, creating a strong visual impact.

In terms of color and technique, these two works offer distinctive features, providing viewers with a rich visual and emotional experience.

Two Gongbi-Style Bird-and-Flower Paintings

Left-Side Mural



Figure 29. Gongbi-Style Bird-and-Flower Paintings

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural on the left depicts two pheasants resting in a natural setting. The pheasants are shown in various poses, appearing to be in communication with each other. Their plumage is vividly colored, showcasing their natural state. The background features plants and trees, rendered in a relatively simple manner to highlight the vibrant colors and detailed portrayal of the pheasants.

The composition is clever, with the positions and actions of the pheasants conveying their vitality and energy. Flowers blooming on the rocks add a touch of life

to the scene, enriching the layers of the composition. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and harmonious, presenting a beautiful scene of coexistence with nature.

Right-Side Mural



Figure 30. Gongbi-Style Bird-and-Flower Paintings

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural features a pheasant with an elegant posture, especially its long, fanned tail feathers, which form the visual focal point of the painting. The pheasant's plumage is richly colored, primarily in deep green or blue tones, with a clear sense of layering that emphasizes the texture of the feathers. The body of the pheasant is depicted in lighter colors, contrasting with the dark tail feathers, enhancing the three-dimensionality of the composition.

The plants and environment in the background are depicted simply, serving to complement the pheasant as the central figure. The overall scene is tranquil and harmonious, showcasing the pheasant's noble posture and graceful demeanor. Through meticulous brushwork and skillful use of color, this mural successfully captures the natural beauty and vivid presence of the pheasant.

Symbolic Significance and Educational Value of the Murals

In Chinese culture, the pheasant is considered a symbol of good fortune. Its image is often used to express expectations of nobility, elegance, and prosperity. The posture of the pheasant with its fanned tail feathers symbolizes the family's flourishing and promising future.

The pheasant is associated with autumn's harvest, bringing joy and prosperity. Its call and appearance are seen as embodiments of beauty and perfection, symbolizing a prosperous life and comprehensive achievement.

Traditionally, the pheasant is regarded as a symbol of good luck and happiness, especially during important festivals and celebrations. By depicting pheasants in a natural setting, these two murals convey love and reverence for nature. The flowers, pine trees, and rocks in the environment, combined with the pheasants, create a harmonious and beautiful scene, showcasing the vitality and beauty of nature.

Comparison and Complementarity of the Two Pheasant Murals

These two murals, each depicting a pheasant, form a contrast and complementarity:

Left-Side Pheasant: Showcases the harmony and beauty of the pheasant with flowers, symbolizing happiness, beauty, and natural harmony.

Right-Side Pheasant: Displays the majestic presence of the pheasant with pine trees and rocks, symbolizing nobility, resilience, and prosperity.

Through the contrast and complementarity of these two murals, the ancestral hall not only presents a rich natural landscape but also conveys multiple layers of cultural and spiritual meaning. The combination of the two pheasant murals symbolizes the family's diversity and overall development, embodying both a gentle and tranquil side and a noble and independent aspect.

Color and Technique Analysis of the Two Pheasant Murals

Left-Side Pheasant Mural Color Analysis:

The colors used for the pheasant's plumage are rich and varied. The mural predominantly employs golden yellow, brown, green, and blue tones, fully expressing the diversity and splendor of the pheasant's feathers. The pheasant's plumage is layered and transitions naturally, making the composition appear lively. The trees and vegetation in the background are depicted in more muted greens and grays, contrasting with the foreground pheasants while also highlighting the central figures.

Technique Analysis:

This mural uses detailed gongbi brushwork, with smooth and precise lines. The depiction of the pheasant's plumage, in particular, employs meticulous techniques that fully showcase the texture and layering of the feathers. The

background trees and plants are rendered with relatively simple brushstrokes, and the muted colors create a visual depth that emphasizes the pheasant as the focal point of the painting.

Overall Effect:

The combination of color and technique in this mural creates a natural beauty. The vibrant colors of the pheasants harmonize with the overall scene, demonstrating the artist's skilled use of color. Meanwhile, the simplified background treatment ensures the visual focus remains on the pheasants, achieving the desired emphasis on the central figures. The composition as a whole exudes a sense of harmony and tranquility, presenting the pheasant's lively image in its natural environment while conveying an ideal of peaceful coexistence with nature.

Right-Side Pheasant Mural Color Analysis:

Main Color Scheme: The pheasant in the painting is predominantly depicted in deep green and blue tones, highlighting its unique feather coloration. These colors, when refracted by light, show varying degrees of brightness, giving the pheasant's feathers a sense of depth and texture.

Contrast Colors: The lower part of the pheasant's body is painted in lighter colors, such as pale yellow or light brown, creating a strong contrast with its dark tail feathers. This contrast not only enhances the three-dimensionality of the pheasant but also emphasizes its presence in the composition.

Background Colors: The background colors are relatively soft, primarily using pale tones like light green and beige. The plants and environment in the background are simple but form a harmonious contrast with the pheasant in the foreground, making the pheasant the focal point of the composition.

Technique Analysis:

Gongbi Meticulous Brushwork: This mural employs traditional gongbi meticulous brushwork, with fine lines carefully detailing the pheasant's feathers, eyes, and claws. The use of heavy color techniques, with layers of color overlaying each other, effectively conveys the texture and sheen of the feathers.

Combination of Line Drawing and Shading: The painting combines detailed line drawing with color shading, where the outline and details of the pheasant are rendered with precise lines, and the feathers' colors are layered to show rich color

variations and light effects. This technique enhances the mural's three-dimensionality and vividness.

Expression of Dynamism: The pheasant's standing posture is full of dynamism, with its tail feathers gently spread as if swaying in the breeze. The artist's accurate grasp of the pheasant's posture and meticulous depiction make the mural not just a static image but a captured moment of movement.

Through the use of these techniques, this mural is not only visually appealing but also successfully conveys the pheasant's liveliness and elegance, bringing it vividly to life before the viewer.

First Mural



Figure 31. Gongbi Bird-and-Flower Paintings Inside the Head Gate

Source: GuangHui, July. 14, 2024 photographed

Description:

This work depicts two phoenixes soaring in the sky. The phoenix is a mythical bird in traditional Chinese culture, symbolizing auspiciousness and nobility. In the painting, one phoenix is on the left side, with luxurious and long tail feathers, exuding dignity and grace; the other phoenix is on the right side, with its wings spread, appearing to be flying or turning. The two phoenixes are depicted with flowing lines and vibrant colors, particularly in their tail feathers, which are colorful and full of movement.

The background is relatively simple, primarily using pale colors to highlight the phoenixes as the central figures. The entire composition, with its symmetrical

structure and balanced colors, creates a peaceful yet lively atmosphere, conveying common symbolic meanings in ancestral hall murals, such as auspiciousness, prosperity, and the flourishing of the family.

Second Mural



Figure 32. Gongbi Bird-and-Flower Paintings Inside the Head Gate

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This work depicts two colorful pheasants walking on a grassy field. In traditional Chinese culture, pheasants often symbolize nobility and good fortune. In the painting, the pheasant on the left holds its head high, with a long and vibrant tail feather, appearing very lively; the pheasant on the right slightly lowers its head, as if searching for food or observing the surroundings.

The background, with yellow flowers and green vegetation, adds a natural touch, making the composition full of vitality. The pheasants' feathers are depicted with fine lines and rich colors, especially in the tail feathers, where the color gradation is distinct, showing the artist's meticulous attention to detail.

This mural, through detailed depictions of the natural environment and the animals, conveys a harmonious and beautiful atmosphere, consistent with the usual auspicious meanings of ancestral hall murals, expressing wishes for the family's prosperity and well-being.

Color and Technique Analysis of the Gongbi Bird-and-Flower Paintings Inside the Head Gate

First Mural (Phoenixes and Peacocks):

Color Usage: This mural uses vibrant and saturated colors, especially in the feathers of the phoenixes and peacocks. The phoenix's feathers are predominantly gold, red, and green, full of vitality and energy, symbolizing nobility and auspiciousness. The peacock's feathers are primarily blue and green, exuding elegance and mystery. The background colors are simple, using pale yellow and light green, contrasting with the vivid colors of the foreground, making the phoenixes and peacocks stand out more.

Technique Usage: The mural employs the gongbi meticulous brushwork and vibrant color techniques, with smooth and delicate lines. The feather details are exquisitely depicted, particularly in the layering and light variation of the feathers, reflecting the artist's high attention to detail. The simplified background treatment makes the central figures stand out, enhancing the visual impact of the entire composition.

Second Mural (Two Pheasants):

Color Usage: The colors in this mural are relatively softer. The pheasants' feathers primarily use yellow, green, brown, and red tones, with warm hues. The color transitions on the pheasants are natural, reflecting the texture of the feathers. The background flowers mainly use green and yellow, resonating with the pheasants' colors, creating a harmonious composition.

Technique Usage: Similar to the first mural, this mural also uses gongbi meticulous brushwork, but the strokes are finer, focusing on the texture and glossiness of the pheasant's feathers. The background plants are rich in detail, especially in the depiction of the flowers, which, though simple, create a lively contrast with the pheasants. The pheasants' postures are lively and natural, giving a lifelike impression.

Comprehensive Analysis

The two murals each have their own characteristics in terms of color and technique. The first mural features brighter colors, emphasizing the splendor and mystery of the phoenixes and peacocks, creating a strong visual impact. In contrast, the second mural's colors are softer, focusing on the harmony between the natural environment and the animal forms, presenting a tranquil and warm atmosphere.

Both murals use gongbi meticulous brushwork, with smooth and flowing lines, particularly in the detailed depiction of the animals' feathers, showcasing a high level of artistic skill. In terms of background treatment, the first mural is more simplified, highlighting the central figures; while the second mural, with its rich background details, enhances the layering and liveliness of the composition.

Overall, these two murals skillfully combine color and technique to convey the imagery of nobility and harmony, fully embodying the essence of traditional mural art.

4.2.3 Murals in the Ancestral Hall's Central Worship Hall

The worship hall is the second building in the ancestral hall complex and serves as the main venue for family discussions and celebrations. It is the largest and most public space within the complex, with the highest utilization rate. Architecturally, different worship halls vary in the degree of enclosure and transparency, resulting in different spatial forms.

The area in front of the The worship hall is called the corridor. In the upper part of the cloisters, there are 22 murals painted, 11 on the left and 11 on the right. Contains flowers and birds, figures, landscapes and other types. At the same time, in the middle of the current corridor, an inscription of the Peng family was made, recording the restoration of the Peng ancestral hall and the records of donations from the ethnic people. And the production of a billboard, the content is the history and cultural deposits and development history of the Peng ancestral hall. The following is the analysis and introduction of the mural part:



Figure 33. Painting content: auspicious still life

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This work depicts several still-life objects, including potted plants, a blue vase, traditional Cantonese wood carving, and a Buddha's hand citron. In traditional Chinese culture, these objects symbolize longevity, prosperity, and family harmony. The flowers and ornaments are intricately detailed, creating an elegant artistic atmosphere. The plants in the pots appear vibrant, the yellow flowers in the vase symbolize nobility and auspiciousness, and the Buddha's hand citron signifies blessings, longevity, and good fortune. The Cantonese wood carving, used as a home decoration, reflects the region's unique craftsmanship and cultural value, often symbolizing stability and the prosperity of the family.

Background: The background uses light tones, primarily pale green, to highlight the main objects. This simple background design enhances the visual impact of the still-life, making the central elements stand out.

Color and Technique Analysis

Color Usage: The mural uses soft colors, with the green of the plants contrasting against the blue of the vase, while the yellow flowers add vibrancy to the scene. The golden-yellow flowers and green plants symbolize prosperity and harmony, while the yellow-green of the Buddha's hand citron further enhances the auspicious meaning of the painting. The Cantonese wood carving, in dark brown, provides a subtle contrast with the other elements, giving the composition a sense of stability.

Technique Usage: The mural employs the traditional gongbi (meticulous brushwork) technique, with smooth and delicate lines, particularly evident in the detailed depiction of the plant leaves, flowers, and wood carving. The background is simple but expressive, adding depth and enhancing the composition. The details of the Cantonese wood carving are meticulously rendered, reflecting the craftsmanship of the region and symbolizing the prosperity and stability of the family.



Figure 34. Sparrows and Bamboo

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts a group of sparrows resting among bamboo stalks. Sparrows in traditional Chinese culture symbolize diligence and vitality. The sparrows, small in size with brown and gray feathers, are portrayed in various natural postures—some are pecking at the ground, while others are watchful—giving the scene a lively, dynamic feel.

Background:

The background consists of lush green bamboo and weathered rocks, creating a serene, natural setting. These elements not only provide context for the sparrows but also enhance the sense of vitality in the scene, with the vibrant green foliage contrasting against the natural colors of the sparrows.

Color and Technique Analysis

Color Usage:

The colors in this mural are more subdued and natural, with the sparrows depicted in shades of brown and gray, while the bamboo and surrounding greenery are a vibrant green. The overall color scheme creates harmony, with the natural tones of the sparrows complementing the bright greenery, producing a balanced and tranquil atmosphere.

Technique Usage:

The mural employs “gongbi” meticulous brushwork, with fine, detailed lines used to depict both the sparrows' feathers and the bamboo leaves. The sparrows are rendered with a delicate touch, highlighting the texture and depth of their plumage, while the bamboo and rocks in the background are similarly detailed, adding depth and vitality to the scene. The use of contrast between the relatively simple background and the intricate foreground makes the sparrows stand out as the focal point.

Comprehensive Analysis

This mural, through its use of natural, earthy colors and detailed brushwork, conveys a sense of harmony and vitality in nature. The sparrows, symbolic of energy and industriousness, interact seamlessly with the bamboo, a symbol of resilience and flexibility, creating a peaceful yet lively scene. The mural reflects traditional Chinese values of balance and prosperity, with its subtle yet powerful depiction of nature.



Figure 35. Women's Army (Pingyang Princess Legend)

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts a female general in armor, holding a flag, portraying her in the midst of fierce battle. (According to the words on the image, it is recorded in the allusions of the Detachment of Women) According to the legend, this female general represents “Princess Pingyang” of the Tang Dynasty, who led the Women's Army in the founding battles of the Tang Dynasty. The figure's posture is commanding, and

the flag waves in the wind, full of dynamic motion, highlighting the brave image of Princess Pingyang.(New World Encyclopedia contributors,2015)

Background:

The background primarily features a bridge and trees, simple yet effective in emphasizing the movement of the figure. The simplicity of the background ensures that the focus remains on the figure, allowing viewers to fully appreciate the heroic depiction of the female general.

Color and Technique Analysis

Color Usage:

The colors in the mural are predominantly bright greens, yellows, and blues. The green armor symbolizes vitality and resilience, while the flag and ribbons create a striking contrast, adding a sense of motion and visual impact to the piece. This color scheme not only enhances the strength of the figure but also aligns with the dramatic color use typical in theater, emphasizing the importance of the character.

Technique Usage:

The mural employs the “gongbi” technique, characterized by fine, meticulous brushwork. The posture and expression of the figure are carefully crafted. The details in the flag and ribbons are particularly lively, enhancing the overall sense of movement. The artisans likely referred to ancient paintings during the creation process, using a combination of copying and re-creation to faithfully depict the legendary figure.

Cultural and Historical Context:

The legend of Princess Pingyang's Women's Army originated in the early Tang Dynasty, nearly a thousand years ago. In the “Guangfu ancestral hall”, this mural not only serves as a representation of a historical story but also enhances the cultural atmosphere of the space through its theatrical expression and use of color. Given that Princess Pingyang's image and story have been depicted numerous times throughout history, it is likely that the artisans referenced previous artworks and theatrical representations when creating this mural. This combination of copying and re-creating ensures that ancient stories continue to be transmitted through visual art in modern times.

Placement and Symbolism:

This mural is painted on the corridor of the Guangfu ancestral hall, forming an important part of the overall space. As one of many murals in the hall, it not only symbolizes the courage and wisdom of women but also expresses Guangfu culture's respect and commemoration of historical figures.



Figure 36. Gongsun Daniang (Theatrical Figure)

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts a woman wielding a sword, mid-performance in a sword dance. Based on historical records, the figure is likely the renowned sword dancer

Gongsun Daniang from the Tang Dynasty, famous for her exceptional swordsmanship. The figure, captured in motion, showcases a graceful yet powerful combination of elegance and strength, with fluid movements portrayed in the painting.

Background:

The background is once again composed of a bridge and trees, rendered simply. This minimalist background provides an excellent contrast to highlight the dynamic pose of the dancer, making the figure the focal point and emphasizing the movement and energy of her sword dance.

Color and Technique Analysis

Color Usage:

The figure's clothing is primarily in green and blue tones, while the orange ribbons add vibrancy to the composition, especially in the depiction of movement. The dynamic flow of the ribbons enhances the rhythm of the sword dance,

emphasizing the balance of strength and grace. The color choices are not overly elaborate but effectively highlight the dancer's motion.

Technique Usage:

The mural employs the “gongbi” technique, bringing the figure's movements and clothing details to life. The ribbons, in particular, are depicted with great finesse, adding a sense of fluidity to the overall scene. While it's not definitively known whether the figure is wearing theatrical attire, the artisan's meticulous brushwork highlights the fluidity and grace of the movements, demonstrating the high level of craftsmanship.

Comparative Analysis: Women's Army vs. Gongsun Daniang

Theme Comparison:

Women's Army: This mural depicts the famous “Women's Army”, led by Princess Pingyang during the Tang Dynasty. The focus is on the bravery and wisdom of women in warfare. The painting portrays the princess holding a flag, leading her army with courage, symbolizing leadership and strength.

Gongsun Daniang: Gongsun Daniang was renowned for her sword dance during the Tang Dynasty, representing a combination of artistry and skill. In this mural, she is shown wielding a sword in mid-dance, her graceful movements illustrating her expertise in both dance and martial arts.

Color and Dynamic Representation:

Women's Army: The dynamic sense of this mural is conveyed through the waving flag. The overall color scheme primarily includes green and yellow. Although the flag is actually white, its flowing form and large movements create a strong sense of motion, evoking a feeling of strength and action. The green armor symbolizes vitality and resilience, matching the atmosphere of battle. The white flag flying alongside the figure's movement enhances the dynamic feeling of the scene, adding a visual focal point to the composition. The colors are not in stark contrast but rather harmoniously balanced, highlighting the energy and strength of an army on the move.

Gongsun Daniang: Gongsun Daniang's dynamic sense is expressed through the motion of her dual swords and flowing ribbons. Her clothing is predominantly green and blue, while the orange ribbons add a sense of movement to the dance.

Compared to the Women's Army, this mural has a softer color palette, and the movements are more delicate, reflecting the rhythm and grace of her dance. The movement of the dual swords, in conjunction with the ribbons, increases the dynamic beauty of the scene. Although the expression differs in style, it still conveys the balance of strength and elegance in the figure.

Dynamic Representation:

Women's Army: The movement in this mural is full of energy, with the flag waving dramatically as the princess takes command. The strong dynamic lines, especially in the flag and her posture, convey a sense of action and tension.

Gongsun Daniang: Gongsun Daniang's movements are more fluid and refined, emphasizing the beauty of the sword dance. The flowing ribbons and the smooth curves of her posture create a sense of graceful movement, highlighting both power and beauty in her swordsmanship.

Cultural Symbolism:

Women's Army: The mural of the Women's Army symbolizes female courage, leadership, and wisdom in the context of warfare. Princess Pingyang played a crucial role in the founding of the Tang Dynasty, and this mural honors the significant contributions of women in history.

Gongsun Daniang: Gongsun Daniang represents the intersection of artistry and skill. Her sword dance is not only a display of martial prowess but also a celebration of beauty and elegance in movement, symbolizing the union of strength and artistry in women.

Creative Background:

Both the Women's Army and Gongsun Daniang date back nearly a thousand years. These murals in the Guangfu ancestral halls were created based on earlier artistic representations, with artisans drawing inspiration from traditional depictions to recreate these figures. The craftsmanship involved was a blend of copying previous designs and adding creative elements, ensuring the characters would be brought to life through a new lens.

Placement and Symbolism:

These murals are positioned symmetrically in the corridors of the ancestral hall, highlighting both the military and artistic excellence of women in history. On one side, the Women's Army represents the strength of women in leadership and warfare, while on the other, Gongsun Daniang illustrates the beauty and skill of women in the arts. Together, they celebrate the multifaceted contributions of women across different domains.

Conclusion:

These two murals create a strong contrast in theme, color, and dynamic representation. While the Women's Army showcases the power and leadership of women, Gongsun Daniang illustrates the artistry and skill of women in traditional Chinese culture. This contrast enriches the cultural narrative of the ancestral hall, where these murals serve not only as visual art but also as a tribute to the historical and cultural achievements of women.



Figure 37. Bird on a Branch

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts a bird perched on a branch, surrounded by lush leaves, full of natural vitality. The bird appears calm and relaxed, standing on the curved branch,

with its beak slightly open as if singing. The overall image evokes a sense of tranquility and harmony.

Background:

The leaves and branches are depicted with fine detail. The tree's structure is simple yet vivid, providing enough space for the bird to stand out as the focal point. The overall background is soft, creating a contrast with the bird's serene posture and further emphasizing its stillness.

Color and Technique Analysis

Color Usage:

The colors in this mural are primarily natural shades of brown and green. The brown of the branch and the green leaves harmonize with the bird's color. The bird's feathers are relatively plain, matching the natural harmony of the scene, reflecting traditional Chinese art's emphasis on natural imagery.



Figure 38. Two Birds on a Branch

Source: GuangHui, July. 14, 2024 photographed

Description:

This mural portrays two small birds perched on a lush tree branch. One bird is hanging upside down from the branch, showcasing their lighthearted and natural

behavior. The branch is filled with vibrant green leaves, and the lively interaction between the birds creates a cheerful and harmonious atmosphere.

Background:

The background is relatively simple, without complex elements, which allows the birds' dynamic movements and the layers of foliage to stand out. The minimal background directs the viewer's attention to the birds and the branch, making the scene more lively.

Color and Technique Analysis

Color Usage:

The color palette of this mural primarily consists of green and brown, with the leaves being bright green, and the birds' feathers rendered in soft grey and brown tones, in line with the natural color scheme. The colors are gentle, giving the mural a fresh and peaceful feel. The contrast is moderate, without any stark differences, maintaining the harmonious representation of nature typical in traditional painting.

Technique Usage:

The mural uses the traditional “gongbi” technique, known for its fine, flowing lines, especially in the depiction of the leaves and the detailed feathers of the birds. The craftsman skillfully captures the birds' postures, imbuing the painting with a sense of movement and playfulness. The curve of the branches and the interaction between the birds create a rhythmic flow, adding to the overall aesthetic appeal.

Comparative Analysis:

These two murals, positioned symmetrically on the same location in the left and right corridors, depict birds and trees in natural settings. Both showcase the precision and detail of traditional “gongbi” painting in their portrayal of nature and living creatures.

Color Comparison:

Both murals harmoniously use natural tones of green, brown, and grey. The overall color scheme is balanced, avoiding harsh contrasts and emphasizing the beauty of nature.

Dynamic Representation:

In the first mural, the bird calmly perches on the branch, exuding a sense of tranquility. In contrast, the second mural portrays a more lively scene, with the two birds interacting playfully, one even hanging upside down, which adds a dynamic and vibrant touch.

Cultural and Historical Context:

The intricate detail in these bird-and-flower murals likely draws inspiration from the style of “Huang Quan, (Liang weiming,2016)a famous court painter from the Tang and Song Dynasties. Huang Quan’ s art was known for its meticulous detail and lifelike representation of nature, highly esteemed by later artists and craftsmen. The bird postures and fine brushwork in these murals resonate with Huang Quan's artistic tradition, highlighting the “gongbi” painting technique’ s focus on capturing the beauty of nature and the harmony between humans and the natural world.



Figure 39. Rabbits

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural features two rabbits grazing in a natural landscape. One rabbit is feeding, while the other stands alert, illustrating interaction between the animals. The overall scene exudes a peaceful pastoral atmosphere, with the rabbits depicted in natural, relaxed postures.

Background:

The background includes large-leafed plants and soft rocks, creating a calm outdoor

setting. The simplicity of the plants and rocks highlights the rabbits' actions, making them the central focus of the mural.

Color and Technique Analysis

ColorUsage:

The colors in this mural are primarily green, brown, and greyish-white. The rabbits' soft white fur contrasts with the green plants, making them the focal point of the image. The plants are painted in rich green, reinforcing the natural setting of the scene. The simple color palette enhances the tranquility of the mural, with subtle contrasts and layers adding depth.

TechniqueUsage:

The mural also utilizes the gongbi technique, with fine, delicate lines used to depict the rabbits' fur and the details of the plants. The rabbits' dynamic and lifelike postures are captured with detailed strokes, while the plants and rocks provide a solid yet lively background, enriching the overall natural ambiance.



Figure 40. Lotus and Mandarin Ducks

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts a pair of mandarin ducks resting among lotus leaves in a serene water scene. Mandarin ducks symbolize love and loyalty, often representing harmonious marriage in traditional Chinese art. The ducks float quietly on the water, surrounded by blooming lotus flowers and large leaves, creating an atmosphere of tranquility and harmony.

Background:

The combination of lotus flowers and mandarin ducks forms a lively natural scene. The lotus leaves are depicted in deep green, while the lotus flowers are painted in soft,

delicate hues, complementing the peaceful stance of the mandarin ducks. The simplicity of the background helps to emphasize the ducks as the focal point of the composition.

Color and Technique Analysis

ColorUsage:

The mural uses soft colors, primarily natural greens, whites, and browns. The plumage of the mandarin ducks contrasts gently with the surrounding lotus flowers and leaves. The overall color scheme is simple but layered, with the deep green of the lotus leaves adding depth and texture to the scene.

TechniqueUsage:

The mural employs the traditional gongbi technique, especially in the detailed depiction of the lotus leaves and flowers. The feather texture of the mandarin ducks is intricately rendered, showing the artisan's precise attention to natural details. The water's surface is also delicately portrayed with fine brushstrokes, enhancing the tranquil and harmonious feel of the scene.

Comparative Analysis

These two murals, located symmetrically on opposite corridors, present different natural themes. The lotus and mandarin ducks symbolize harmony and love, while the rabbits evoke a sense of peacefulness and serenity in nature.

ColorComparison:

Both murals use a soft, natural color palette, primarily composed of greens, whites, and browns. The mandarin ducks add a slight richness in color compared to the more neutral-toned rabbits, but both maintain a harmonious blend with their surroundings.

DynamicRepresentation:

The mandarin ducks are depicted in a more static posture, symbolizing the calm and harmonious nature of love, while the rabbits are shown interacting, with one rabbit in a more dynamic pose, adding a playful element. Despite the differences in subject matter, both murals convey a sense of balance and respect for nature through their meticulous technique.

Although the themes differ, both murals offer a harmonious and detailed representation of nature, reflecting the cultural emphasis on beauty, balance, and the peaceful coexistence of living creatures in traditional Chinese ancestral halls.



Figure 41. Goldfish and Small Fish

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts a large golden fish swimming alongside a smaller fish amid aquatic plants. The large fish is vibrant and brightly colored, while the smaller fish is grayish in tone. The image illustrates the calm and natural state of the two fish in their underwater habitat, creating a sense of tranquility and harmony.

Background:

The background is filled with lush aquatic plants, presenting a lively underwater scene. The soft green hues of the plants form the fish's natural environment. The simple and fresh background allows the movement of the large and small fish to become the focal point of the image.

Color and Technique Analysis

ColorUsage:

The mural predominantly uses shades of gold, gray, and green. The golden fish stands out with its bright yellow color, attracting the viewer's attention and contrasting with the smaller gray fish. The green of the aquatic plants adds depth and a natural ambiance to the scene, with a gentle color contrast.

TechniqueUsage:

The mural employs meticulous gongbi technique, with the fish's scales and details rendered finely, and the layers of the aquatic plants depicted with precision. Though

simple, the interaction between the large and small fish is captured with care, showing their leisurely swimming in the water.

Cultural Significance:

In traditional Chinese art and folklore, fish are symbols of good fortune and abundance, particularly the golden fish, which represents wealth and prosperity. Additionally, the word for "fish" (yú) shares the same pronunciation as "surplus" (yú), symbolizing “yearly surplus” (年年有余), meaning an abundance of wealth and resources every year. Therefore, this painting not only captures the beauty of nature but also embodies wishes for good fortune and prosperity.



Figure 42. Twin Fish

Source: GuangHui, July. 14, 2024 photographed

Description:

This mural features two fish swimming side by side, their natural postures suggesting they are gracefully gliding through the water. The synchronized movement of the fish symbolizes harmony and connection between the two. The accompanying text on the mural adds cultural and historical significance to the image.

Background:

The background consists of aquatic plants, rendered in soft colors, creating a peaceful scene of the fish swimming. The design of the plants complements the motion of the fish, adding depth to the mural. The inscription at the top not only serves as an artistic embellishment but also adds cultural depth.

Color and Technique Analysis

ColorUsage:

The colors in this mural are soft, primarily composed of light blue and pale red hues. The fish have a delicate coloration, contrasting with the blue-green aquatic plants in the background. Although the color contrast is not strong, the layers of the fish and the flowing water are effectively conveyed through the subtle use of color.

TechniqueUsage:

The detailed gongbi technique is evident in the depiction of the fish's scales, fins, and the aquatic plants. The fish's posture is natural and smooth, while the plants and water ripples are delicately portrayed through fine lines. This careful brushwork enhances the dynamic quality and aesthetic beauty of the mural.

CulturalSignificance:

In Chinese culture, pairs of fish often symbolize harmony and balance, particularly in marriage, where they represent a happy and prosperous union. Additionally, the pronunciation of "fish" (yú) sounds like "surplus," expressing the wish for "yearly surplus" (年年有余), a traditional blessing for abundance and prosperity. This mural, therefore, not only depicts the harmony between the fish but also carries the auspicious meaning of ongoing wealth and fortune.

Comparative Analysis

These two murals, located in symmetrical positions in the left and right corridors, present different themes related to fish, but both use intricate gongbi techniques to depict the natural beauty of aquatic life.

Color Comparison:

The Goldfish and Small Fish mural uses more vibrant colors, with the golden fish contrasting sharply against the green aquatic plants, emphasizing the large fish as the main subject.

The Twin Fish mural, by contrast, uses softer colors, primarily light red and blue-green, creating a more unified color scheme that emphasizes harmony and tranquility.

Dynamic Representation:

The Goldfish and Small Fish mural has relatively less movement, portraying the fish in a calm, relaxed state.

The Twin Fish mural, through the synchronized swimming of the two fish, conveys a sense of fluidity and connection, reflecting harmony in motion.

Cultural Significance:

Both murals use fish not only as symbols of nature but also as bearers of auspicious meaning in Chinese culture. Fish symbolize wealth, abundance, and harmony, and the theme of “yearly surplus” (年年有余) further enhances the murals’ cultural richness. Twin fish, in particular, are associated with marital harmony and happiness, while the golden fish is linked to prosperity and good fortune. These murals combine artistic beauty with cultural symbolism, conveying blessings for a prosperous and harmonious life.



Figure 43 Plum Blossoms, Magpies, and Peonies (Inscription: Prosperity and Flourishing)

Source: GuangHui, July. 14, 2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts two magpies resting on blooming plum tree branches, with peonies blooming nearby. The plum blossoms symbolize resilience and purity, magpies are regarded as birds bringing joy and good fortune, while peonies have long been considered the "king of flowers," symbolizing wealth and prosperity. The overall image conveys an atmosphere of auspiciousness and beauty.

Background:

The background is simple, with soft tones that emphasize the plum blossoms, magpies, and peonies as the focal points of the image. The plum tree’s high

branches symbolize noble character, the magpies' presence adds a lively touch, and the peonies enhance the richness of the scene. The inscription "Prosperity and Flourishing" further reinforces the mural's overall theme, expressing wishes for family and national prosperity.

Color and Technique Analysis

ColorUsage:

The mural uses soft colors; the white and pale pink of the plum blossoms contrast with the rich colors of the peonies, highlighting the beauty and abundance of life. The green leaves create a striking contrast with the vibrant flowers, adding layers of depth and beauty to the composition.

TechniqueUsage:

The craftsmen used the gongbi meticulous painting technique, with fine lines detailing the flowers and leaves. The intricate textures of the plum blossoms and peonies showcase a high level of craftsmanship. The magpies are detailed, enhancing the dynamic quality and vitality of the mural.

CulturalSignificance:

The combination of plum blossoms, magpies, and peonies is commonly seen in traditional Chinese painting, symbolizing good fortune. The plum blossoms represent resilience, magpies bring joy and luck, and peonies symbolize wealth and prosperity. The inscription "Prosperity and Flourishing" further reinforces the mural's meaning, expressing the desire for a prosperous and flourishing life.



Figure 44. Five Blessings and Three Abundances (Inscription: Five Blessings, Three Abundances, Wealth, Longevity, and Honor)

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

The Second Mural: Description:

This mural depicts a scene filled with symbolic meaning, with the inscription "Five Blessings, Three Abundances, Wealth, Longevity, and Honor." In the image, immortals are seen riding on clouds, dressed in elaborate garments, bestowing blessings upon the world. In the foreground, a man on horseback stands in awe, seemingly receiving this divine blessing.

Background:

The background features natural scenery with lush trees and rolling hills, creating a peaceful and harmonious atmosphere. The immortals in the distance symbolize divine blessings, while the man and his horse in the foreground represent humanity's pursuit of wealth and longevity.

Color and Technique Analysis

ColorUsage:

The mural features soft blue and green tones, representing the peacefulness of nature. The clothing of the immortals and the man is depicted in richer colors, emphasizing their importance in the composition. The overall color scheme conveys a sense of serenity and solemnity.

TechniqueUsage:

This mural uses fine gongbi technique, with detailed depictions of the figures, the horse, and the natural surroundings. The flowing robes of the immortals and the clouds enhance the dynamic quality of the scene, demonstrating the craftsmen's skill in portraying both characters and nature.

CulturalSignificance:

The inscription "Five Blessings, Three Abundances, Wealth, Longevity, and Honor" is central to this mural, expressing wishes for long life, prosperity, health, and many descendants. The "Five Blessings" refer to traditional concepts of fortune, while the "Three Abundances" commonly refer to abundant children, long life, and fortune. These symbols emphasize the values of longevity, wealth, and harmony in family life. This mural not only illustrates divine blessings but also reflects the human desire for a long, prosperous, and harmonious life.

Comparative Analysis

ColorComparison:

Both murals employ soft, natural tones in their color schemes but differ in theme. The first mural uses natural elements like plum blossoms, magpies, and peonies to express beauty and wealth, while the second focuses on a divine scene to convey blessings of longevity and prosperity.

DynamicRepresentation:

The magpies in the first mural add a sense of movement, symbolizing vitality and joy. In contrast, the second mural depicts an interaction between mortals and immortals, conveying a sense of divine blessing and solemnity, with a quiet yet powerful dynamic.

These murals not only showcase the refined craftsmanship of gongbi technique but also embody rich cultural symbolism, offering blessings for a prosperous and harmonious life. In an ancestral hall setting, they hold significant meaning, reflecting desires for wealth, longevity, and family happiness.



Figure 45. White Rabbit and Black Rabbit

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts a white rabbit and a black rabbit resting in the dense grass. The white rabbit is standing and appears to be gazing forward, while the black rabbit is lying down, appearing relaxed. Through the different postures of the rabbits, the mural conveys a sense of harmony and tranquility in nature.

Background:

The background consists of tall grass and soft green tones, creating a serene natural

environment. The simplicity of the background design makes the interaction between the two rabbits the focal point of the composition.

Color and Technique Analysis

Color Usage:

The mural primarily uses natural colors like green, white, and black. The contrast between the white rabbit and the black rabbit creates a visual balance, symbolizing the concept of yin and yang. The green of the grass further enhances the natural atmosphere of the scene.

Technique Usage:

The mural uses the gongbi meticulous brush technique, with intricate details in the rabbits' fur and the grass. The soft brushstrokes used for the grass add layers of depth and movement to the scene, complementing the calm posture of the rabbits.

Cultural Significance in Ancestral Hall:

In Chinese culture, rabbits are often associated with longevity and good fortune. In an ancestral hall setting, the rabbits symbolize the continuation and prosperity of the family. The contrast between the white and black rabbits can also represent the harmony of yin and yang, suggesting balance and peace within the family. This mural conveys a wish for long-lasting stability and prosperity for the family line.

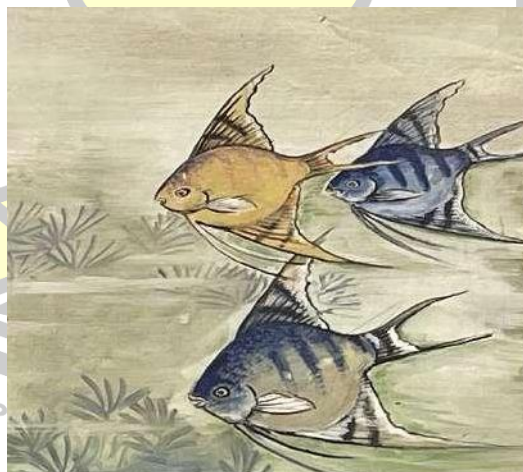


Figure 46. Three Fish

Source: GuangHui, July. 14, 2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts three fish swimming freely in the water, each with a different

color. The fish are arranged gracefully, and their postures suggest a natural, flowing movement, symbolizing peace and vitality in the water.

Background:

The background features soft water plants and light green water ripples, depicting the underwater environment. The simple design of the background highlights the dynamic movements and colors of the fish, making them the center of the composition.

Color and Technique Analysis

Color Usage:

The colors of the fish are vibrant, featuring yellow, blue, and black, creating a striking contrast with the green water plants in the background. Each fish has a distinct color, with yellow symbolizing wealth, blue representing wisdom, and black signifying stability and strength.

Technique Usage:

The mural uses the traditional gongbi technique, with delicate details in the fish's scales and fins, enhancing the dynamic quality of the scene. The soft lines used for the water plants complement the fluid motion of the fish, reflecting the beauty of underwater life.

Cultural Significance in Ancestral Hall:

In Chinese culture, fish hold special significance as symbols of abundance and prosperity. The phrase “年年有余” (yearly surplus) is often associated with fish, signifying continuous wealth and good fortune. The presence of three fish in this mural may represent harmony and prosperity within the family, symbolizing unity and abundance. In an ancestral hall, this mural serves to express wishes for the continued success and flourishing of the family, embodying the hope for an enduring legacy.

Combined Significance in Ancestral Hall Setting

Cultural and Symbolic Importance:

These murals, displayed in an ancestral hall, carry significant cultural meanings. The white and black rabbits symbolize harmony between yin and yang, conveying a desire for family unity and long life. The fish mural, with its associations of abundance and prosperity, expresses hopes for ongoing wealth and success for future generations.

In an ancestral hall, these murals not only beautify the space but also serve as visual expressions of reverence for ancestors and blessings for the family's future. The combination of rabbits and fish, two symbols of prosperity and harmony, enhances the ancestral hall's function as a spiritual and cultural center, reflecting the deep values of family, continuity, and well-being.



Figure 47. Five Bats Offering Longevity

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts a peach tree bearing ripe longevity peaches, with five bats flying around the branches. The peach symbolizes longevity, while bats in Chinese culture represent good fortune. Specifically, five bats signify the "Five Blessings," which include longevity, wealth, health and peace, love of virtue, and a natural death. The inscription "Five Bats Offering Longevity" further emphasizes the blessings of fortune and long life brought by the bats.

Background:

The background features vibrant branches and leaves, with the bats in flight adding a dynamic element to the composition. The combination of peaches and bats enhances the auspicious message, expressing wishes for good fortune and longevity.

Color and Technique Analysis

Color Usage:

The mural employs soft colors, primarily green leaves and pink peaches, highlighting the fruit's abundance and richness. The bats are depicted in darker

tones, creating contrast with the peaches and making them stand out more prominently. The overall color palette conveys a sense of health and prosperity.

Technique Usage:

The mural uses the traditional “gongbi” meticulous painting technique, especially evident in the depiction of the plump, ripe peaches. The bats are portrayed with fluid, expressive lines, giving a sense of movement and vitality to the mural.

Cultural Significance in Ancestral Hall:

In the context of an ancestral hall, the combination of peaches and bats represents wishes for long life and prosperity. The phrase "Five Bats Offering Longevity" expresses the hope for all five blessings to come together, ensuring a family's continued prosperity and longevity. This mural not only decorates the space but also conveys blessings for the family's future generations, symbolizing the continuity and flourishing of the family line.



Figure 48. Two Pigeons

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts two pigeons standing on a rock, facing each other, symbolizing peace, loyalty, and harmony. Pigeons are often associated with these qualities, and in this mural, their interaction reflects a sense of closeness and peaceful communication.

Background:

The background consists of natural elements like trees and plants, which complement the pigeons' postures. The simplicity of the background allows the pigeons to become the focal point of the composition, highlighting their interaction.

Color and Technique Analysis

Color Usage:

The pigeons are depicted in natural shades of gray and white, creating a harmonious balance with the green plants in the background. The use of similar tones for both pigeons symbolizes unity and harmony, reflecting the peaceful atmosphere of the scene.

Technique Usage:

This mural also employs the “gongbi” technique, with the pigeons' feathers and the texture of the rocks meticulously detailed, bringing a lifelike quality to their interaction. The soft colors and delicate lines contribute to the serene and natural beauty of the mural.

Cultural Significance in Ancestral Hall:

Pigeons symbolize peace, loyalty, and harmony in Chinese culture. The interaction between the two pigeons suggests a harmonious relationship, often interpreted as a representation of a peaceful family bond or marital unity. In an ancestral hall, such murals express a wish for family unity and harmony, emphasizing the importance of strong, loyal relationships within the family.

Combined Significance

Both of these murals serve not only as decorative art but also carry deep cultural and symbolic meanings within the ancestral hall. The “Five Bats Offering Longevity” mural combines peaches and bats to represent wishes for good fortune and long life, symbolizing the family's prosperity. Meanwhile, the mural of two pigeons emphasizes peace, loyalty, and unity, conveying a desire for harmonious family relationships. Together, these murals not only adorn the ancestral hall but also express reverence for the ancestors and a hope for the family's future prosperity and well-being.



Figure 49. Butterfly and Flowers

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts a yellow butterfly fluttering above a cluster of flowers. The flowers are lush and vibrant, symbolizing the beauty and harmony of nature. In traditional Chinese culture, the butterfly represents beauty and the fleeting nature of life, while the flowers symbolize prosperity and vitality.

Background:

The background features a simple natural scene, highlighting the connection between the butterfly and the flowers. The curved lines of the flowers and leaves add a soft sense of movement to the composition, emphasizing the peaceful and harmonious aspects of nature.

Color and Technique Analysis

Color Usage:

The yellow of the butterfly contrasts sharply with the green of the plants, making the butterfly stand out in the mural. This contrast not only enhances the visual appeal but also symbolizes the balance between life and prosperity.

Technique Usage:

The mural employs the meticulous gongbi brush technique, with intricate details in both the butterfly's wings and the texture of the flowers. The artisan's high level of skill is evident in the refined depiction of both elements.

Cultural Significance in Ancestral Hall:

In the context of an ancestral hall, the butterfly and flowers represent the family's prosperity and vitality. The transient nature of the butterfly's life contrasts with the enduring growth of the flowers, expressing a wish for the family's long-lasting prosperity and the continuation of life.



Figure 50. Bonsai and Containers (Inscription: "Fortune, Longevity, and Eternal Spring")

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts a small bonsai pine tree and a pot of plants, with two yellow fruits beside them. In Chinese culture, bonsai, especially pine trees, symbolize longevity and resilience, while the plants represent vitality and prosperity. The inscription "Fortune, Longevity, and Eternal Spring" conveys a wish for blessings, longevity, and prosperity for the family.

Background:

The background is rendered in soft tones, with a subdued color palette that centers the viewer's attention on the bonsai and containers. The inscription further reinforces the message of blessings, conveying hopes for long-lasting prosperity and vitality.

Color and Technique Analysis

Color Usage:

The green leaves of the bonsai and pine tree contrast harmoniously with the gray-blue tones of the containers, emphasizing the natural balance. The yellow fruits serve as a visual accent, symbolizing abundance and good fortune.

Technique Usage:

The mural uses the traditional gongbi technique, with smooth and precise lines that bring the bonsai's branches and leaves to life. The detailed treatment of the bonsai reflects the artisan's expertise in combining nature and art.

Cultural Significance in Ancestral Hall:

In the ancestral hall, the bonsai and pine tree symbolize the family's longevity and resilience, while the inscription "Fortune, Longevity, and Eternal Spring" conveys wishes for happiness, long life, and prosperity. This mural not only celebrates the beauty of nature but also serves as a blessing for the family's future success and prosperity.

Comprehensive Analysis

Symbolism in Ancestral Hall:

Both murals convey wishes for the family's prosperity, longevity, and harmony. The butterfly and flowers symbolize the beauty and fleeting nature of life, while the bonsai and pine tree represent resilience and longevity. Displayed in an ancestral hall, these murals are not only decorative but also hold deep cultural and symbolic significance, reflecting reverence for ancestors and wishes for the family's bright future.



Figure 51. Drunken Story

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description :

This mural, painted directly on the wall of the ancestral hall, depicts an interaction between an elder and a young boy, with the elder appearing to be in a state of drunkenness, leaning on the young boy's shoulder. According to research, this mural represents a classical Chinese tale of drunkenness. In ancient Chinese literature and art, the image of a drunken person is often used to symbolize an unrestrained personality and the genuine expression of emotions.

Background

The background of the mural features traditional Chinese garden and architectural elements, including typical bridges and trees. These background details not only enrich the visual effect of the mural but also emphasize the interaction between the drunken elder and the young boy, drawing the viewer's attention to their relationship.

Color and Technique Analysis

Color Usage:

The color contrast between the figures is quite noticeable, with the elder dressed in deep green, symbolizing his stability, while the boy's light-colored clothing represents youth and vitality. The overall color harmony enhances the emotional interaction between the two figures.

Technique Usage:

The artisan employed the traditional “gongbi” meticulous painting technique, with great attention to the facial expressions and postures of the characters. The elder's drunken state is vividly rendered through smooth lines, adding authenticity and emotional expression to the scene.

Cultural Context and Significance in Ancestral Hall

In the ancestral hall setting, painting a scene of a drunken story symbolizes a reverence for natural emotions and a respect for human authenticity. This depiction not only recreates a classic tale from ancient literature but also conveys the family's appreciation for sincerity and traditional virtues. Through this visual representation, the ancestral hall celebrates the pursuit of natural and free-spirited ideals.



Figure 52. Wang Xizhi Feeding Geese

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description

The second mural, painted on the ancestral hall wall, depicts the famous Chinese calligrapher Wang Xizhi feeding geese. (Li,bolin,2024,PP17) Wang Xizhi is one of the most renowned calligraphers in Chinese history, and his act of feeding geese is a well-known story that symbolizes his love for the details of life and his dedication to the art of calligraphy.

Background

The mural's background features a serene natural landscape and garden elements that harmonize with the presence of Wang Xizhi and the geese. This background design not only highlights the interaction between the figures and nature but also integrates Wang Xizhi's refined character into the setting of the ancestral hall.

Color and Technique Analysis

Color Usage:

The colors in the mural are predominantly soft greens, grays, and whites. The deep color of Wang Xizhi's attire contrasts with the white feathers of the geese, emphasizing his significance in the mural. The harmonious combination of these colors with the natural scenery reinforces the elegance and purity of the artwork.

Technique Usage:

The artisan employed the “gongbi” painting technique, paying meticulous attention to the details of both Wang Xizhi and the geese. The intricate depiction of

facial expressions and the movement of the geese showcases the artisan's skill, bringing vitality and artistic beauty to the mural.

Cultural Context and Significance in Ancestral Hall

Painting Wang Xizhi feeding geese in the ancestral hall serves as a tribute not only to the great calligrapher and his life philosophy but also to the family's reverence for culture and art. In Chinese culture, Wang Xizhi represents the pinnacle of knowledge and artistic pursuit. Depicting his image on the ancestral hall wall signifies the family's respect for cultural refinement and a pursuit of a high-quality lifestyle.

Comprehensive Analysis

Symbolism in the Ancestral Hall

The creation of these murals directly on the ancestral hall walls serves to beautify the space while also embedding rich cultural connotations into visual art. The drunken story symbolizes the pursuit of free spirit and the expression of human emotions, while the scene of Wang Xizhi feeding geese highlights the value of art, knowledge, and a refined way of living. These murals, painted on the walls of the ancestral hall, convey the family's respect for ancestors and the transmission of cultural and moral values through generations.



Figure 53. Bird and Flowers

Source: GuangHui, July. 14, 2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts a bird perched amidst a cluster of blooming flowers. The flowers are vibrant and colorful, while the bird's posture is natural, as if it is observing its surroundings. Such depictions often symbolize harmony, nature, and a prosperous life in traditional Chinese painting.

Background:

The background features delicately detailed branches and flowers, creating a serene and harmonious scene. The soft color palette of the background helps to emphasize the main subjects of the mural, drawing attention to the bird and flowers.

Color and Technique Analysis

Color Usage:

The mural primarily uses shades of green, yellow, and pink, with the green leaves and colorful flowers creating a striking contrast. The bird's muted tones complement the background's color scheme, highlighting the natural harmony within the scene.

Technique Usage:

This mural employs the traditional “gongbi” painting technique, with precise and detailed lines, especially in the depiction of the flowers and leaves. The bird's feathers and posture are rendered with great skill, adding a dynamic quality to the composition.

Cultural Significance in Ancestral Hall:

In the ancestral hall, the bird and flowers symbolize the family's prosperity and harmony. The flowers often represent wealth and happiness, while the bird stands for freedom and longevity. This combination conveys a wish for the family's bright future and enduring success.



Figure 54. Lotus and Bird

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural features a bird perched on a lotus stem, surrounded by lush lotus leaves. In Chinese culture, the lotus symbolizes purity, nobility, and detachment from worldly concerns, often used to express a high moral character.

Background:

The background is set in a serene waterside scene, with layers of lotus leaves creating a natural depth. The overall soft color scheme enhances the elegance of the lotus and the delicate movement of the bird.

Color and Technique Analysis

Color Usage:

The green of the lotus leaves contrasts beautifully with the pink of the lotus flower, while the bird's subdued colors keep the focus on the lotus. The harmonious color palette of the mural communicates a sense of calm and tranquility.

Technique Usage:

The artist used the “gongbi” painting technique to great effect, particularly in capturing the details of the lotus leaves and flowers. The bird's pose complements the gentle elegance of the lotus, adding a sense of liveliness to the composition.

Cultural Significance in Ancestral Hall:

In the context of the ancestral hall, the lotus represents purity and longevity, while the bird symbolizes peace and harmonious family life. This mural conveys admiration for the moral values of the family members and a wish for a peaceful, united household.

Comprehensive Analysis

Symbolism in the Ancestral Hall:

Both murals depict harmonious scenes from nature involving flowers and birds, symbolizing family unity, prosperity, and happiness. The first mural, with its combination of flowers and a bird, conveys aspirations for wealth and freedom, while the second mural uses the purity of the lotus and the bird's liveliness to praise the family's high moral standards and desire for a beautiful life. In the ancestral hall, these murals are not just decorative; they are profound expressions of family culture and values.

This section presents an analysis of the murals located on the ceiling of the central hall, which serves as the meeting hall of the ancestral complex. The central hall primarily functions as a gathering space for clan members to convene and conduct important discussions. Currently, the ceiling of this area features a series of intricately painted murals. The following is a detailed analysis of these murals and their cultural significance within the context of the hall's purpose.



Figure 55. Landscape with Pavilion

Source: GuangHui, July. 14, 2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts a traditional landscape scene, featuring a pavilion standing amidst a lush forest, surrounded by dense vegetation and rocks. The overall composition reflects the style of classical Chinese landscape painting, conveying a sense of vastness and depth through its layered depiction of natural elements.

Background:

The background features distant mountains and soft-toned vegetation, creating a clear contrast with the foreground elements like trees, rocks, and the pavilion. This background treatment enhances the sense of spatial depth, highlighting the visual impact of the scene.

Color and Technique Analysis

Color Usage:

The mural employs traditional shades of green and blue, commonly found in Chinese landscape paintings. The interplay of light and dark tones in the trees and rocks conveys the rich texture of the natural environment. The brighter colors of the

pavilion stand out against the surrounding nature, emphasizing its central role in the scene.

Technique Usage:

The artist utilized the “gongbi” meticulous painting technique, particularly in the fine details of the pavilion and the surrounding foliage. The precise lines and delicate brushwork bring out the elegance of the landscape, creating a harmonious balance between natural and architectural elements.

Cultural Significance in Ancestral Hall:

In the context of the ancestral hall, the depiction of the landscape with a pavilion symbolizes harmony between nature and humanity. It reflects the family's appreciation of the natural world and their pursuit of a tranquil, harmonious life. The pavilion signifies the family's stable position within nature and their aspiration for a peaceful existence.



Figure 56. Waterfall and Distant Mountains

Source: GuangHui, July. 14, 2024 photographed

Description:

This mural showcases a scene of a cascading waterfall set against a backdrop of rolling mountains. The lush trees and flowing water in the foreground create a dynamic representation of nature's vitality and beauty.

Background:

The layered mountains in the background contrast with the vibrant waterfall and trees in the foreground. The soft treatment of the distant mountains complements

the flowing water, which serves as the focal point of the mural, enhancing the sense of movement and depth.

Color and Technique Analysis

Color Usage:

The mural predominantly features shades of green, white, and gray, emphasizing the serene and peaceful quality of the natural scene. The white of the waterfall contrasts with the green trees and rocks, creating a striking visual effect that captures the viewer's attention.

Technique Usage:

The artist employed the “gongbi” technique once again, with careful attention to the layers of the landscape and the dynamic portrayal of the waterfall. The detailed rendering of the trees and rock textures adds realism and a sense of dimension to the natural scene.

Cultural Significance in Ancestral Hall:

The depiction of the waterfall and distant mountains on the walls of the ancestral hall symbolizes resilience and strength in the face of challenges. The force of the waterfall represents a spirit of perseverance, while the endless mountains signify the family's pursuit of stability and continuity. This natural landscape is not only a visual representation of the environment but also a reflection of the family's values and their commitment to enduring principles.

Comprehensive Analysis

Symbolism in the Ancestral Hall:

Both murals use landscape elements to portray the harmonious relationship between nature and family values. The landscape with the pavilion symbolizes the family's presence in nature and their aspiration for a peaceful life, while the waterfall and distant mountains represent resilience and steadfastness. Within the ancestral hall, these murals serve not only as decoration but also as a profound expression of cultural heritage and family ideals.



Figure 57. Bird on a Plum Branch

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts a bird perched on the branch of a plum tree. The bird's posture appears calm and elegant, while the surrounding branches are adorned with blooming plum blossoms. In traditional Chinese culture, plum blossoms symbolize resilience and purity, often flourishing in the cold winter, representing strength and perseverance.

Background:

The background is kept minimal, allowing the focus to remain on the bird and the plum branches. The delicate depiction of the tree and blossoms creates a serene and poetic atmosphere, highlighting the elegant beauty of the scene.

Color and Technique Analysis

Color Usage:

The bird is painted in shades of gray and black, which contrasts beautifully with the subtle tones of the plum blossoms. The overall color palette is subdued, emphasizing the natural grace of the scene while maintaining harmony with the ancestral hall's environment.

Technique Usage:

The mural employs the “gongbi ” meticulous painting technique, characterized by its detailed line work and precision. The careful rendering of the bird's feathers and the intricate design of the plum blossoms demonstrate the artisan's skill, bringing a sense of liveliness to the artwork.

Cultural Significance in Ancestral Hall:

In the ancestral hall setting, the combination of the bird and plum blossoms serves as a symbol of hope, perseverance, and the endurance of the family through difficult times. The plum blossom's ability to thrive in cold weather represents the family's resilience, while the bird adds a touch of elegance and grace to the scene.



Figure 58. Peacock Among Flowers

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural features a peacock standing gracefully amidst a cluster of yellow flowers. The peacock is a symbol of beauty, grace, and prosperity in Chinese culture, often associated with nobility and elegance. The vibrant plumage of the peacock and the surrounding flowers create a striking visual composition.

Background:

The background remains simple and understated, focusing on the lush foliage and the detailed plumage of the peacock. The use of natural elements like rocks and plants enhances the overall harmony of the scene, blending seamlessly with the ancestral hall's decorative style.

Color and Technique Analysis

Color Usage:

The peacock's vibrant green and blue feathers contrast with the bright yellow flowers, creating a visually dynamic effect. The color combination highlights the beauty and elegance of the peacock while maintaining a balanced and harmonious relationship with the surrounding flora.

Technique Usage:

The use of the “gongbi” technique is evident in the fine details of the peacock's feathers and the intricate depiction of the flowers. The meticulous brushwork emphasizes the peacock's delicate beauty, enhancing the overall aesthetic appeal of the mural.

Cultural Significance in Ancestral Hall:

Within the context of the ancestral hall, the peacock symbolizes grace, beauty, and the aspiration for prosperity. The inclusion of yellow flowers adds a touch of auspiciousness, representing wealth and good fortune. Together, the peacock and flowers reflect the family's desire for elegance, success, and a harmonious life.

Comprehensive Analysis

Symbolism in the Ancestral Hall:

Both murals emphasize the beauty of nature and its symbolic meanings within the ancestral hall. The bird on the plum branch represents resilience and the enduring spirit of the family, while the peacock among flowers symbolizes prosperity, grace, and nobility. These elements combined in the murals convey the family's values of strength, elegance, and the pursuit of a prosperous future. In the ancestral hall, these murals serve not only as decorative art but also as expressions of the family's cultural heritage and aspirations.



Figure 59. Ink-Style Dragon Variant Decoration

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural presents a unique variant of a dragon, rendered in an ink-style design. The dragon's form is depicted with flowing lines and intricate patterns, emphasizing its dynamic movement and graceful curves. In traditional Chinese culture, dragons symbolize power, strength, and good fortune. This particular dragon variant is adapted to fit the specific shape of the roof structure, demonstrating a close relationship between the mural design and the architectural elements of the ancestral hall.

Background:

The background is kept simple, using a monochromatic color palette that highlights the dragon's detailed patterns. The use of a black base with white accents creates a striking contrast, making the dragon's form stand out prominently against the wall.

Positional Information:

These murals are located symmetrically at the same position on the roof ridges of both the left and right halls, creating a balanced design. This symmetrical placement enhances the overall sense of unity in the architectural design while emphasizing the protective and guardian role that the dragon symbolizes in different locations. This layout highlights the deliberate planning in the spatial design of the ancestral hall.

Color and Technique Analysis

Color Usage:

The dragon's design employs a traditional ink style, with black and gray as the primary colors. This monochrome approach effectively accentuates the dragon's intricate patterns and the fluidity of its form. The contrast between the dragon's lines and the dark background enhances its visual impact, making the figure appear more vivid.

Technique Usage:

The mural utilizes traditional Chinese ink painting techniques, known for their precise and expressive line work. The scales, curves, and flowing mane of the dragon are meticulously detailed, showcasing the artist's skill in creating depth and dimension using minimal color. The adaptation of the dragon's form to the roof's shape demonstrates a seamless blend between art and architectural design.

Cultural Significance in Ancestral Hall:

In the context of the ancestral hall, dragons symbolize protection, strength, and good fortune. The positioning of these dragons on the ceiling or roof ridge is especially significant, as they are believed to safeguard the space they inhabit and bring good fortune. The symmetrical placement of these dragon designs on the roof ridges of both halls not only enhances the visual balance of the architecture but also conveys the family's aspirations for strength, harmony, and prosperity.



Figure 60. Flowers and Butterflies

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts a few blooming pink flowers with two butterflies fluttering above them. The flowers are lush, and the butterflies gracefully fly through the air, representing the harmony and vitality of nature. In traditional Chinese culture, the combination of flowers and butterflies symbolizes beauty, prosperity, and the fleeting nature of life.

Background:

The background is simple, primarily white, highlighting the flowers and butterflies. The branches sway gently, and the butterflies' movements bring a sense of life and energy to the scene. The overall composition is elegant and highly decorative.

Color and Technique Analysis

Color Usage:

The colors are soft, with pink flowers and green leaves contrasting with the light-colored butterflies. The light tones of the butterflies emphasize their delicacy, and the overall scene creates an atmosphere of tranquility and harmony.

Technique Usage:

This mural uses traditional Chinese gongbi (meticulous) painting techniques. The details of the flowers and butterflies are depicted with precision, showcasing the artist's craftsmanship. The flowing and delicate lines, especially in the flower petals and the wings of the butterflies, add to the beauty of the mural.

Cultural Significance in Ancestral Hall:

In the context of the ancestral hall, the flowers and butterflies symbolize the family's prosperity and harmony. The fleeting beauty of the butterflies and the blooming flowers convey a wish for the family's ongoing prosperity and longevity, reflecting cultural values of continuity and flourishing life.



Figure 61. Flowers and Hummingbirds

Source: GuangHui, July. 14, 2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts a tall cluster of blooming flowers with several hummingbirds flying around them. The hummingbirds hover in the air while the flowers bloom in full, presenting a sense of vibrancy and liveliness in nature. In Chinese culture, hummingbirds represent vitality and energy, while blooming flowers symbolize wealth and prosperity.

Background:

The background is similarly simple, focusing on the interaction between the hummingbirds and the flowers. The birds' movements add dynamism to the scene, and the lush foliage of the flowers contributes to the sense of natural beauty and life.

Color and Technique Analysis

Color Usage:

The colors of the hummingbirds and flowers are more vibrant, with the pink flowers contrasting against the green leaves, while the hummingbirds' lighter colors emphasize their delicate flight. The overall palette is rich yet harmonious, creating a vivid visual effect.

Technique Usage:

The mural also employs traditional gongbi painting techniques, particularly in the detailed depiction of the flowers and hummingbirds. The fluidity of the lines and the precision in the depiction of the birds' movements and the texture of the flowers enhance the liveliness of the scene.

Cultural Significance in Ancestral Hall:

In the ancestral hall, the combination of hummingbirds and flowers symbolizes vitality, prosperity, and wealth. The active hummingbirds and the lush flowers convey a message of the family's thriving success, representing the hope for continued happiness and longevity.

Overall Analysis

Symbolic Meaning in the Ancestral Hall:

Both murals use natural elements such as flowers, butterflies, and hummingbirds to express the family's aspirations for a prosperous and harmonious life. The flowers and butterflies emphasize the beauty and transience of life, while the hummingbirds and flowers symbolize energy and prosperity. These murals are not just decorative art but also reflect the deep cultural hope for familial success and happiness.



Figure 62. Lion in the Mountains

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description

This mural depicts a majestic lion standing on a rocky mountain. The lion's posture is powerful and imposing, with its head held high, symbolizing strength and courage. In traditional Chinese culture, lions often represent authority, nobility, and the protective power of a family.

Background

The background features mountains and trees, showcasing a natural environment for the lion. The towering peaks and soft background colors contrast with the bright yellow of the lion, highlighting it as the focal point.

Color and Technique Analysis

Color Usage:

The lion's color is predominantly yellow, with its mane depicted in a darker shade to emphasize thickness and strength. The background mountains and trees are painted in softer greens and grays, further highlighting the lion's central position. The contrast between the lion's bright colors and the softer background creates a dynamic and vivid scene.

Technique Usage:

This mural uses traditional gongbi (meticulous brushwork) techniques. The lion's muscles and fur are finely detailed, showcasing the craftsman's high level of skill. The flowing yet strong lines of the lion, combined with the detailed depiction of the mountain landscape, add depth and layers to the mural.

Cultural Background and Significance in the Ancestral Hall

The Lion in Chinese Painting History:

Lions are not native to China and were introduced into Chinese culture through Buddhism around the Han Dynasty. Initially, lions appeared in Buddhist temples' carvings and murals as protective guardian creatures. Stone lions were often placed at the entrances of temples and important buildings to symbolize protection and guardianship. By the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the lion had become a popular symbol of power and authority in paintings and sculptures, particularly in official buildings and ancestral halls, representing guardianship and honor.

Cultural Significance in the Ancestral Hall:

In ancestral halls, lions symbolize the protective power and noble status of the family. They represent strength and courage, symbolizing the resilience and protective abilities of the family in the face of challenges. As an important decorative element, the lion adds a sense of majesty to the ancestral hall and conveys hope for the family's prosperity and success.



Figure 63. Elephant in a Mountainous Landscape

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description

This mural depicts an elephant standing amidst a landscape of mountains and water. In Chinese culture, elephants symbolize good fortune, strength, and wisdom. The phrase “太平有象” (peace is present when elephants appear) is often associated with the peaceful and prosperous symbolism of elephants.

Background

The background shows distant mountain peaks and tropical plants, especially palm trees, representing the natural habitat of the elephant. The distant mountains and trees create multiple layers in the composition, drawing focus to the elephant as the visual center of the mural.

Color and Technique Analysis

Color Usage:

The elephant is painted in a soft beige color, while the background consists of muted greens and blues, creating a harmonious natural atmosphere. The gentle color palette contrasts with the more prominent figure of the elephant, making it stand out.

Technique Usage:

This mural also employs traditional gongbi techniques. The elephant's form is accurately proportioned, particularly in its body and tusks, demonstrating the craftsman's keen understanding of animal anatomy. The depiction of the background's mountains and plants is simple, but it provides a fitting backdrop that enhances the depth and space of the mural.

Cultural Background and Significance in the Ancestral Hall

The Elephant in Chinese Painting History:

Elephants have a long history in Chinese culture, often associated with Buddhism. In Buddhist art, elephants symbolize good fortune and wisdom, with the white elephant in particular representing the birth of Buddha. Over time, elephants became a symbol of wealth and prosperity in secular Chinese culture. The phrase “太平有象” expresses peace and tranquility, with elephants symbolizing a peaceful and stable society. In Song and Ming Dynasty paintings, elephants were often depicted in festive and auspicious scenes, representing family prosperity and social stability.

Cultural Significance in the Ancestral Hall:

In the ancestral hall, elephants symbolize the family's good fortune and wisdom. They represent peace and stability, symbolizing the family's flourishing and harmony. The saying “太平有象” not only conveys a wish for family harmony but also symbolizes the family's stable position in society. The inclusion of natural

scenery not only beautifies the space but also reflects the transmission of family values and heritage.

Comprehensive Analysis

Symbolism in the Ancestral Hall

Both murals “the lion in the mountains” and “the elephant in the landscape” not only beautify the ancestral hall but also carry rich cultural meanings. The lion represents strength and courage, while the elephant symbolizes peace and wisdom. By placing these two animals in the decoration of the ancestral hall, the murals not only display the harmony between nature and animals but also carry blessings for the family's prosperity, strength, and wisdom.

Position and Layout:

These two murals are symmetrically placed on the same positions of the ridges of the left and right halls. This symmetrical layout not only enhances the overall design of the architecture but also emphasizes the protective and guardian symbolism of the dragon in different locations. This design shows the masterful planning of the ancestral hall's spatial layout, combining art and architecture.

Integration of Cultural and Historical Contexts:

The evolution of lions and elephants in Chinese painting history is closely tied to their symbolic meanings in the ancestral hall. The lion's majesty and strength and the elephant's auspiciousness and peace are reflections of family culture and protection within the hall. Analyzing the development of these animals in Chinese art helps to understand their cultural significance in the ancestral hall murals and adds academic depth to the dissertation.

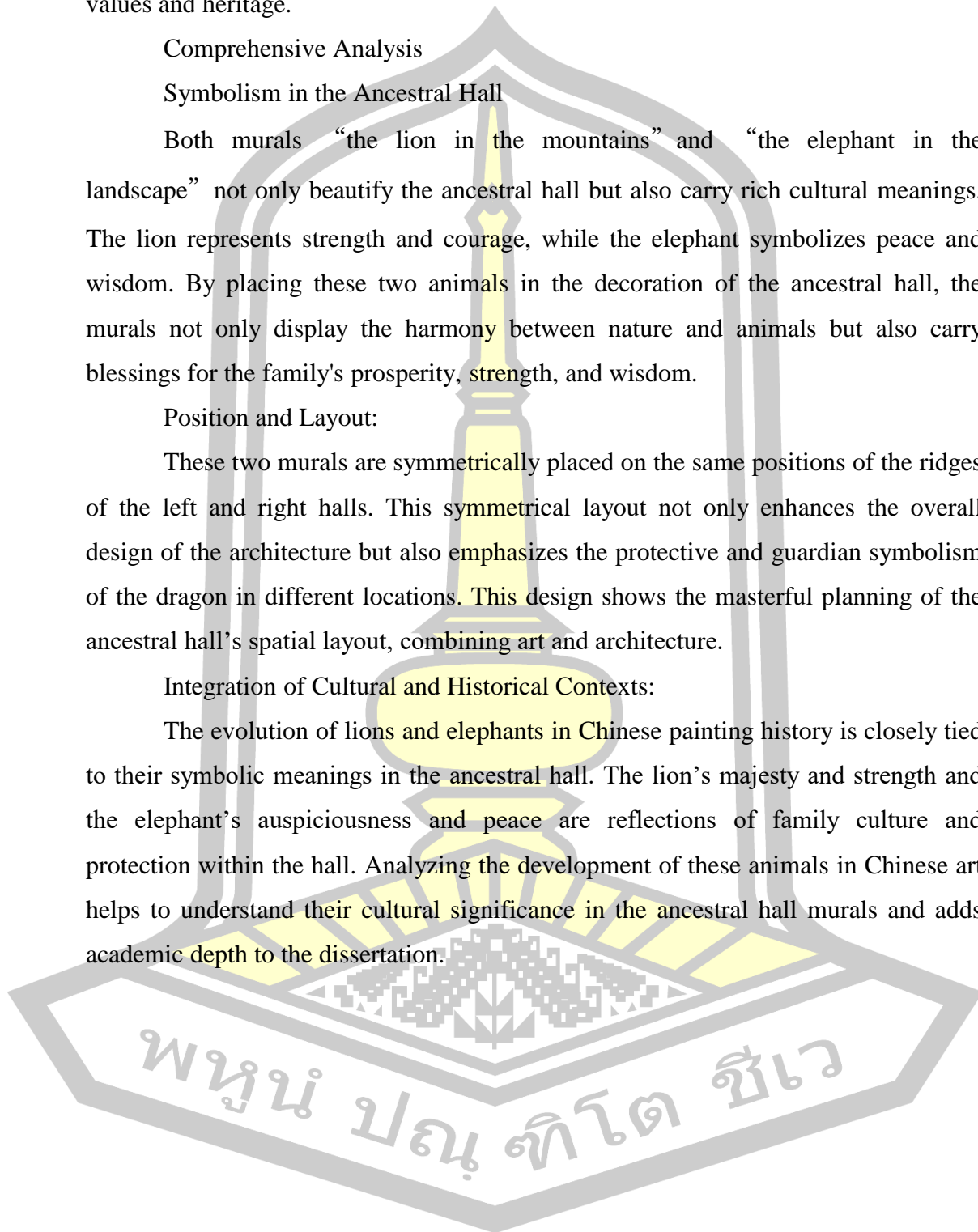




Figure 64. The Eight Trigrams Formation

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts the famous military formation known as the "Eight Trigrams Formation," which was designed by the renowned strategist Zhuge Liang during the Three Kingdoms period. On the right side, a general in armor is shown riding a horse, symbolizing battle readiness, while the distant mountains and rocks represent the complex battlefield terrain, forming the Eight Trigrams Formation. The scholar dressed in blue on the left, holding a feather fan, symbolizes the brilliant strategist Zhuge Liang.

Historical Background:

The Eight Trigrams Formation was a strategic defense designed by Zhuge Liang, Prime Minister of Shu Han, during the Three Kingdoms era. It made use of natural terrains and arranged stones and objects in such a way that created a defense capable of both offense and defense. In "Romance of the Three Kingdoms", Zhuge Liang deployed this formation multiple times to successfully fend off attacks from the armies of Wu and Wei.

Technique Analysis:

This mural employs the traditional "gongbi" technique, with delicate and smooth lines. The attention to detail in the clothing, facial expressions, and the complex terrain of the battlefield demonstrates the artist's mastery. The mountains and formations in the background, along with the smooth transitions in the lines and color

gradients, vividly bring out the complexity of the Eight Trigrams Formation, imbuing the scene with a sense of strategy and historical gravitas.

Cultural Significance:

The Eight Trigrams Formation not only symbolizes wisdom but also represents the protective spirit of the family. By depicting Zhuge Liang and his formation, the mural conveys reverence for the ancestral wisdom and the family's protective strength. It embodies the values of strategic foresight and unity in complex situations, resonating with the core beliefs of the clan.



Figure 65. The Legend of the Finishing Touch
Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural recreates the famous Chinese legend of "Finishing Touch." At the center of the painting, a painter is seen adding the eyes to a dragon, while the onlookers focus intently, anticipating the moment when the dragon will come to life. The tools of the painter are set on a table beside him, and the background shows a traditional courtyard, symbolizing the setting of this legendary event.

Historical Background:

The story of "Finishing Touch" originates from the Southern Dynasties and is attributed to the renowned painter Zhang Sengyao. Legend has it that Zhang once painted four dragons on a temple wall but intentionally left their eyes unfinished, explaining that if he added the eyes, the dragons would fly away. Upon public insistence, Zhang finally completed the eyes for two of the dragons, and they indeed

soared into the sky. This story symbolizes the transformative power of a single crucial action.

Technique Analysis:

The artist's use of the “gongbi” technique here is evident in the intricate depiction of the dragon's body. The dragon’s scales, claws, and dynamic posture are rendered with meticulous attention to detail, giving the impression that the dragon is already on the verge of coming to life. The background architecture and figures are thoughtfully depicted, creating a rich narrative scene that enhances the storytelling aspect of the mural.

Cultural Significance:

In the ancestral hall context, the legend of "Finishing Touch" represents the family’s ability to make pivotal decisions at critical moments. It also symbolizes leadership and creativity within the family, suggesting that even the smallest action or decision can significantly alter the course of events. By depicting this story, the mural highlights the leadership and wisdom of the family elders and conveys hopes for the family's future development.

Combined Analysis: Technique and Cultural Values

Both murals utilize the traditional “gongbi” technique, which emphasizes precise and detailed lines. In the “Eight Trigrams Formation”, the intricate portrayal of the terrain and figures demonstrates the artist's ability to convey both historical complexity and strategic intelligence. In “The Legend of the Finishing Touch”, the lifelike depiction of the dragon emphasizes the critical moment of transformation, capturing the viewer's attention.

Culturally, these two murals together represent core family values such as wisdom, leadership, creativity, and the protective strength passed down through generations. In the ancestral hall, they serve not only as decorative pieces but also as profound reminders of the importance of foresight and decisive action in preserving and strengthening the family legacy.

4.2.4 The Space and Function of the Ancestral Hall’s Rear Hall (寢殿)

The rear hall, located at the deepest part of the ancestral hall, serves as the core of the entire structure. Its primary function is to house the ancestral tablets and facilitate important family and clan activities.

Functions and Cultural Connotations of the Rear Hall

As the central area of the ancestral hall, the rear hall fulfills the following key functions:

Ancestral Worship: The rear hall features a shrine dedicated to housing ancestral tablets, which form the spiritual core of the entire ancestral hall. Family members perform rituals here to honor their ancestors, continuing traditions of filial piety and reverence for their forebears.

Clan Deliberations: Beyond its ritualistic purposes, the rear hall also serves as a venue for clan gatherings, discussions, and the enforcement of family rules. It embodies the organizational structure and governance within the family, symbolizing the cohesion of the lineage.

Cultural Heritage: The rear hall is adorned with decorative elements such as couplets, plaques, and murals, which collectively represent the family's historical legacy, values, and cultural symbolism. These visual elements serve not only as cultural carriers but also as mediums for imparting respect for ancestors and fostering a sense of family honor among future generations.

4.2.5 Arrangement and Symbolic Significance of Murals in the Rear Hall

The murals in the rear hall typically revolve around themes of family culture, natural landscapes, and auspicious symbols. As a crucial part of the rear hall's décor, the murals enhance the cultural ambiance of the space and convey the family's spiritual aspirations through specific imagery.

For instance:

Natural Landscape Themes: Common depictions of mountains, rivers, pine trees, and birds in the murals create a solemn and elegant atmosphere while symbolizing family prosperity and the continuity of life.

Auspicious Symbols and Meanings: Imagery such as dragons, phoenixes, peonies, and bamboo conveys meanings of good fortune, loyalty, and moral steadfastness, reflecting the family's aspirations for a virtuous and prosperous life.

Spatial Adaptation: The arrangement of the murals harmonizes with the structural characteristics of the rear hall. Given the enclosed nature of the space, the murals are often symmetrically displayed, integrating seamlessly with architectural features such as roof beams and walls, thereby creating a dignified and harmonious visual effect.

4.2.6 Sources and Artistic Features of the Murals

The murals in the rear hall of Guangfu ancestral halls are often created through the technique of “fenben” (draft tracing), with designs drawn from renowned artworks or classic painting manuals such as the “Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting”. Consequently, the murals do not necessarily reflect specific familial histories but instead adopt universally recognized cultural motifs to communicate shared ethical and aesthetic values.

This method of creation highlights the craftsmanship typical of Guangfu ancestral hall murals. During the creative process, the artists selected themes that aligned with the spatial structure and environment while incorporating local decorative elements. This approach ensured that the murals not only possessed artistic appeal but also complemented the rear hall’s functional and cultural significance.

There are 20 murals in the Peng ancestral hall, which are introduced by the specific murals below



Figure 66. TCorner Area Decorative Motif Phoenix and Flowers

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural is located in the corner area of the building, presenting an intricate pattern of curves and ornamental designs, blending cloud motifs with plant elements, which create a sense of movement and symmetrical beauty. The dragon-shaped variant extends visually across the decorative space, providing a smooth and continuous effect.

Spatial Integration:

Since the mural is positioned in the corner area of the building, it cleverly integrates with the spatial features of the architecture itself. The design of the curves complements the angle of the building, not only filling the visual gap in the corner but also enhancing the coherence of the space. This combination of space and pattern not only increases the decorative appeal but also demonstrates the artisans' deep understanding and respect for the architectural structure.

Color and Technique Analysis:

The mural utilizes vibrant yellows, greens, and blues as the primary color palette, further enhancing the liveliness and dimensionality of the pattern. The artisans employed meticulous “gongbi” techniques (fine-brush painting), capturing smooth lines and intricate details, particularly in the representation of the cloud motifs and dragon-shaped variants. The combination of color and technique imbues the mural with vitality and dynamic movement.

Cultural Significance:

In traditional Chinese culture, the dragon symbolizes power, prosperity, and good fortune. The use of the dragon-shaped variant in this mural not only symbolizes the protection of the architectural space but also expresses a wish for family prosperity and the safety of the household. The incorporation of the dragon motif into the corner of the building signifies the protection and continuity of the family's honor.

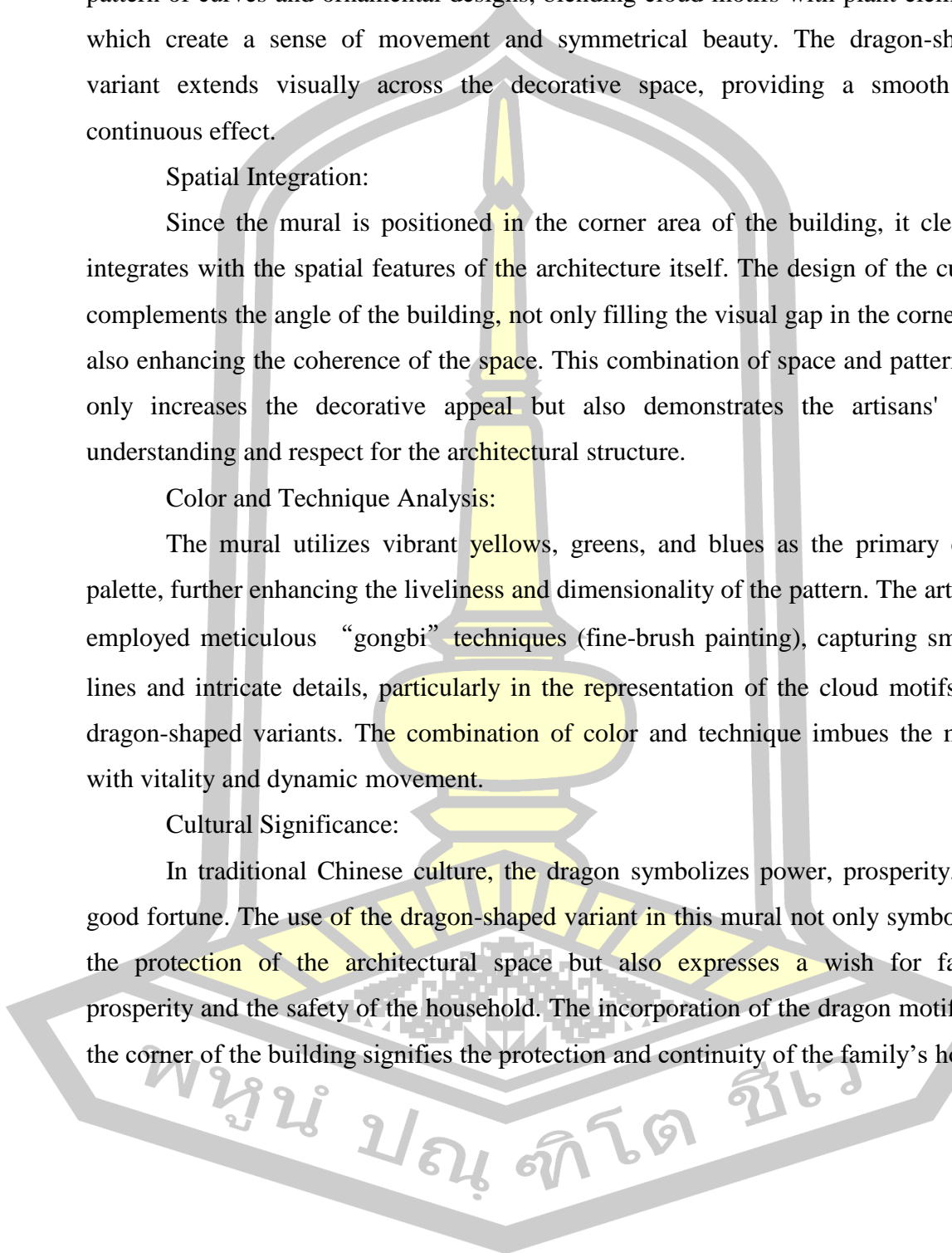




Figure 67. Phoenix and Flowers

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts a vividly colored phoenix standing amidst lush flowers. The phoenix's feathers are intricately detailed, with vibrant colors, particularly highlighting its moderately long tail feathers that make it especially eye-catching. The surrounding flowers are also meticulously painted, showcasing a variety of colors and vitality, giving the scene an elegant and noble aura.

Background Analysis:

The flowers in the background symbolize the flourishing of nature, often used in Chinese traditional culture to represent beauty and prosperity. In Chinese culture, the phoenix is regarded as a symbol of nobility, representing peace and harmony. The combination of the phoenix and flowers reinforces a positive meaning, conveying a hope for the family's prosperity and harmony in the ancestral hall.

Color and Technique Analysis:

The mural uses vivid colors, primarily gold, green, and red, creating strong visual contrasts and appeal. The fine detailing of the phoenix's feathers and the flowers demonstrates the skillful use of the "gongbi" technique, known for its meticulous brushstrokes. The craftsman's use of color gives the phoenix and the flowers a sense of life and dynamism.

Cultural Significance in Ancestral Hall:

In traditional Chinese culture, the phoenix is a symbol of good fortune, representing the family's glory and prosperity. In the context of an ancestral hall, the phoenix not only serves as decoration but also carries the family's wishes for a prosperous and harmonious future.



Figure 68. Long-Tailed Bird in the Mountains
Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural portrays a long-tailed bird perched confidently on a rock, surrounded by trees and mountains. The bird's elegant posture and its long tail feathers are particularly notable as it seems to be interacting with a smaller bird nearby. The scene conveys the vitality of nature, capturing the liveliness of the wildlife in the mountains.

Background Analysis:

The background of mountains and trees provides depth and a sense of space in the mural. The combination of rocks and vegetation highlights the complexity and diversity of the natural landscape, while the dynamic pose of the bird complements the natural setting, embodying the vitality and freedom of wildlife.

Color and Technique Analysis:

The color palette primarily features natural greens, browns, and grays, characteristic of traditional Chinese landscape paintings. The soft tones of the bird's

feathers blend harmoniously with the natural background, enhancing the mural's sense of peace and balance. The artist's craftsmanship is evident in the detailed portrayal of the bird's dynamic pose, creating a harmonious scene of nature and wildlife.

Cultural Significance in Ancestral Hall:

The long-tailed bird and mountain scene symbolize the freedom and vitality of nature. In the context of the ancestral hall, such images not only beautify the space but also represent the family's aspirations for freedom and prosperity, as well as a respect for the harmony of nature.

Combined Analysis:

These two murals, located in the same position on the left and right corridors of the sleeping hall, present different natural scenes and wildlife. The phoenix and flowers symbolize nobility and prosperity, while the long-tailed bird and mountain scenery represent freedom and harmony with nature. Together, they convey the family's hope for a bright future and a harmonious relationship with the natural world.



Figure 69. Landscape Paintings Based on Transfer Sketching Techniques

Source: GuangHui, July. 14, 2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts a serene natural landscape, with distant mountains and flowing rivers. Several stones and boats are scattered across the water, showcasing the

calm beauty of a typical southern Chinese water town. The composition is balanced, conveying a sense of harmony in nature.

Artistic Technique:

The composition and style of this mural bear a strong resemblance to traditional Chinese landscape painting. It likely stems from the use of transfer sketching techniques, where the artist copied materials from well-known masterpieces or classic painting manuals like the “Manual of the Mustard Seed Garden” . The artist probably extracted iconic elements of mountain and water scenes from these sources and adapted them to fit the architectural structure of the ancestral hall.

Cultural Significance:

In this type of mural, though the scene may seem simple, the craftsmen employed transfer sketching techniques to reproduce and interpret traditional Chinese aesthetics. These murals emphasize harmony and tranquility in nature, rather than carrying specific familial or cultural symbols.

Second Mural



Figure 70. Landscape Paintings Based on Transfer Sketching Techniques

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This second mural similarly portrays a peaceful river and mountain scene, with distant peaks and buildings nestled along the riverbank. The combination of architecture and nature evokes a sense of quiet elegance.

Artistic Technique:

This mural likely drew on elements from the “Manual of the Mustard Seed Garden” or other painting manuals, particularly in its rendering of mountains and pavilions. Here, the craftsman focused on replicating traditional compositions and techniques, without necessarily imbuing the painting with symbolic meaning related to the family. The creation process was more concerned with enhancing the space aesthetically rather than conveying family history.

Cultural Significance:

Although these landscape murals decorate the walls of the ancestral hall, their primary function is aesthetic enhancement rather than directly conveying cultural or familial heritage. The artist, through the use of transfer sketching and reinterpretation, enriched the hall visually but did not prioritize narrative symbolism.



Figure 71. Yellow Orioles and Flowers

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts two yellow birds resting on a lush, flowering branch, surrounded by blooming flowers. The yellow plumage of the birds contrasts beautifully with the soft pink blossoms, creating a harmonious and vibrant natural setting.

Background:

In ancient Chinese paintings, orioles frequently appeared alongside flowers in traditional templates (粉本), representing vitality and beauty in nature. The recurring use of such motifs underscores people's aspirations for a happy life and their admiration for natural beauty.

Identification and Symbolism:

The yellow birds in the mural are likely orioles. In Chinese traditional culture, orioles are considered auspicious birds, often symbolizing happiness, good fortune, and family harmony. The presence of these orioles not only enlivens the mural but also imbues it with a deeper symbolic meaning of well-being. In the context of an ancestral hall, the oriole's imagery reflects wishes for familial harmony and prosperity.

Cultural Significance in Ancestral Hall:

In an ancestral hall setting, this mural is more than decoration; it signifies the family's hope for happiness and unity. The combination of orioles and flowers embodies prosperity and blessings passed down through generations, enriching the cultural significance of the space.



Figure 72. Red-Crowned Cranes on Pine Tree

Source: GuangHui, July. 14, 2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts two red-crowned cranes standing gracefully on the branch of a pine tree, surrounded by dense pine needles. The elegant posture of the cranes complements the strength of the pine tree, creating a serene and dignified atmosphere.

Symbolism of Cranes and Pines:

Both the red-crowned crane and the pine tree are auspicious symbols in traditional culture. The crane represents longevity, grace, and loyalty, while the pine symbolizes resilience and endurance. The pairing of cranes and pine trees conveys wishes for longevity and respect for elders, a common theme in Chinese art.

Cultural Significance in Ancestral Hall:

Within the ancestral hall, the combination of cranes and pine trees not only conveys respect for long life and noble character but also reflects the family's desire for stability and continuity. This mural adds a sense of solemnity to the hall, serving as a visual blessing from elders to future generations for health and longevity.

These two murals, through various natural elements, embody the family's pursuit of harmony, prosperity, and longevity, offering a visual representation of the hall's cultural and spiritual heritage.



Figure 73. Bamboo and Hermit

Source: GuangHui, July. 14, 2024 photographed

Description:

The mural showcases a scene in a bamboo grove, with bamboo symbolizing purity and resilience, while the hermit represents a life of quiet retreat and detachment. The hermit is nestled within the bamboo forest, creating a harmonious

relationship between the figure and the natural surroundings, portraying a sense of transcendence and serenity.

Background:

In Chinese culture, bamboo is a symbol of humility, resilience, and tenacious vitality, while the hermit embodies ideals of seclusion and nobility. Traditionally, hermits lived away from society, pursuing inner peace and purity, embodying the family's aspiration for virtuous qualities.



Figure 74. Peony and Plum Blossoms

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural presents an elegant arrangement of peonies and plum blossoms. The peonies, with their lush petals and rich colors, represent wealth, prosperity, and nobility in Chinese culture. The branches of plum blossoms, with their sparse yet resilient appearance, stretch delicately across the mural, contrasting with the fullness of the peonies. The combination of these two plants forms a harmonious visual effect that conveys both beauty and endurance.

Cultural Symbolism:

In traditional Chinese symbolism, peonies are often referred to as the "king of flowers," symbolizing wealth, honor, and high social status. They are commonly used in decorative art to convey good fortune and success. Plum blossoms, on the other hand, represent perseverance and resilience, as they bloom in the harshness of winter, bringing a message of hope and endurance. Together, these flowers form a powerful

combination: the peony representing external prosperity and the plum blossom symbolizing inner strength and resilience.

Positioning in the Ancestral Hall:

Positioned within the ancestral hall, this mural serves not only as a decorative element but also as a symbolic reminder of the family's values. The pairing of peonies and plum blossoms conveys a balanced aspiration for both material prosperity and spiritual resilience. It reflects the family's hope for lasting wealth and the strength to withstand challenges, embodying both beauty and endurance in the family's legacy.

Artistic Techniques:

The mural uses traditional Chinese brush techniques to depict the delicate texture of peony petals and the rough, resilient branches of plum blossoms. The soft, flowing lines of the peony petals contrast with the sharp, angular strokes of the plum branches, enhancing the mural's visual richness. This technique highlights the careful craftsmanship involved and the aesthetic attention to detail that is characteristic of traditional Chinese mural art.

This analysis highlights how the mural combines cultural symbolism with artistic techniques to create a meaningful and visually appealing piece, conveying both beauty and deep cultural values within the ancestral hall.

As a pair of symmetrical decorative elements, these two murals embody respect for nature and the pursuit of noble qualities in life, while reflecting the ancestral hall's wishes for the family members' well-being and aspirations.



Figure 75. Pine Tree and Rocks

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts a sturdy pine tree alongside rugged rocks. The branches of the pine stretch upwards, demonstrating resilience and vitality. The rocks in the background add stability to the composition, creating a solemn and grounded atmosphere.

Cultural Symbolism:

In Chinese culture, the pine tree symbolizes endurance, longevity, and an indomitable spirit. Its evergreen nature throughout the seasons has made it a favorite subject for poets and scholars over centuries, symbolizing a family's resilience through hardships. The rocks represent firmness and stability, complementing the pine tree and emphasizing the family's solid foundations and the enduring values passed down through generations.

Artistic Technique:

The mural employs meticulous brushwork, with the pine's textures and the ruggedness of the rocks vividly rendered. Through variations in shading, the artist brings depth to the pine tree and solidity to the rocks, enhancing the three-dimensional effect and highlighting the tree's resilience and the rocks' steadfastness.

Role in the Ancestral Hall:

In the context of an ancestral hall, the imagery of pine and rocks serves as more than just decoration; it symbolizes the family's spirit. The pine tree stands for longevity and resilience, while the rocks represent a stable foundation, collectively expressing wishes for the family's continuity and prosperity.



Figure 76. Birds and Blossoms

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural portrays two birds perched on blooming branches. The birds, graceful and seemingly engaged in communication, bring vibrancy and liveliness to the scene. The colorful blossoms add to the atmosphere of vitality and harmony.

Cultural Symbolism:

In Chinese tradition, birds are often seen as symbols of happiness and harmony, particularly in an ancestral hall where they symbolize familial harmony and the prosperity of descendants. Blossoms represent beauty and thriving growth. Together, they convey a wish for family unity and flourishing, embodying hopes for the future generations.

Artistic Technique:

The feathers of the birds are meticulously detailed, with smooth lines and gentle colors, lending them a sense of liveliness. The blossoms show gradations in color, creating a natural sense of life and beauty, and showcasing the artist's skilled technique.

Role in the Ancestral Hall:

In the ancestral hall, the imagery of birds and blossoms not only enhances visual beauty but also embodies the family's aspirations. The birds and blossoms signify family harmony and prosperity, making this mural a representation of the family's vision for a thriving and harmonious life and blessings for future generations.

Combined Analysis

These two murals are symmetrically positioned within the hall, each expressing natural harmony and the core family values. The pine tree and rocks symbolize stability and resilience, while the birds and blossoms represent harmony and prosperity. This symmetrical arrangement achieves visual balance and culturally conveys the family's pursuit of enduring prosperity and internal harmony, creating a cohesive symbolic meaning.



Figure 77. Phoenix and Flowers

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description

This mural depicts a pair of phoenixes resting among blooming flowers. The male phoenix stands tall, its vibrant tail feathers raised high, symbolizing authority and nobility, while the female phoenix appears gentle and submissive, complementing the male and creating a harmonious scene. The surrounding flowers are in full bloom, their vibrant colors blending with the phoenixes' feathers, creating an atmosphere of peace and prosperity.

Cultural Background

The phoenix is one of the most iconic symbols in traditional Chinese culture, often paired with the dragon to represent nobility and auspiciousness. Historically, the phoenix symbolizes benevolence, justice, and peace and is often associated with family prosperity and flourishing. In traditional Chinese art, the phoenix is frequently combined with peonies or other flowers symbolizing wealth, forming auspicious motifs such as “The Phoenix Facing the Sun” or “Phoenix Perched on Wutong Tree.”

In ancient times, the phoenix was a symbol of imperial rites, but it was also adopted in folk art to symbolize family harmony and prosperity, reflecting aspirations for a happy and fulfilling life.

Color and Technique

Color Analysis: The mural employs gold, green, and red as dominant colors, highlighting the phoenix's noble aura while contrasting with the vibrant flowers, enhancing the visual impact.

Technical Execution: The phoenix's feathers are meticulously depicted using fine lines and shading techniques, particularly evident in the tail feathers, showcasing the artisan's exceptional skill. The flowers are symmetrically arranged, echoing the phoenixes and reinforcing the composition's balance.

Spatial and Cultural Significance

Located in a specific area of the ancestral hall, this mural aligns with the harmonious themes of family worship and ancestral hall culture. The phoenix symbolizes the noble lineage and flourishing development of the family, while the flowers represent wealth and enduring prosperity. Together, they enhance the aesthetic appeal of the ancestral hall and convey the family's hopes for harmony and happiness.

Analysis of Pounced Patterns

The phoenix's posture and the style of the flowers suggest that the mural was likely created based on pounced patterns. The phoenix's details and feathers closely resemble those found in traditional references, such as "The Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting", indicating the artist's adept use of classical motifs.

Comprehensive Analysis

This mural, through the combination of phoenixes and flowers, presents a scene of beauty and auspiciousness, reflecting the family's pursuit of prosperity and wealth. The phoenix symbolizes nobility and good fortune, while the flowers represent vitality and abundance. The overall composition, color application, and symbolic meaning highlight the ancestral hall's role as the spiritual center of the family and demonstrate the aesthetic principles of Chinese traditional art.



Figure 78. Mountain Rocks, Peacocks, and Flowers

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural features a pair of peacocks amidst mountain rocks and flowers. The male peacock fans its tail in a majestic pose, while the female peacock nestles beside it, creating a warm and harmonious atmosphere. The faint outline of mountains in the background complements the natural scene formed by the peacocks and flora.

Color and Technique Analysis:

The artist employed a rich color palette in this mural, particularly in the depiction of the peacock's tail and the flowers, showcasing exceptional skill through detailed color layering. The soft pink hues of the flowers contrast with the gray mountains in the background, making the peacock's bright plumage even more visually striking.

Symbolic Significance:

This mural similarly displays the combination of peacocks and flowers, representing auspiciousness, harmony, and prosperity in Chinese traditional culture. The elegant posture of the peacock, combined with the natural elements of the mountains and flowers, conveys the ancestral hall's wishes for family harmony and enduring prosperity.

Symmetrical Layout and Significance

The two murals are symmetrically placed in the same location within the ancestral hall, further reinforcing the symbolism of harmony and completeness. The combination of peacocks with peonies and rocks, arranged symmetrically, reflects the

ancestral hall's emphasis on familial relationships and the pursuit of happiness and fulfillment. This design not only enriches the decoration of the ancestral hall but also imbues the space with an atmosphere of auspiciousness and prosperity, embodying the traditional Chinese cultural aspiration for family unity and well-being.



Figure 79. Pastoral Landscape

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts a serene pastoral landscape. In the distance, gentle hills stretch along the horizon, while the calm river flows softly. A small boat with a fisherman casting a net adds a sense of tranquility to the scene. Trees and vegetation line the riverbank, evoking a feeling of peace and harmony with nature.

Color and Technique Analysis:

The mural uses soft tones, primarily green and blue, creating a calming atmosphere. The distant hills are rendered in light colors to give a sense of depth. Trees and the boat are finely detailed, employing traditional gongbi (meticulous) painting techniques, which bring clarity and layers to the scene.

Cultural Significance:

In the ancestral hall context, landscapes like this symbolize a desire for peace and harmonious living. This mural conveys admiration for nature's balance and implies wishes for the family's enduring prosperity and happiness.

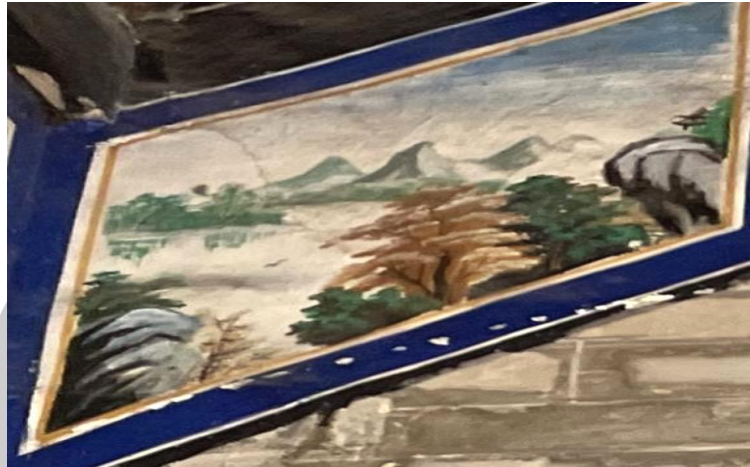


Figure 80. Distant Autumn Scene

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural portrays an autumn mountain landscape, where distant mountains are shrouded in mist, and trees show the warm tones of fall, with some leaves turning golden. The scene feels both tranquil and profound, inviting viewers to immerse themselves in the natural beauty and sense the seasonal change.

Color and Technique Analysis:

The mural features rich greens and browns, representing the texture and seasonal feel of the trees. The mountains are surrounded by mist, enhancing the mural's depth. Detailed gongbi techniques bring out the textures and forms of the trees, giving the composition a vivid and dimensional appearance.

Cultural Significance:

In the ancestral hall, the autumn scene symbolizes maturity and harvest, suggesting family prosperity and a thriving lineage. The mist-covered mountains hint at the depth and continuity of family history, embodying respect for ancestors and hopes for a bright future.

Combined Analysis

These two murals are symmetrically placed within the same area of the ancestral hall. The peaceful pastoral landscape contrasts with the profound autumn scene. The pastoral view symbolizes the tranquility of life and reverence for nature, while the autumn scene embodies the passage of time and maturity. Together, the

murals express the family's aspirations for peaceful lives and thriving generations, reflecting a traditional cultural appreciation for the cycles of nature and the continuity of life.



Figure 81. Chrysanthemums and Insects
Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural features vibrant chrysanthemums as the main subject, showcasing the vitality of blooming flowers in nature. Two insects, one yellow and one green, flutter around the flowers, adding a sense of motion to the composition. The detailed rendering of the flowers and leaves highlights the artisan's meticulous observation of nature and painting skill.

Color and Technique Analysis:

Color Usage:

The yellow chrysanthemums contrast sharply with the green leaves, emphasizing the flowers as the visual focal point. The yellow and green tones of the insects harmonize with the overall color scheme, enhancing the liveliness of the scene.

Technical Characteristics:

The mural employs the meticulous technique of *gongbi* painting, characterized by smooth lines and well-defined layers of flowers and leaves. The petals are delicately drawn, demonstrating the artisan's exceptional painting skills.

Symbolic Meaning:

In traditional Chinese culture, chrysanthemums symbolize purity, longevity, and the noble qualities of hermits. The insects represent vitality and harmony in nature. Together, the combination of chrysanthemums and insects conveys an appreciation for the beauty of nature and a wish for a prosperous and enduring life.

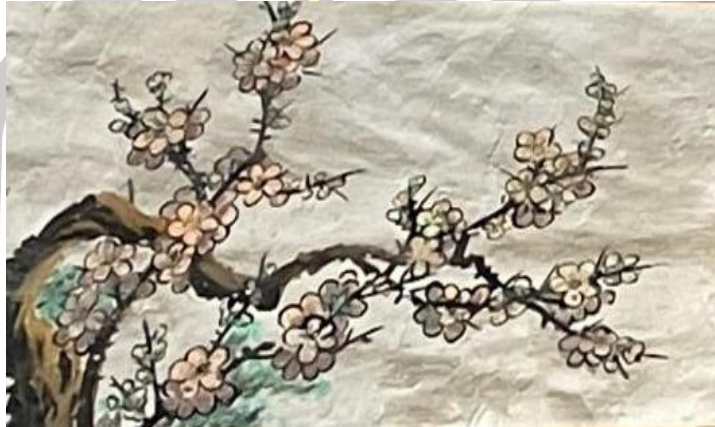


Figure 82. Plum Blossom Branch

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts a branch of plum blossoms with flowers blooming densely along its winding and gnarled branches. The soft pink and white hues of the petals contrast with the dark brown branches, while the simple background creates an elegant and refreshing atmosphere.

Color and Technique Analysis:

Color Usage:

The pink and white blossoms stand out against the dark branches, making the flowers the focal point. The background's simplicity enhances the overall serene and refined mood of the artwork.

Technical Characteristics:

The depiction of the branches uses lines of varying thickness to convey texture, while the blossoms are rendered in fine detail, emphasizing their delicate and vibrant nature.

Symbolic Meaning:

Plum blossoms are a symbol of resilience and purity in Chinese culture, often representing a steadfast spirit that withstands adversity. This mural conveys the

vitality of plum blossoms and the perseverance reflected in the branches' winding growth, embodying an indomitable spirit.

Combined Analysis:

These two murals, within the ancestral hall, represent distinct cultural values and aesthetic pursuits. The chrysanthemums and insects celebrate the beauty and prosperity of nature, along with wishes for longevity. The plum blossom branch symbolizes resilience and noble qualities. Both murals demonstrate the artisan's exceptional craftsmanship and convey deep cultural meanings. Together, they reflect the ancestral hall's decorative murals as both visually captivating and profoundly symbolic.



Figure 83. This mural depicts a classic Chinese landscape scene

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts a classic Chinese landscape scene. At the center of the composition is a tranquil lake with two boatmen leisurely paddling across its surface. Lush pine trees and colorful vegetation frame both sides of the lake, while distant mountains shrouded in mist provide a sense of depth. On the right side of the painting, a traditional Chinese pavilion blends harmoniously with the natural setting.

Color and Technique Analysis:

The mural employs traditional Chinese painting techniques with vibrant yet soft colors. The deep green of the pine trees contrasts sharply with the serene blue of the lake, enhancing the tranquil beauty of the natural environment. The mist effect is

achieved through ink-wash techniques, adding a dreamlike quality to the distant scenery.

Symbolism:

This mural conveys a serene and harmonious atmosphere, symbolizing an appreciation for natural beauty and the ideal of coexistence between humans and nature. The scene may also reflect the ancestral hall's aspirations for family prosperity and peace, symbolizing the stability and harmony passed down through generations.



Figure 84. The second mural portrays a vast mountain valley, featuring ancient rock formations and vegetation

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

The second mural portrays a vast mountain valley, featuring ancient rock formations and vegetation. The central focus is on a mountain range in the distance, with no human figures or man-made structures present, emphasizing the raw beauty of nature.

Color and Technique Analysis: The mural utilizes soft, natural tones with clearly defined layers to highlight the depth of the mountains. The intricate details of the rocks and plants are rendered with remarkable craftsmanship, showcasing the painter's artistic skill.

Symbolism:

This mural emphasizes the primal beauty of nature, untouched by human influence, symbolizing the enduring power and eternity of the natural world. The artwork may also reflect reverence for nature and imply the family's deep cultural heritage and lasting vitality.

Comprehensive Analysis

Together, these murals form a symmetrical pair, offering contrasting yet complementary perspectives on nature: one illustrates the harmony between humans and nature, while the other focuses on nature's majestic and untamed essence. These murals not only demonstrate exquisite artistic techniques but also convey the ancestral hall's emphasis on harmony and stability. The symmetrical placement of the murals likely signifies the family's value for balance, a core philosophy of the hall as a collective memory space.



Figure 85. Rooster and Hen

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural depicts a rooster and a hen foraging in a grassy area. The rooster stands tall with a proud posture and vibrant tail feathers, symbolizing its majesty and confidence. The hen is portrayed with its head lowered, focused on the ground, reflecting gentleness and tranquility. The background consists of trees and rocks, creating a harmonious rural atmosphere.

Color and Technique Analysis:

The mural employs a combination of vivid colors and subtle ink tones. The rooster's feathers are detailed with intricate layers, emphasizing its elegance, while the hen is depicted with softer hues to highlight its tenderness. The green and brown tones in the background enhance the serene, natural ambiance.

Cultural Significance:

In Chinese traditional culture, chickens symbolize good fortune and diligence. The rooster represents courage and confidence, while the hen signifies warmth and familial responsibility. This mural conveys values of family harmony and industrious living through the imagery of chickens in a natural setting.



Figure 86. Quails and Fruit Tree

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Description:

This mural portrays a pair of quails near a fruit tree. The quails appear lively and alert, while the tree is laden with fruit, symbolizing abundance and prosperity in nature. The background is dominated by soft green hues, illustrating the tranquility of the countryside.

Color and Technique Analysis:

The artwork utilizes gentle colors, particularly in the depiction of the quails, where the gradations of ink create detailed textures and patterns on their feathers. The yellow fruits on the tree add a pop of brightness, contrasting with the green background and enhancing the visual depth of the composition.

Cultural Significance:

Quails symbolize peace and stability in Chinese culture, while fruit-bearing trees represent harvest and blessings. Through the harmonious depiction of animals and plants, the mural conveys wishes for a peaceful and prosperous family life.

Combined Analysis:

Positioned symmetrically on the same walls of the ancestral hall, these two murals emphasize animals in their natural environments, highlighting themes of

family harmony and natural abundance. The rooster and hen symbolize industriousness and familial roles, while the quails signify peace and prosperity. Together, they reflect respect for nature and family values, celebrating the simplicity and beauty of rural life.

4.2.7 Modern Landscape and Flower-Bird Murals: Content and Layout

The modern landscape and flower-bird murals displayed on the walls of the ancestral hall exhibit a fresh and elegant style. Unlike traditional murals, these works showcase a stronger focus on modern artistic techniques and decorative characteristics while reflecting the local community's aesthetic and cultural heritage.

1. Features of Thematic Content

Landscape Scenes: Most of the murals feature themes of verdant mountains and tranquil waters, with pavilions, small boats, and fishermen adding detail. These elements together create a serene and expansive atmosphere.

Flower-Bird Imagery: Another category of works centers on colorful flowers and lively birds. For instance, the "Hundred Birds Mural" vividly portrays various avian species, highlighting the diversity and vitality of nature.

2. Spatial Logic of Mural Display

These murals are predominantly hung in prominent areas of the ancestral hall, arranged symmetrically or in a balanced manner:

Combination of Decoration and Functionality: The works fill the blank spaces on the walls while enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the interior environment.

Integration of Culture and Aesthetics: The themes of these murals carry auspicious meanings and align with the traditional reverence for nature in ancestral hall culture.

3. Modernized Techniques and Styles

These murals utilize brighter colors and dynamic brushstrokes, appealing to contemporary tastes and differing from traditional mural styles:

Delicacy and Realism: Many of the works emphasize the textures and details of the depicted subjects, aiming for a sense of realism.

Dynamic Composition: In murals like the "Hundred Birds Mural," the multidirectional movements of the birds inject vitality into the imagery, making the space feel more animated.

4. Aesthetic and Cultural Significance

These modern works not only reflect the advancement of contemporary art but also demonstrate the ancestral hall's adaptability to artistic expressions across different eras:

Aesthetic Value: These murals continue the ancestral hall's pursuit of beauty, enriching the space while enhancing its visual appeal.

5. Cultural Significance: While they may lack the deep historical connotations of traditional murals, these artworks convey modern familial aspirations for harmony, nature, and prosperity, contributing to the continuity of cultural values.

By integrating modern artistic methods with traditional settings, these murals play a supplementary yet valuable role in enhancing the ancestral hall's environment and cultural resonance.

Next, the ten modern flower-and-bird paintings in the main hall will be analyzed in detail:



Figure 87. Modern flowers and birds

Source: GuangHui, July. 14, 2024 photographed

Content and Composition

This painting portrays a vibrant gathering of various birds in a lush, natural setting, centered around a large tree by a pond. The composition includes diverse species such as peacocks, ducks, cranes, and other birds, all interacting peacefully in a harmonious natural environment. The birds are depicted in various states of activity, such as flying, perching, and swimming, which brings dynamism and life to the scene.

The backdrop features a serene pond and dense foliage, enhancing the naturalistic setting of the artwork.

Symbolic Significance

Natural Beauty: The diverse assembly of birds symbolizes the beauty and variety of life, celebrating the richness of nature. This depiction of different species coexisting peacefully may also represent an ideal of harmony and balance in the natural world.

Cultural Meaning: Birds have significant cultural symbolism in many traditions. For instance, peacocks are often seen as symbols of beauty and pride, while cranes are revered as symbols of longevity and wisdom. The presence of these birds together in a single scene might suggest a unification of various positive qualities such as grace, wisdom, and beauty.

Ancestral Hall Spirit: The mural likely reflects the ancestral family's values and aspirations, such as a desire for peace, longevity, and prosperity. The flourishing natural scene can be seen as a metaphor for the family's wish for continuous growth and harmony.

Spatial Context Analysis

Decorative Function: The vivid depiction of the birds and the lush environment not only adds aesthetic value to the space but also serves as a reminder of the beauty of the natural world, which can provide a contemplative or calming influence in the ancestral hall.

Cultural Ambiance

The choice of birds, each with its own set of meanings and associations, contributes to a cultural narrative that blends natural beauty with symbolic depth. This enhances the cultural resonance of the space, making it not just a place of familial reverence but also of cultural celebration.

Modern Artistic Integration

While rooted in traditional themes of nature, the style and vivid coloring give the mural a fresh and contemporary feel, suggesting an embrace of modern artistic methods while still honoring traditional values.

This mural serves as both a celebration of natural beauty and a symbol of the family's values, blending traditional symbolism with modern artistic expression to enrich both the aesthetic and the spiritual atmosphere of the ancestral hall.



Figure 88. Landscape with Pavilion and Tower
Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Content and Composition

This mural depicts a classic landscape scene centered around a vast lake, framed by layered distant mountains shrouded in mist. The lake is bordered by trees, a pavilion, and a tall tower. On the right side of the mural, a bridge and a small building add a touch of human presence. The foreground features a large tree painted with bold strokes, creating a strong contrast with the delicate, distant mountains and water. A small boat drifts peacefully on the lake, imbuing the scene with a tranquil and poetic atmosphere. Overall, the composition is open and serene.

Symbolic Significance

Natural Beauty:The theme of a landscape mural often represents the serenity and harmony of nature, conveying reverence and love for the natural world. The lake symbolizes nourishment and vitality, while the mountains and trees evoke stability and resilience.

Cultural Meaning:The pavilion and tower signify the harmonious coexistence of human activity and nature, celebrating cultural heritage and symbolizing auspiciousness and longevity.

Ancestral Hall Spirit:The mural embodies the family' s wishes for peace, harmony, and sustainable prosperity. Its elegant composition reflects the family's cultural sophistication and depth.

Spatial Context Analysis

This mural is displayed on one of the side walls in the main hall of the ancestral hall. While its placement is not particularly prominent, its delicate painting style and refined color palette add a rich layer of visual interest to the space:

Decorative Function: The vivid colors and intricate composition enhance the visual appeal of the ancestral hall, enriching its artistic and aesthetic qualities.

Cultural Ambiance:The serene and beautiful scene complements the solemn and dignified atmosphere of the hall, highlighting the family' s respect for the integration of nature and culture.

Modern Artistic Integration

Although rooted in traditional landscape painting, the mural's bright colors and dynamic composition reflect a more modern painting style, showcasing the ancestral hall' s acceptance of contemporary art forms.

Through this mural, the ancestral hall not only enhances its spatial beauty but also strengthens the cultural and spiritual legacy conveyed by the symbolic imagery of natural landscapes.



Figure 89. Smooth Sailing under Cloudy Skies

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Content and Composition

This mural portrays a tranquil river landscape with a sailboat gliding through calm waters under a cloudy sky. The composition highlights the vast expanse of the river, flanked by rocky banks and verdant trees. A towering tree occupies the right side of the foreground, adding depth and framing the scene, while distant mountains provide a serene backdrop. The delicate interplay of light and shadow across the water creates a reflective and harmonious atmosphere.

Symbolic Significance

Smooth Sailing:The central imagery of the sailboat symbolizes a journey or progress that is unimpeded and smooth, reflecting auspicious wishes for a harmonious and successful life.

Nature's Harmony:The integration of the river, trees, and mountains expresses the beauty and balance of the natural world, emphasizing stability and resilience.

Cultural Resonance:The title, "Smooth Sailing under Cloudy Skies" (一帆风顺), conveys a poetic and philosophical perspective on navigating challenges in life with ease and grace, resonating with traditional Chinese values of perseverance and optimism.

Spatial Context Analysis

This mural is displayed on one of the side walls of the main hall, serving as a complementary decorative element within the ancestral hall:

Enhancing Space:The expansive river and open sky depicted in the mural contribute a sense of vastness and depth to the hall, counterbalancing its enclosed architectural structure.

Visual and Cultural Enrichment:The harmonious scenery enhances the hall's solemn and dignified atmosphere while adding a touch of poetic beauty and cultural refinement.

Modern Artistic Influence:While rooted in traditional landscape painting, the mural's vibrant colors and dynamic composition reflect modern artistic sensibilities, highlighting the blending of historical and contemporary aesthetics within the space.

This mural, through its symbolic imagery and tranquil composition, not only beautifies the ancestral hall but also conveys a message of optimism and resilience, enriching the cultural narrative of the space.



Figure 90. Mountain River Tranquility
Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Content and Composition

The mural depicts a serene landscape where lush trees and rugged rocks line the banks of a flowing river. The central composition features a towering tree on the left, its branches gracefully extending over the tranquil water. The river winds through the valley, creating depth and perspective, while small boats gently sail in the distance. In the background, towering mountains rise into the hazy sky, adding a sense of vastness to the scenery. The muted colors and meticulous brushstrokes imbue the scene with an atmosphere of peace and harmony.

Symbolic Significance

The mural represents harmony between humanity and nature. The presence of the river and boats symbolizes a smooth and prosperous journey through life, while the towering mountains stand as guardians of stability and endurance. The tall tree is a metaphor for growth and resilience, reflecting values cherished by the family and community. Together, these elements communicate a collective hope for peace, prosperity, and strength in the face of challenges.

Display Space Analysis:

This mural is displayed on the sidewalls of the ancestral hall's main room, a supplementary yet significant space that enhances the hall's aesthetic and cultural ambiance. Its vibrant colors and detailed depiction provide a visual focal point that enriches the interior. As part of the modern additions, the artwork complements the

traditional murals by offering a contemporary interpretation of timeless themes, bridging the past and the present while maintaining a consistent cultural narrative.



Figure 91. Pine-Clad Peaks

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Content and Composition

This mural showcases a breathtaking mountain landscape enveloped in mist. The foreground features rugged rocks and ancient pine trees with gnarled branches, creating a strong sense of texture and depth. The middle ground reveals undulating peaks partially hidden by ethereal mist, giving the scene a dreamlike quality. The background is bathed in a warm, soft hue that suggests the glow of dawn or dusk, adding a poetic atmosphere. A calligraphic inscription adorns the upper left corner, providing context or poetic reflection on the scene.

Symbolic Significance

The pine trees, known for their resilience and longevity, symbolize strength, endurance, and unyielding spirit—qualities often associated with the values upheld by families and communities in the ancestral hall. The mountains represent stability and the enduring legacy of the ancestors. The mist adds an air of mystery and transcendence, perhaps signifying the spiritual connection between the present and the past. Together, the elements of this mural encapsulate a sense of timelessness and continuity.

Display Space Analysis

This mural occupies a prominent position on the ancestral hall's sidewall, contributing to the overall cultural and aesthetic ambiance of the space. While not the central focus, its detailed depiction and harmonious composition enhance the hall's decorative richness. As part of the modern additions to the hall, this artwork merges traditional themes with contemporary painting techniques, providing a sense of continuity and adaptation in the representation of cultural ideals.

Aesthetic and Cultural Contributions

Aesthetic Value: The mural's intricate detailing and balance between light and shadow highlight the artist's skill in portraying natural beauty. The interplay between mist and light creates a tranquil and meditative visual experience.

Cultural Legacy: By integrating the symbolic elements of pine trees and mountains, the mural reinforces the ancestral hall's role as a space of reflection, respect for heritage, and aspiration for harmony and resilience in family and community life.



Figure 92. Serene River Valley

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Content and Composition

This mural presents a tranquil river valley surrounded by towering mountains. The foreground features a large, sturdy tree with sprawling branches, symbolizing strength and resilience. The middle ground showcases a meandering river that flows through lush greenery, with small boats gently floating on its surface. In the background, jagged mountain peaks rise dramatically against a soft, diffused sky,

creating a sense of depth and grandeur. The muted color palette, dominated by earthy greens and gentle blues, evokes a serene and harmonious natural landscape.

Symbolic Significance

The mural symbolizes tranquility, resilience, and the harmonious coexistence of nature and humanity. The sturdy tree represents stability and growth, while the flowing river conveys the continuity of life and the passage of time. The boats drifting on the water suggest exploration and the pursuit of peaceful endeavors, aligning with the ancestral hall's themes of family unity and legacy. The imposing mountains in the background underscore the enduring strength and permanence of the family's heritage.

Display Space Analysis

Positioned on the sidewall of the ancestral hall, the mural serves as a supplementary yet significant visual element that enhances the hall's cultural and aesthetic ambiance. Its serene imagery provides a calming influence, balancing the grandeur of other decorative features. While not a central focal point, its detailed execution and harmonious composition contribute to the enrichment of the space's overall artistic value.

Aesthetic and Cultural Contributions

Aesthetic Value: The mural's masterful use of perspective and subtle color gradation creates a sense of depth and tranquility. The interplay of light and shadow adds to its visual appeal, making it an engaging piece for viewers.

Cultural Legacy: By depicting a serene and timeless natural scene, the mural aligns with traditional Chinese artistic values of harmony, balance, and respect for nature. It reinforces the ancestral hall's role as a space for reflection and reverence for both familial and natural heritage.

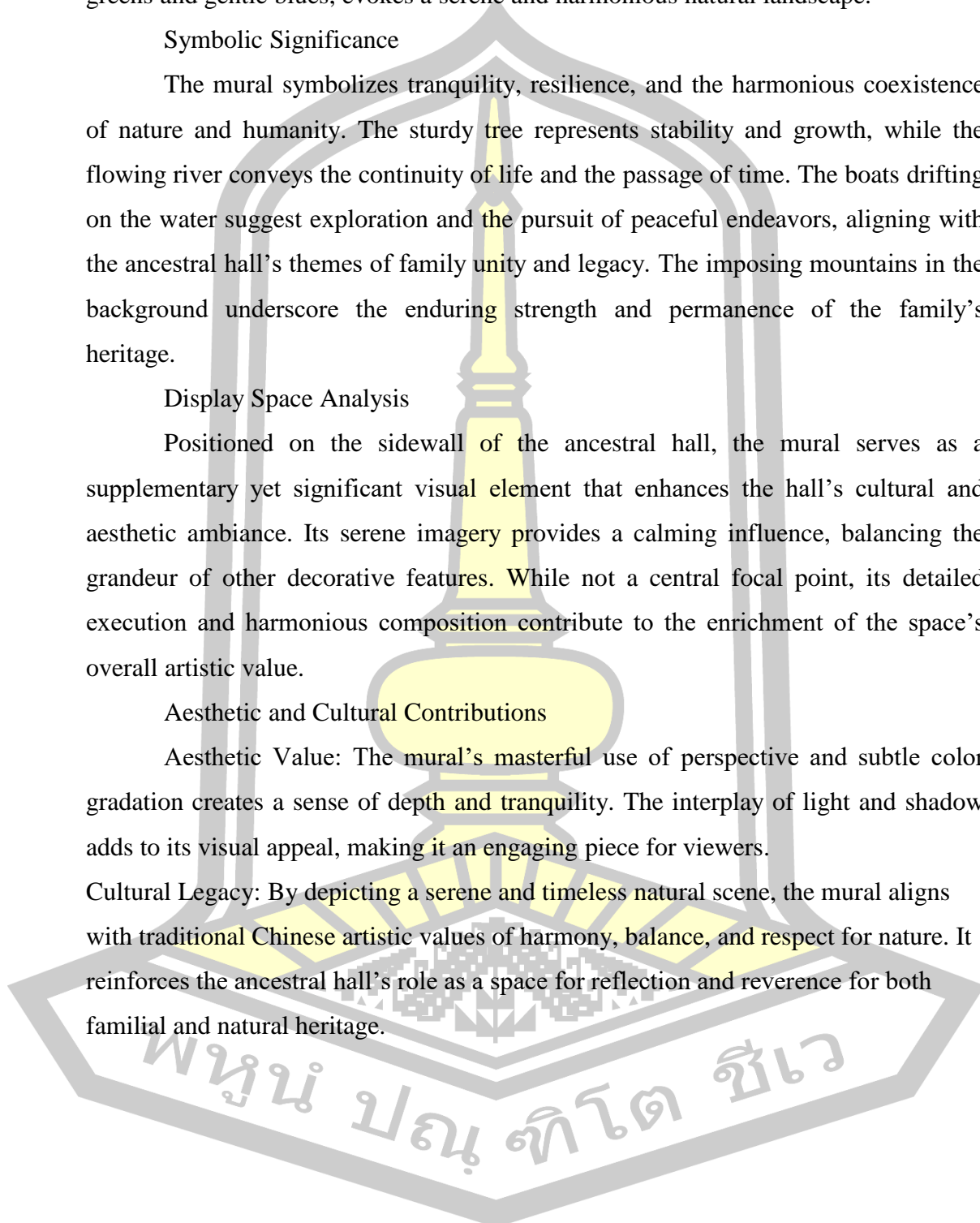




Figure 93. Lake and Pavilion Scene

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Content and Composition

This mural depicts a natural landscape centered around a lake and a pavilion. At the heart of the scene stands a striking stone mountain, crowned by an elegant pavilion, symbolizing harmony between humanity and nature. The lake's reflection and distant mountain ranges create a sense of depth, while a small bridge on the right connects the two sides of the lake. On the left, trees contrast with the faraway peaks, adding layers to the spatial composition. The overall tone is refreshing, dominated by blues and greens, evoking a serene and graceful atmosphere.

Symbolic Meaning

By integrating natural and architectural elements, the mural conveys an aspiration for an ideal life and a deep appreciation for natural beauty. The pavilion, a traditional symbol of seclusion and self-cultivation, reflects a reverence for a refined lifestyle, while the calm imagery of the lake and distant mountains embodies a longing for harmony and tranquility.

Spatial Context Analysis

This mural is displayed on the wall of the ancestral hall's central chamber, serving as a decorative supplement. Its beautiful scenery and harmonious layout enhance the visual layers of the interior while introducing a modern artistic freshness to the space. As a modern landscape painting, it balances decorative appeal with the

continuation of cultural meaning, adding a soft and comforting ambiance to the ancestral hall.



Figure 94. Expansive Lake with Distant Peaks

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Content and Composition

This mural presents an expansive lake framed by gentle hills and distant peaks, conveying a serene and immersive natural environment. The composition is dominated by the vastness of the water, punctuated by scattered elements such as a solitary boat, clusters of trees, and rugged rocks. On the right, a grand tree anchors the foreground, while the distant mountain ranges are softened with misty strokes, creating a sense of depth and tranquility. The palette primarily consists of soft blues and greens, enhancing the peaceful atmosphere.

Symbolic Meaning

The lake represents purity and the flow of life, while the distant peaks evoke aspirations for stability and continuity. The small boat symbolizes a humble journey, perhaps alluding to introspection and a connection with nature. Overall, the mural reflects themes of harmony and resilience, values that resonate with the cultural ethos of the ancestral hall.

Spatial Context Analysis

Displayed on the central chamber's wall, this mural serves as a supplementary decorative element, enriching the hall's visual and cultural layers. Its expansive scene complements the architectural symmetry of the ancestral hall, providing an

impression of openness and continuity. The incorporation of traditional landscape aesthetics alongside modern artistic techniques illustrates a fusion of heritage and contemporary sensibilities, enhancing the hall's atmosphere with elegance and vitality.



Figure 95. Palatial Reflections Over the Lake
Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Content and Composition

This mural showcases a serene lakeside view, with a prominent palace complex nestled amidst lush greenery on the far shore. The foreground features a red-latticed stone bridge leading to a pavilion, creating a layered perspective. Boats dot the tranquil waters, while the distant hills and sky offer a soft gradient of hues, enhancing the depth of the scene. The architectural details of the palace, with its tiered roofs, suggest a majestic and harmonious connection between nature and human craftsmanship.

Symbolic Meaning

The imagery of the palace overlooking the lake reflects aspirations for prosperity, stability, and cultural refinement. The bridge symbolizes connection and transition, aligning with themes of unity and continuity valued in ancestral traditions. The boats on the water may represent journeys of life, evoking a sense of introspection and forward movement.

Spatial Context Analysis

Positioned along the side walls of the ancestral hall's central chamber, this mural complements the hall's symmetrical layout. Its refined details and balanced composition enrich the decorative scheme, providing a tranquil and grand visual

experience. The juxtaposition of natural and architectural elements underscores the integration of tradition and modernity, contributing to the hall's cultural narrative and aesthetic appeal.



Figure 96. Serene Lake Amidst Mountain Peaks

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Content and Composition

This mural depicts a tranquil lake surrounded by majestic mountains and lush greenery. The focal point is a small boat floating in the center of the lake, which conveys a sense of solitude and harmony with nature. The left side features towering trees, their branches stretching outward, framing the scene, while distant pavilions and bridges add architectural interest to the composition. The soft transitions between the lake, mountains, and sky contribute to an idyllic and peaceful ambiance.

Symbolic Meaning

The mural symbolizes peace, balance, and unity between humans and the natural world. The solitary boat in the vast lake might represent individual introspection and the journey through life, resonating with themes of reflection and harmony. The mountains signify stability and endurance, qualities often admired in family and clan traditions.

Spatial Context Analysis

Located on the side walls of the ancestral hall, this mural serves as a supplementary visual element, enriching the decorative scheme with its serene and picturesque imagery. The combination of natural beauty and architectural details

enhances the space's cultural and artistic atmosphere. Its vibrant yet harmonious color palette adds to the spatial balance, offering a moment of visual repose amidst the ancestral hall's ceremonial grandeur.

4.3 The Cultural Significance of the Doorstone

This section focuses on how the doorstone serves as a carrier of social memory within the Peng family, transmitting the family's core values and social memory through its design, narrative background, and cultural significance.

4.3.1 The History and Inheritance of the Doorstone



Figure 97. On the right side of the door pillow stone at the door of the main hall

Source: GuangHui, July. 14, 2024 photographed

พหุบัน ปณฺ ทิโต ชีเว



Figure 98. The front of the stone at the main hall
Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed



Figure 99. The front of the stone at the main hall
Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Detailed Description of the Doorstone's Design and Cultural Significance

Design Description

1. Overall Style:

The doorstone of the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall is carved from solid stone, with a smooth and fine finish that reflects classical aesthetic principles. The intricate and refined carvings combine traditional craftsmanship with artistic detail, adding dignity and beauty to the ancestral hall.

2. Top and Bottom Decorations:

The top and bottom of the doorstone are adorned with flowing cloud patterns and scroll designs. These motifs, common in traditional architectural decoration, symbolize auspiciousness and peace. The cloud patterns add movement and depth to the stone, while the scroll designs represent vitality and prosperity, symbolizing the family's flourishing success.

3. Central Design - Kirin:

The central part of the doorstone features a Kirin, a symbol of good fortune, prosperity, and justice in Chinese culture. The Kirin is depicted with a strong and majestic posture, symbolizing the stability and prosperity of the family. This design not only serves an aesthetic purpose but also embodies the family's wishes for the well-being and harmony of its members.

4. Cultural Significance:

These carvings not only enhance the beauty of the doorstone but also carry the cultural significance of the Peng family. The combination of the Kirin, cloud patterns, and scroll designs symbolizes the family's hope for peace and prosperity and their reverence for their ancestors. The doorstone, through these traditional motifs, integrates the family's spirit and values into the architectural details, becoming a vital carrier of family memory and cultural transmission.

Historical Origins

The doorstone, a key component of ancient Chinese architecture, originated during the Qin and Han dynasties and became widely used in the Ming and Qing periods. Positioned at the base of the door frame, the doorstone supported the door's weight and protected the door panels from wear. It not only had practical

functions but was also endowed with the role of warding off evil, making it an important protective symbol for the home.

4.3.2 The Cultural Significance of the Bandit Story

According to oral tradition, during the Ming Dynasty, one of the Peng ancestors encountered a bandit who robbed the wealthy and distributed the goods to the poor. Upon learning the truth, the Peng ancestor, known for his justice and kindness, chose to spare the bandit. In gratitude, the bandit gifted a valuable doorstone. This legend highlights the righteousness and wisdom of the Peng ancestor, which is symbolically preserved in the carvings on the doorstone: the Kirin represents benevolence, and the dragon motif symbolizes strength. Together, these convey the family's core values.

Transmission through Oral Tradition:

This story has been passed down through generations in the Peng family, becoming a shared memory among its members. Each time the story is told, the symbolic significance of the Kirin on the doorstone is rekindled, reinforcing the family members' identification with and pride in their ancestors' virtues. This oral tradition not only preserves the family's cultural memory but also makes the doorstone a powerful symbol of the family's values.

4.3.3 Doorstone's Cultural Significance

1. Feng Shui and Symbolic Meaning:

In Feng Shui, the doorstone is considered an essential item for warding off evil. It not only protects the door from damage but also symbolizes the family's stability and security. The motifs on the doorstone, such as the Kirin, cloud patterns, and scroll designs, further enhance its symbolic meaning, representing the family's prosperity, harmony, and longevity.

2. Family Memory and Transmission:

As a material carrier of family culture, the doorstone not only preserves the family's historical memory but also conveys the ancestors' spirit and values through its carvings. The Kirin symbolizes good fortune and justice, while the cloud and scroll patterns represent vitality and prosperity. Together, these elements express the family's pursuit of a happy life and reverence for their ancestors.

3. Artistic Value:

The carvings on the doorstone are exquisitely crafted, showcasing the high level of traditional craftsmanship. These carvings not only have decorative appeal but also express rich cultural connotations through their detailed workmanship. In the context of ancestral hall culture, the doorstone is an essential part of the architectural art, with its carving style and motif choices symbolizing the family's identity and culture.

Conclusion

The doorstone of the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall is more than just an architectural element; it is a bridge connecting the family's history and culture. By carrying the family's historical memory, conveying the ancestors' values, and symbolizing the family's prosperity and longevity, the doorstone has become a significant symbol of family culture. Within the overall architecture of the ancestral hall, it, along with other elements, forms a complete system of cultural transmission, providing cultural identity and spiritual sustenance for future generations.

Summary

This section explores the role of the doorstone in the Peng family as a vital carrier of social memory, emphasizing how it encapsulates the family's core values through its design, historical background, and cultural symbolism.

The doorstone's design features intricate carvings that blend traditional craftsmanship with artistic elegance. Key elements include flowing cloud patterns and scroll designs, which symbolize auspiciousness, peace, and the family's vitality. The central depiction of a Kirin represents good fortune, prosperity, and justice, reflecting the family's wishes for stability and harmony. Together, these motifs enhance the doorstone's aesthetic appeal while embodying the Peng family's spirit and values, making it a crucial element in the transmission of cultural heritage.

The historical origins of the doorstone trace back to the Qin and Han dynasties, with its use becoming widespread in the Ming and Qing periods. Initially serving practical functions such as supporting the door and protecting it from wear, the doorstone also carried symbolic meaning, acting as a protective charm against evil. Thus, it holds both functional and cultural significance, underscoring its importance in the architectural and cultural traditions of the Peng family.

4.4 The Social Memory of Poetry

The culture of ancestral halls forms the bedrock of Chinese heritage. Just as a tree has roots and a river has its source, a nation cannot stand without its cultural foundation, and a family, even more so, cannot thrive without the support of its historical culture. The poems hung within the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall were mostly composed between the mid-Ming and Qing dynasties. Each poem captures the poet's depiction of their time and environment, reflecting their inner emotions, aspirations, and the noble qualities they hoped to pass down to future generations. By analyzing and reciting these poems, we engage in a profound dialogue with these texts that span over four centuries. Despite the passage of time, the hardships, seasonal changes, gains and losses, lessons learned, and moral virtues experienced by our ancestors are preserved through these verses. Through bodily practice and emotional resonance, and by considering the historical context of the time, we can recreate the scenes of the past and deeply empathize with them. The transmission and recitation of these poems to this day not only continues the cultural traditions of the Peng family but also constructs a collective social memory among its members. Next, I will categorize these poems based on their significance and provide a detailed analysis of six representative poems, exploring the lives of their authors and the historical contexts in which they were written.



Figure 100. Peng's poetry works. These poems were written by the ancestors of the Peng family of different dynasties. The picture is taken in the atrium of Peng's great ancestral hall, where the poems are hung on the walls.

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed



Figure 101. Peng's poetry works. These poems primarily describe the authors' personal life experiences, life reflections, and their states of mind during different stages of their lives.

Source: GuangHui, July. 14, 2024 photographed

4.4.1 Records of Personal Life and Experiences

Peng Shichao

"Inscription on Ten Thousand Bamboos": Describes the peaceful life and inner tranquility after retiring to the countryside, reflecting his state of life and mind after withdrawing from public office.

Inscription on Ten Thousand Bamboos

"Clusters of jade rings naturally sparse, dense shadows obscure the doors and windows.

On stormy nights, the dragon stirs; at dawn, birds play their tunes.

Resilient against late snow, they bloom for centuries; the heart embraces cold clouds, a touch of emptiness.

A pillow of fresh breeze, a scroll of books—certainly not the abode of a common man."

(Baoyuan Keng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Home")

Peng Liangui

"New Hall Completion, A Self-Composed Poem While Reading with My Son, Yihong": Records his daily routine of reading with his sons and nephews after the completion of a new hall, showing his emphasis on educating future generations.

New Hall Completion, A Self-Composed Poem While Reading with My Son, Yihong

"Four walls shade coolness, the room now quiet and long for study.

Moonlight sends mountain shadows around the desk, wind carries birdsong into verses.

The old student, living in seclusion, kills idle days, while the young now understand the walls they face.

Leaning on my cane in the backyard, among tall bamboos, I reflect—what reason would a white-haired man have to want to serve as a courtier?"

(Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Family Letters"1)

Peng Yihong

"Early Autumn in Yangcheng": Paints a picture of autumn, reflecting the poet's thoughts on current affairs and deep homesickness.

Early Autumn in Yangcheng

"As autumn approaches, the air clears, the smoke and haze settle quietly over the emerald hills.

Pearl River mirrors geese newly arrived, flower beds catch the breeze as the grass begins to wither.

Cold pestles urge the night moon forward, red corridors keep company with dreams through lattice windows.

Alone in the border town, reflecting on current events, I am left to contemplate the fireflies within my books."

(Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Family Letters"2)

Peng Zhuangyou

"Eating Sticky Rice on the Fifth Day, Remembering Qu Yuan": Through commemorating Qu Yuan, expresses his mindset and personal ambitions amidst societal turmoil.

Eating Sticky Rice on the Fifth Day, Remembering Qu Yuan

"Sticky rice offered in reverence, coral and jade gleam softly.

Knowing the day, reflecting on five days past, yearning for the loyal minister of old.

Drunken, the world does not tolerate sobriety, how could I bear to stay in a chaotic land?

Sincerity moves fish and turtles, a clear shadow keeps company with the moon.

The passion for racing boats never wanes, the wind of remembrance persists.

Writing like Jia Yi, I hesitate, setting down my chopsticks, pensive."

(Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Family Letters"3)

Peng Min

"Celebrating the Eightieth Birthday of Inspector General Ai'an, Gifted by the Emperor with Clothes and an Inkstone": Reflects on his thoughts after obtaining the degree of tribute scholar in his old age, showcasing his philosophical attitude towards life.

Celebrating the Eightieth Birthday of Inspector General Ai'an

"Tall and unyielding, towering over four heroes, in the past, you served with merit in Cangwu.

With new imperial gifts of robes and treasured inkstones, your meritorious deeds are highly esteemed.

In this prosperous age, naturally, no hidden talents are overlooked; in this tranquil era, who wouldn't envy your return to seclusion?

Using quiet years wisely, recalling imperial teachings, your colorful and vibrant life echoes phoenix feathers."

(Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Family Letters"4)

"The Pavilion by the Water": Describes the serene scene of a small pavilion by the forested pond, expressing his love for nature and his attitude towards enjoying life.

The Pavilion by the Water

"A small forested pond above, a leisure pavilion half-opened.
The summer heat hasn't yet dissipated, a gentle breeze brings refreshment.
Friends gather, time passes over a single cup; we always sing like poets, filling
the air with fragrance."

(Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Family Letters"5)

Peng Tingkuan

"Imitation of an Early Court Audience": Through the depiction of court life, records his experiences and feelings within the imperial court.

Imitation of an Early Court Audience

"The hourglass calls out at midnight, the phoenix ranks stand before the dawn court.

The palace shrouded in warmth from the smoke, flags and banners reflect the cold dew.

The red wheel opens the gates wide, pendants sound as the officials stand solemnly.

Face-to-face with the emperor, they diligently present their plans for peace and prosperity."

(Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Family Letters"6)

Peng Chaofen

"Inscribed: Even Good Birds Make Friends in Trees": Expresses the poet's lifestyle in companionship with the birds in nature, reflecting his attitude towards life.

Inscribed: Even Good Birds Make Friends in Trees

"I seek rest in this world, like an old bird in a dense tree.

In spring, the bird's song breaks the silence, under the flowers, hunger is forgotten, with a contented spirit.

Unwilling to circle around for three times, nurturing oneself like guarding a single tree.

Flying and chirping, day and night, through wind and moon, no one else compares to the egrets."

(Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Family Letters"7)

Peng Jue

"Autumn Day Sending a Friend Back to Zhejiang": Records the scene of bidding farewell to a friend, expressing deep friendship and the sorrow of parting.

Autumn Day Sending a Friend Back to Zhejiang

"Leaves fall along the long dike, troubling the coots, the autumn so long.

Reunions like ours come around again; from the chrysanthemum that has opened, distant news from home.

The old hometown is now tied with sorrow, reflecting on the past decade, the clear mirror sadly shows gray hairs.

One by one, the sails of boats send off the guest; turning back on horseback at the Meiguan Pass, the white clouds fly away."

(Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Family Letters"8)

Peng Zhenqian

"Gathering Firewood in the Rain": Records his experience of gathering firewood on an autumn day, reflecting his observation of and insights into nature.

Gathering Firewood in the Rain

"Early to gather firewood in the cave, deep autumn mist feels faint.

The stone bridge reflects a thousand layers of brocade, ancient trees block the path with red flowers.

Pieces of floating clouds confuse the morning sun, misty rain drizzles in the west wind.

Stopping in the forest, I avoid the way home, and listen distantly to the temple bell."

(Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Family Letters"9)

Peng Qian

"Boiling Chrysanthemums": Records the scene of boiling yellow chrysanthemums, expressing his insights and contentment with a simple life.

Boiling Chrysanthemums

"I have yellow chrysanthemums, which I boil under the moon.

The fire ages the autumn color,
the cauldron bubbles with fresh snow petals.

The aroma is strong, who cares about the bitterness?

Sipping a cup is enough to sustain a pure and humble life."

(Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Family Letters"10)

Peng Yunsheng

"Yujie Grass": Expresses his admiration for historical figures and his steadfast commitment to emotions, reflecting his inner world.

Yujie Grass

"The roots of passion never fade,
Bloodstains remain on the plains.
The ancient spirits should not die,
So green grass accompanies the dusk."

(Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Family Letters"11)

Peng Yongjian

"Reading by Fireflies": Records his experience of reading by the light of fireflies at night, expressing his reverence for knowledge and preference for a simple life.

Reading by Fireflies

"Books are spread on the walls, the will is as firm as ashes,
Picking up a pearl on the green moss.

No need for oil lamps, the fireflies serve as coal,
The pen of Jianglang shines with light.

The glimmering light even confuses the spirits of the Han dynasty trees,
The countless meteors gather around the snow-covered desk, the five carts of books scattered at will."

(Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Family Letters"12)

4.4.2 Records and Reflections on Historical Events

These poems go beyond personal emotions to record the authors' observations and reflections on historical events.

Peng Yudeng

"Remembering Shouyang": Uses the past to reflect on the present, expressing his concern about contemporary society and pursuit of justice.

Remembering Shouyang

"When fate wanes, there is no smooth path,
A stone hangs high, a hidden picture.
Picking ferns in the morning and evening,
Upholding the principles between brothers.
The nation perishes, the land of commerce no longer exists,
The starving man dies, yet his spirit remains.
I ask the eight hundred marquises who gathered,
Who among them remembered the unmarked grave?"

Peng Zhuangyou

"Eating Sticky Rice on the Fifth Day, Remembering Qu Yuan": Commemorates Qu Yuan, expressing a commitment to social justice and criticism of the state of society at the time.

4.4.3 Transmission of Social Memory and the Manifestation of Family Spirit

These poems express the authors' desire to convey family spirit, educate future generations, and maintain the family culture and social memory through poetry.

Peng Shichao

"Inscription on Ten Thousand Bamboos": Beyond expressing personal emotions, the poem conveys his hope for future generations to maintain integrity and uprightness as part of the family culture.

Peng Liangui

"New Hall Completion, A Self-Composed Poem While Reading with My Son, Yihong": Not only records the reading scenes but also reflects his emphasis on family education and his hope to inspire future generations through poetry.

Peng Guoxiang

"Rejoicing at My Grandson Menglong's Enrollment": Expresses joy and hope for the success of the next generation, reflecting the transmission of family culture.

Rejoicing at My Grandson Menglong's Enrollment

"Snow on the window, fireflies already years gone,
Joy now as you enter the student ranks.

The willow marks the clothes, the first steps forward,
The flowers embrace the green mane just over the shoulders.
Do not boast of learning three winters' worth,
Make sure your achievements last a thousand generations.
Poetry and books are the inheritance of the family,
Treasures are not cherished like a virtuous person."

Peng Yingshi

"The Shadow on the Small Bridge": Though it mainly depicts natural scenery, it also reflects the poet's pursuit of tranquility and harmony in life, becoming a part of family culture.

The Shadow on the Small Bridge

"Under the small bridge, the water flows cool,
People lean on the bridge, watching the willows turn green.
Only the clear shadow remains,
As the water flows out to the vast sea."

Peng Chaofen

"Inscribed: Even Good Birds Make Friends in Trees": Through companionship with the birds in nature, reflects the family's ideal of living in harmony with nature.

Peng Yingqiu

"Early Spring Chant" and "Peach Blossom Melody": Through descriptions of natural scenery, reflect the family members' pursuit of a beautiful life and their reflections on the passage of time.

Early Spring Chant

"Unnoticed, spring warmth returns,
The landscape is like a painting, the moon like a bow.
Willow strands dance in the wind, the creek turns green,
Flower shadows drag clouds along the path, wanting to turn red.
Wine battles idle sorrow, dispelling the old winter,

Poetry accompanies the fresh joy of the new spring.

Yet time pushes the year away,

With every child, another old man appears."

Peach Blossom Melody

"The path is full of crimson, the dawn's makeup delicate,

Red robes brushing the flower chamber.

In spring's deep dreams, the road to paradise,

Unending love remembers the absent one.

Year after year, spring brings new radiance,

Drunken eyes peek at people, the longing grows.

Once entrusted to the flowing water,

The fragrance of the flowers lingers by the cave to this day."

(Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy, Vol. 3 "Family Letters")

4.4.4 Reflections of Social Memory in Poetry

Ancestral hall culture forms the foundation of Chinese civilization, much like roots anchor a tree and a river has its source. A nation cannot stand without its cultural roots, and a family cannot thrive without the support of its historical culture. The poems displayed within the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall, mostly composed between the mid-Ming and Qing dynasties, encapsulate the poets' depictions of their times and surroundings, reflecting their inner emotions, aspirations, and the noble qualities they hoped to pass down to future generations. By analyzing and reciting these poems, we engage in a deep dialogue with texts that span over four centuries. Despite the passage of time, the struggles, seasonal changes, life's gains and losses, lessons learned, and the noble virtues experienced by our ancestors are preserved in these verses. Through bodily practice and emotional resonance, and by considering the historical context, we can recreate past scenes and deeply empathize with them. The continued transmission and recitation of these poems not only sustain the cultural traditions of the Peng family but also help to construct a shared social memory among its members. The following analysis categorizes these poems based on their significance and provides a detailed examination of six representative poems, exploring the lives of their authors and the historical contexts in which they were written.

In my dissertation, these six poems—"Inscription on Ten Thousand Bamboos," "New Hall Completion, A Self-Composed Poem While Reading with My Son, Yihong," "Eating Sticky Rice on the Fifth Day, Remembering Qu Yuan," "Early Autumn in Yangcheng," "Autumn Day Sending a Friend Back to Zhejiang," and "Remembering Shouyang"—hold a critical position. Each poem not only reflects the authors' personal thoughts and emotions but also deeply embodies the transmission of family culture and the formation of social memory. In the following analysis, I will reveal how these poems demonstrate the family's adherence to core values such as integrity, uprightness, education, social justice, friendship, and historical reflection. These poems, created in different historical contexts, not only record the personal life journeys of the authors but also convey the spiritual essence of the family, becoming an important vehicle for the transmission of family culture. A thorough exploration of these poems not only helps us understand the roles and influence of the poets within the family but also provides important documentary evidence for analyzing how family culture is perpetuated within history and society. Together, these poems form the core argument of my dissertation, illustrating how bodily practice and social memory are transmitted and formed within the family through poetry, highlighting the irreplaceable significance of poetry as a cultural vehicle in the transmission of family spirit.

1. Records of Personal Life and Experiences

These poems primarily describe the authors' personal life experiences, reflections on life, and their states of mind during different stages of their lives.

Peng Shichao's poems (1)

"Inscription on Ten Thousand Bamboos"

Clusters of jade rings naturally sparse, dense shadows obscure the doors and windows.

On stormy nights, the dragon stirs; at dawn, birds play their tunes.

Resilient against late snow, they bloom for centuries; the heart embraces cold clouds, a touch of emptiness.

A pillow of fresh breeze, a scroll of books—certainly not the abode of a common man.

(Baoyuan Keng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Home")

Analysis of "Inscription on Ten Thousand Bamboos"

Interpretation of the Poem and Bodily Practice:

Peng Shichao's "Inscription on Ten Thousand Bamboos" paints a tranquil and poetic picture of pastoral life. The opening line, "Clusters of jade rings naturally sparse," depicts the scene of a bamboo grove, dense yet naturally distributed. This layout not only provides a visual aesthetic but also, through bodily practice, conveys the poet's pursuit of harmony with nature and inner peace. Through interaction and observation of the bamboo grove, the poet experiences the serenity and calm of life, an experience that transcends the personal and is embedded in the family's daily life and cultural atmosphere.

Introduction to Peng Shichao's Background:

Peng Shichao, also known as Longxi, was known for his intelligence and passion for learning from a young age. At the tender age of eighteen, he became a county scholar (Xiucan). In the fourth year of the Jiajing reign of the Ming Dynasty (1525), Peng Shichao passed the provincial examination and was appointed as an instructor in Gutian, Guangxi. He was later promoted to academic recorder at the Imperial Academy and, due to his lectures on "The Book of Yu" before the imperial court, was highly regarded by Emperor Shizong, who awarded him a degree and appointed him as a censor of Shaanxi Circuit. Peng Shichao was renowned for his integrity and uprightness, unyielding in the face of power, but eventually, due to his unbending nature, he resigned and returned to a life of seclusion in the countryside. He devoted himself to poetry and the construction of the family ancestral hall, leaving a lasting influence on future generations.

The line "On stormy nights, the dragon stirs" shows that the poet, through bodily practice, felt the dragon's roar in the stormy night, symbolizing unyielding strength and courage in life. Such natural phenomena in the poem are imbued with profound symbolic meaning, showcasing Peng Shichao's resolute spirit in the face of life's storms.

Cultural Symbols and Social Memory:

"Resilient against late snow, they bloom for centuries" not only describes the bamboo's tenacity in winter snow but also symbolizes the poet's perseverance and integrity in adversity. The late snow represents the spirit of resilience, a value not only

held by Peng Shichao personally but one passed down through the Peng family. These symbols, conveyed through poetry, are passed on to future generations, becoming part of the family's social memory, inspiring descendants to maintain resilience in the face of challenges.

The verse "A pillow of fresh breeze, a scroll of books" depicts the poet's contentment and immersion in books within the gentle breeze. This scene not only portrays the comfort and leisure of pastoral life but also represents the pursuit of an ideal literati life. Through this lifestyle, Peng Shichao closely links his spiritual world with the family's cultural heritage, ensuring that the family's values and life philosophies are integrated into daily life through bodily practice, forming a continuous social memory.

Family Spirit and Social Memory in the Poem:

Peng Shichao's poetry not only records his personal sense of peace and satisfaction with rural life but also deeply conveys the core values and spiritual pursuits upheld by the family during times of social turmoil. The imagery of "On stormy nights, the dragon stirs" in the poem not only represents a natural phenomenon but also serves as a metaphor for life's hardships. The dragon symbolizes strength and dignity, while the storm represents the challenges and adversities in life. Through such imagery, Peng Shichao expresses his determination to maintain integrity and uprightness even after experiencing the tempests of officialdom. These qualities are further symbolized in the construction of the ancestral hall, particularly through the motifs on the doorstone. The dragon and qilin (Kirin) carvings on the doorstone not only symbolize auspiciousness but also imply the enduring nature of these values and their transmission through generations. This spirit, passed down through poetry, becomes the core memory of the Peng family, inspiring future generations to uphold the family's values and ethics in the face of challenges.

Historical Background and Formation of Social Memory:

The period in which Peng Shichao lived, during the Jiajing reign of the Ming Dynasty, was a time of great turmoil and complexity in Chinese history. Against this backdrop, Peng Shichao's poetry not only expresses personal emotions but also reflects the social conditions and ideals of the time. The line "Resilient against late snow, they bloom for centuries" expresses his perseverance and determination in

adversity, as well as the societal ideal of integrity and uprightness. This period saw internal corruption and external threats within the Ming society, and Peng Shichao's choice to retire to the countryside was an expression of his commitment to social justice and protest against societal injustices. Through his poetry, this spirit became a shared memory and ideal within the family and the broader social community.

Symbolic Significance of Social Memory:

The imagery in Peng Shichao's poetry, such as the dragon and the storm, not only holds personal and family symbolism but also occupies an important place in broader social memory. The dragon, a symbol of strength, dignity, and justice in Chinese culture, and the storm, symbolizing social and life turmoil, are endowed with new meanings in Peng Shichao's poetry, becoming part of the collective memory of the family and society. Through these symbolic figures, the Peng family's descendants not only form a strong sense of identity within the family but also resonate with other families and groups in a broader social context, fostering a collective cultural identity. The formation and transmission of this collective memory ensure that the spirit and values of the Peng family are preserved and promoted within the larger society.

Peng Liangui (2)

"On the Completion of the New Hall and a Self-Composed Poem While Reading with My Son Yihong": This poem celebrates the completion of a new hall, where Peng Liangui and his nephews read together, reflecting his emphasis on education and cultural heritage.

On the Completion of the New Hall and a Self-Composed Poem While Reading with My Son Yihong

"The shade cools the four walls, making the room comfortable;

Building the hall, the pavilion, and the pond, extending our study time.

The moonlight sends mountain shadows around the desk, the wind carries birdsong into our chapters.

The old student whiled away idle days, now the young one understands the task ahead.

Leaning on my cane in the back garden, resting by the tall bamboo,

In old age, what more could I wish to be?"

(Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Family Letters")

Analysis of "On the Completion of the New Hall and a Self-Composed Poem While Reading with My Son Yihong"

Interpretation of the Poem and Bodily Practice:

Peng Liangui composed "On the Completion of the New Hall and a Self-Composed Poem While Reading with My Son Yihong" to commemorate the completion of a new hall and the joy of reading there with his nephew, Yihong. The poem captures the idyllic and joyful life of a scholar. The line "The shade cools the four walls, making the room comfortable" describes a cool and comfortable room in the summer, with the shadows cast by the sun making the walls pleasantly cool. Through bodily practice, the poet experiences firsthand how this environment enhances their study, providing ideal conditions for the continuation of the family's cultural heritage.

The line "Building the hall, the pavilion, and the pond, extending our study time" further depicts the process of constructing the hall and pavilion, emphasizing the poet's commitment to extending study time and improving cultural cultivation. This is not just a description of a material environment but a reflection of the bodily practice of cultural transmission. By extending study time, Peng Liangui ensures that the family's knowledge and values are passed down through generations, becoming part of the social memory.

Reflection and Cultural Transmission:

The latter half of the poem shifts to a reflection on the stages of life: "The old student whiled away idle days, now the young one understands the task ahead." Here, the "old student" refers to the poet himself, while the "young one" refers to the younger generation. By contrasting his leisurely days in old age with the diligent study of the younger generation, the poet reflects on the responsibilities and meanings of different stages of life. While enjoying the ease of old age, he hopes that the younger generation will carry on the family's academic and cultural traditions through hard work.

The final line, "Leaning on my cane in the back garden, resting by the tall bamboo, in old age, what more could I wish to be?" portrays the poet leaning on a

cane beside the bamboo, symbolizing the wisdom and foresight he maintains in his old age. This scene not only reflects the poet's broad-minded attitude but also emphasizes his role in safeguarding and transmitting the family's culture.

Formation of Social Memory:

This poem not only reflects Peng Liangui's emphasis on cultural education but also demonstrates how these values are integrated into the family's social memory through specific bodily practices. By depicting natural scenes and family education, the poet expresses his deep pride in the family's scholarly traditions and his earnest hopes for future generations. These values, transmitted through poetry, become part of the collective memory of the family and society, further solidifying the family's cultural standing in society and setting an example for future generations.

Peng Yihong (3)

"Early Autumn in Yangcheng"

"Early Autumn in Yangcheng": This poem captures a serene autumn scene and expresses the poet's complex emotions regarding the passage of time and current events.

Early Autumn in Yangcheng

"As autumn approaches, the air clears, the smoke and haze settle quietly over the emerald hills.

Pearl River mirrors geese newly arrived, flower beds catch the breeze as the grass begins to wither.

Cold pestles urge the night moon forward, red corridors keep company with dreams through lattice windows.

Alone in the border town, reflecting on current events, I am left to contemplate the fireflies within my books."

Analysis of "Early Autumn in Yangcheng"

Interpretation of the Poem and Emotional Expression:

Peng Yihong's "Early Autumn in Yangcheng" presents a tranquil autumn scene while also revealing the poet's complex inner emotions. The opening line, "As autumn approaches, the air clears," describes the crisp, clear weather as autumn arrives, bringing a sense of physical and mental refreshment. This refreshing autumn

atmosphere not only comforts the body and mind but also prompts the poet to reflect on the passage of time.

The line "the smoke and haze settle quietly over the emerald hills" evokes a peaceful atmosphere as the smoke and haze settle over distant mountains. This serene scene, characterized by the unique tranquility and desolation of autumn, mirrors the poet's feelings of loneliness and anxiety.

Historical Context and Social Reflection:

The line "Pearl River mirrors geese newly arrived" describes the reflection of geese in the Pearl River, symbolizing the changing seasons and the passage of time. The arrival of the geese suggests the onset of autumn and the impermanence of life. In this line, the poet uses natural imagery to express his thoughts on the transience of life.

The line "flower beds catch the breeze as the grass begins to wither" further deepens this theme. The wilting of flowers and grass in the autumn wind symbolizes the impermanence of life and the decline of society. This imagery seems to hint at the social turmoil and decay of the late Ming Dynasty, reflecting the poet's deep concern for the state of society.

Nostalgia and Inner Anxiety:

In the line "Cold pestles urge the night moon forward," the poet portrays the cold and lonely atmosphere of the late night, as if urging the night moon to appear. This scene reflects both the poet's real-life experience and his inner feelings of loneliness and deep homesickness.

The line "red corridors keep company with dreams through lattice windows" further reveals the poet's longing for home. In the quiet of the autumn night, the poet seems to see the distant windows of his hometown in his dreams, intensifying his longing for home.

Social Turmoil and Personal Struggle:

The line "Alone in the border town, reflecting on current events" expresses the poet's anxiety and sorrow as he sits alone in the border town. Living through the turmoil of the late Ming Dynasty, the poet feels the unrest and instability in the border regions, which deeply affects his inner world, causing him to feel endless sorrow and frustration.

The line "I am left to contemplate the fireflies within my books" symbolizes the poet's desire for freedom and release from constraints as he removes the fireflies from his sword's ornament. This act represents the poet's hope to escape the difficulties of life and his pursuit of spiritual freedom.

Conclusion and Social Memory:

This poem, with its detailed portrayal of autumn scenes, deeply explores Peng Yihong's concerns about society and his personal struggles. Through this poem, the poet not only expresses his personal feelings but also contributes to the social memory of his time. Despite Peng Yihong's early death, his poems capture the spirit of the turbulent era in which he lived, making them an integral part of the family's and society's collective memory.

Peng Zhuangyou (4)

Eating Sticky Rice on the Fifth Day, Remembering Qu Yuan

"Sticky rice offered in reverence, coral and jade gleam softly.

Knowing the day, reflecting on five days past, yearning for the loyal minister of old.

Drunken, the world does not tolerate sobriety, how could I bear to stay in a chaotic land?

Sincerity moves fish and turtles, a clear shadow keeps company with the moon.

The passion for racing boats never wanes, the wind of remembrance persists.

Writing like Jia Yi, I hesitate, setting down my chopsticks, pensive."

(Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Family Letters"3)

"On the Fifth Day, Eating Zongzi with Thoughts of Qu Yuan,(Yao,shengliang.2024)" uses the tradition of eating zongzi as an entry point to express his admiration for the historical figure Qu Yuan and his concerns about contemporary society. The poem opens with "Zongzi, a token of the sage's grace, coral and jade unfurl with ease," where zongzi symbolizes the poet's gratitude for virtue. In the poem, zongzi is imbued with symbolic meaning, representing reverence for tradition and remembrance of ancient sages. The unfolding coral and jade further symbolize the poet's pursuit of justice and virtue.

Background of Peng Zhuangyou

Peng Zhuangyou (1635-1717), courtesy name Zijia, later changed to Shengsi, was the second son of Peng Lianggui. During the late Ming Dynasty, the Dongkeng area suffered from looting by Li Wanrong, but Peng Zhuangyou was protected by his uncle and escaped the disaster, later moving to Longquan Street within the city. From a young age, he was exceptionally intelligent, with a bold and unrestrained literary style, and enjoyed horseback riding and archery. However, he did not achieve success in officialdom. His life experiences gave him unique insights into society and life, which are deeply reflected in his poetry.

Historical Background and Social Critique:

The line "How can a sober man tolerate a drunken world, and how can one stay in a perilous land?" expresses the poet's deep dissatisfaction with the contemporary society. During the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, the society was unstable, the government was corrupt, and the people suffered immensely. Through this line, the poet contrasts his sobriety with the drunkenness of society, expressing his concerns about the country's fate and his helplessness. The idea of not enduring a perilous country reflects the poet's disappointment with the current situation and worries about the nation's future.

"With sincerity moving fish and turtles, and with a clear shadow accompanying the toad," uses contrast to express the poet's disgust with the prevailing social ethos. The poet uses fish and turtles to symbolize the vile people and corrupt officials in society, while his sincerity and clear shadow symbolize his adherence to truth and justice. This contrast highlights the poet's loneliness and his steadfastness in moral stance.

Social Memory and Family Spirit:

"Endless feelings in the dragon boat race, lingering thoughts of the past breeze" depicts the scene of dragon boat racing during the Dragon Boat Festival, expressing the poet's deep affection for traditional customs and his remembrance of historical figures. The dragon boat race is not just a physical practice but a transmission of social memory, allowing Qu Yuan's spirit and ideals to be passed down through generations. The poet connects personal emotions with collective social memory, conveying his dedication to family spirit and social ideals.

Literary Pursuit and Self-Reflection:

In the line "Following Jia Yi in writing, hesitating while putting down the chopsticks," the poet expresses his pursuit of literary achievement and his inner hesitation. Jia Yi, a famous politician and writer of the Han Dynasty, was known for his loyalty and talent, and the poet takes him as a role model. However, facing the difficulties of reality, the poet feels lost and uneasy. The scene of hesitating while putting down the chopsticks vividly depicts the poet's internal conflict and struggle, reflecting both personal reflection on his destiny and his helplessness in the face of social reality.

Conclusion and Continuation of Social Memory:

The poem, through the symbolic depiction of zongzi, deeply expresses Peng Zhuangyou's remembrance of Qu Yuan and his critique of contemporary society. The poet connects his personal ideals with social memory through this custom, expressing his steadfastness in justice and ideals. Each line of the poem contains unique insights into social phenomena, demonstrating the poet's deep understanding of the turbulent times and his personal state of mind. Peng Zhuangyou's poetry not only expresses personal emotions but also continues the family spirit and social memory, providing future generations with a unique perspective on understanding that turbulent era.

Jue's Poem (5)

"Sending a Friend Back to Zhejiang"

"Sending a Friend Back to Zhejiang" uses the depiction of an autumn day parting scene to express his reluctance to part with his friend and his lament for the passing of time. The poem opens with "Fallen leaves stir on the long dike, the loyal gulls move as well," depicting the scene of falling leaves and loyal gulls flying in the autumn landscape. The bleak atmosphere of autumn not only reflects the changing of seasons but also symbolizes the melancholy and sadness of parting with a friend.

Analysis of "Autumn Day: Sending a Friend Back to Zhejiang"

Interpretation of the Poem and Emotional Expression:

Peng Jue's "Autumn Day:

"Meeting again with you, another autumn has passed" further expresses the poet's cherishing of the time spent with his friend. As time flows by, they have spent yet another autumn together, which not only suggests the fleeting and precious nature

of their reunion but also hints at the poet's helplessness and reluctance as his friend prepares to leave.

Background of Peng Jue

Peng Jue, courtesy name Yujian, was the second son of Peng Guoxiang, born into a scholarly family and later became a student of the Imperial Academy. His poetry is known for its delicate emotions and deep reflections, often taking scenes from everyday life as subjects to express his insights into life. In his poem "Autumn Day: Sending a Friend Back to Zhejiang," Peng Jue portrays a scene of parting, showing his deep appreciation of friendship and his lament for the impermanence of life.

Nostalgia and Sorrow of Parting:

"Chrysanthemums bloom again, distant is the letter from home, now the homeland ties the sorrow of parting" describes the scene where chrysanthemums bloom as the friend prepares to leave, filling the poet with homesickness and sorrow of parting. Chrysanthemums often symbolize purity and loneliness in classical literature, and the poet uses this to express his worries for his friend's journey and uncertainty about their future reunion. The memory of home intensifies the poet's nostalgia, and the departure of his friend deepens this emotional burden.

Passage of Time and Reflection on Life:

The line "Ten years, the green mirror saddens over graying hair, a lone sail sends off the guest's boat" reflects the poet's lament for the passage of time by recalling how both he and his friend have reached middle age, their hair starting to turn gray. The youth they once knew has passed, and now the friend sails away, leaving the poet with endless sorrow. This reflection is not just on personal life but also a deep realization of the relentless passage of time and the impermanence of life.

Scene of Departure and Emotional Depth:

The final line "Riding back to Mei Pass, turning back to gaze, white clouds all gone, waters flow long" depicts the vastness and helplessness felt at the moment of departure. Mei Pass was an important ancient transportation route and often a place of parting. The poet, riding back and turning to gaze, sees the white clouds dispersing and the waters flowing long, conveying the endlessness of parting and the poet's loneliness. The imagery of white clouds and flowing water not only symbolizes the

passage of time but also reflects the poet's deep sorrow and pain of parting with his friend.

Conclusion and Continuation of Social Memory:

The entire poem, through its delicate depiction of an autumn day parting scene, deeply reflects Peng Jue's deep appreciation of friendship and his lament for the relentless passage of time. While bidding farewell to his friend, the poet not only expresses his personal emotions but also integrates his experiences and reflections into the broader social memory. Peng Jue's "Autumn Day: Sending a Friend Back to Zhejiang" is not just a farewell poem but also a profound meditation on the impermanence of life and the preciousness of friendship. Through this poem, Peng Jue infuses his emotions and thoughts into the social memory, providing future generations with a glimpse into his thoughts and feelings during that era, and adding a unique layer of memory to the cultural heritage and social emotions of his time.

Summary

This chapter delves into the significance of poetry within the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall, emphasizing how these poetic works serve as a profound carrier of social memory and cultural heritage. The poems, primarily composed between the mid-Ming and Qing dynasties, are not mere literary expressions but are deeply intertwined with the family's history, values, and collective memory.

The introduction establishes the context, explaining that the culture of ancestral halls is foundational to Chinese heritage, with poetry playing a crucial role in preserving and transmitting the family's core values and social memory. By analyzing and reciting these poems, we connect with the emotions, experiences, and moral teachings of our ancestors, thus continuing the cultural traditions of the Peng family and fostering a collective social memory.

Peng Yudeng (6)

"Remembering Shouyang": Uses the past to reflect on the present, expressing his concern about contemporary society and pursuit of justice.

Remembering Shouyang

"When fate wanes, there is no smooth path,

A stone hangs high, a hidden picture.

Picking ferns in the morning and evening,

Upholding the principles between brothers.
 The nation perishes, the land of commerce no longer exists,
 The starving man dies, yet his spirit remains.
 I ask the eight hundred marquises who gathered,
 Who among them remembered the unmarked grave?"
 Analysis of "Shouyang Nostalgia") by Peng Yudeng
 Interpretation of the Poem and Emotional Expression

"Shouyang Nostalgia" is a deeply reflective poem that delves into the themes of moral steadfastness, historical remembrance, and social critique. The poet Peng Yudeng uses the story of Boyi and Shuqi, figures from Chinese antiquity known for their loyalty and sacrifice, as a backdrop to lament the loss of ethical values in a chaotic world. The poem encapsulates his disillusionment with societal decline and his yearning for moral constancy.

The opening lines, "When fate is bleak, where can one find smoothness? A piece of stone long suspended tells of a life in seclusion", set a melancholic tone. The poet reflects on the struggles of life and draws inspiration from the legendary brothers who chose death over disloyalty, presenting an ideal of unwavering integrity. The "stone" becomes a metaphor for the enduring values of humility and withdrawal in the face of moral decay.

Background of Peng Yudeng

Peng Yudeng was a poet from the Pengwu lineage, although his life remains undocumented in detail. His poetry is known for its profound engagement with historical and ethical themes. reflects his literary focus on drawing moral and philosophical insights from historical allegories, embodying the intellectual pursuits of his era.

Themes of Moral Integrity and Historical Reflection

The lines "Fern and bracken suffice for daily sustenance, the foundation of moral order relies on brotherhood" praise the ascetic lifestyle of Boyi and Shuqi, highlighting their self-sacrifice and steadfastness in adhering to moral principles. By juxtaposing the legendary figures' adherence to virtue with his contemporary society's struggles, Peng Yudeng implicitly critiques the loss of such values in his time.

The poet's lament becomes more pronounced in "The nation has fallen, the world has no Shang soil; people die of hunger in this realm". Here, Peng conveys a dual critique: the collapse of the Zhou dynasty's moral order and the suffering of ordinary people under unjust conditions. These lines not only reflect the poet's historical awareness but also his empathy for the marginalized.

Critique of Power and Inequality

The concluding lines, "Let me ask the eight hundred feudal lords of the alliance, who among them ever considered the rootless ink-black fetus?" , question the integrity of the powerful. The "ink-black fetus" symbolizes the neglected and oppressed, underscoring the poet's critique of those in power who fail to uphold their moral responsibilities. This stark ending serves as a call for introspection and reform.

Cultural and Historical Context

The poem situates itself within the broader context of Confucian values and historical reflection, which were central to the intellectual and moral discourse of Ming and Qing literati. Peng Yudeng uses the ancestral hall as a space to immortalize these reflections, ensuring that his thoughts contribute to the social memory of the Peng family and the broader community.

Symbolism and Aesthetic Value

" employs layered symbolism, from the "stone" representing steadfastness to the "fern and bracken" symbolizing a life of virtue despite adversity. The aesthetic richness of the poem is matched by its profound moral undercurrents, making it a significant addition to the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall poetic corpus.

Summary and Contribution to Social Memory

Through " Peng Yudeng not only pays homage to the moral exemplars of Chinese history but also embeds his reflections within the Peng's cultural legacy. The poem serves as a medium for transmitting values such as loyalty, integrity, and empathy, ensuring that these ideals remain alive in the collective memory of the family and community. Its inclusion in the ancestral hall underscores the role of poetry as a vital conduit for cultural and moral continuity, enriching the social fabric and fostering a shared heritage that transcends generations.

The chapter then categorizes the poems into three main types:

1. Records of Personal Life and Experiences: These poems capture the personal reflections, life experiences, and states of mind of their authors during different stages of their lives. Examples include Peng Shichao's "Inscription on Ten Thousand Bamboos," which reflects his peaceful life after retirement, and Peng Liangui's "New Hall Completion," which emphasizes the importance of family education and cultural heritage.

2. Records and Reflections on Historical Events: This category includes poems that go beyond personal emotions to reflect on broader historical events and societal conditions. Peng Zhuangyou's "Eating Sticky Rice on the Fifth Day, Remembering Qu Yuan" exemplifies this, using the commemoration of Qu Yuan to critique the societal issues of his time.

3. Transmission of Social Memory and the Manifestation of Family Spirit: These poems express the authors' intentions to convey family values, educate future generations, and maintain the continuity of the family's cultural legacy. Through these works, the Peng family's core values—such as integrity, education, social justice, and the appreciation of friendship—are preserved and passed down through generations.

The chapter concludes by emphasizing the role of poetry in constructing and maintaining social memory within the Peng family. By engaging with these poetic texts, the family not only honors its ancestors but also reinforces its cultural identity and collective memory, ensuring that these values continue to influence and guide future generations.

4.5 Couplets and Ancestral Hall Culture

This section explores the cultural significance of couplets within family and society, particularly their application in the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall. Couplets are more than just a literary form in traditional Chinese culture; they serve as an essential medium for conveying education, ethics, cultural heritage, festivity, blessings, and artistic aesthetics. In the context of ancestral halls, couplets encapsulate the core values, social memory, and cultural identity of a family through concise language and rich symbolism. By analyzing the couplets in the Peng Ancestral Hall, this section

illustrates how couplets play a vital role in cultural transmission and the preservation of family memory.

4.5.1 Origin and Development of Couplets

Definition and Form of Couplets

Couplets, also called “duilian” in Chinese, are pairs of lines of poetry that adhere to strict rules of prosody and are often characterized by parallel structure and harmonious rhythm. Typically composed of two lines, each with an equal number of characters, the lines are paired in meaning and sound, often displayed vertically on pillars or walls. Initially used in temples and palaces, couplets gradually became a popular art form across all social classes, embedding themselves deeply into Chinese cultural practices. Beyond their literary value, couplets serve as powerful cultural symbols, encapsulating rich meanings and values.

4.5.2 Historical Origin and Development of Couplets

Origins and Early Development:

The origin of couplets can be traced back over two thousand years to the "peachwood charms" of the pre-Qin era. These charms were inscribed on peachwood boards to ward off evil spirits and were hung on doorways. Over time, this practice evolved into the more structured and formalized couplets known today. During the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period, the formal structure of couplets began to take shape, and by the Song Dynasty, they were further refined and widely adopted.

Flourishing in the Song and Yuan Dynasties:

The Song Dynasty saw the flourishing of couplets as a medium for literati to showcase their wit, express emotions, and communicate ideas. As urban culture thrived, couplets became a popular form of intellectual exchange. By the Yuan Dynasty, couplets had become common decorations in temples, palaces, and homes, serving both aesthetic and symbolic purposes.

Peak in the Ming and Qing Dynasties:

The Ming and Qing Dynasties represent the golden age of couplet writing. During this period, couplets were not only ubiquitous in various architectural settings—such as imperial palaces, temples, and common residences—but also reached new artistic heights. Many masterpieces from this era are still revered as

exemplars of the art form, characterized by their philosophical depth, educational value, and artistic excellence.

Modern Inheritance and Development:

In modern times, couplets have retained their cultural significance, especially during festivals, celebrations, and other special occasions. During the Lunar New Year, for example, it is customary for families to hang couplets at their doorways as a symbol of good fortune. While modern couplets may exhibit some variations in form and content, they continue to uphold their traditional literary and cultural values.

4.5.3 Cultural Significance of Couplets

Education and Ethics:

Couplets often convey moral and ethical teachings, emphasizing family values, virtues, and responsibilities. For instance, couplets like “Educating children lies in the study of literature” reflect the importance of education and the transmission of knowledge and wisdom from one generation to the next.

Cultural Heritage:

As a form of artistic expression, couplets carry the weight of Chinese classical literature. They not only showcase personal talent and thought but also transmit the accumulated cultural values and knowledge of millennia. Couplets frequently reference historical events, literary allusions, and classical poetry, serving as vehicles for cultural preservation.

Festivity and Blessings:

Couplets play a crucial role in Chinese festive culture, particularly during events such as the Lunar New Year, weddings, and birthdays. Through concise and rhythmic language, couplets convey blessings, good fortune, and happiness, with spring couplets and birthday couplets being common examples.

Art and Aesthetics:

The artistic value of couplets lies in their precise parallelism, harmonious rhythm, and skillful wordplay. Authors craft couplets with an emphasis on formal symmetry and depth of meaning, making them a beloved component of traditional Chinese aesthetics and an indispensable part of cultural life.

The Role of Couplets in Family and Society

Embodiment of Family Culture:

In many families, especially those with ancestral halls, couplets hold special significance. They are often displayed prominently in ancestral halls, doorways, and living rooms, serving as symbols of the family's cultural heritage. Through these couplets, family members express their reverence for ancestors, impart moral teachings, and strengthen familial bonds.

Transmission of Social Memory:

Couplets also serve as carriers of social memory, documenting and transmitting historical events, cultural customs, and societal values. Over time, these couplets not only preserve cultural traditions but also reinforce the cultural identity of the community.

4.5.4 Case Study: Couplets in the Peng Ancestral Hall

The couplets in the Peng Ancestral Hall carry profound meanings, generally falling into three main categories:



Figure 102. Two couplets in the atrium

Source: GuangHui, July. 14, 2024 photographed

1. Couplets Composed by the Ancestral Hall's Builders:

These couplets often reflect the builders' personal experiences and achievements. For example:

“Advance with caution and solemnity, ascend three ranks with grace and dignity.”

This couplet describes the dignity and respectful demeanor of a person, likely alluding to the experience of an ancestor who rose through official ranks, embodying the virtues of decorum and integrity.



Figure 103. The couplet at the door of the temple

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

2. Couplets Encouraging the Education of Descendants:

These couplets emphasize the importance of education and the role of family in nurturing future generations. For instance:

“Educating children lies in the study of literature, following the ancestors’ collection of writings.”

This couplet underscores the significance of family education, particularly the role of mothers in imparting knowledge and values to their children, reflecting the traditional cultural emphasis on learning and moral upbringing.

Social Memory and Internalization:

Family Education and Social Values: This couplet highlights the importance of transmitting family culture through the education of literature, aligning with

broader societal recognition of the family's role in moral education. It reflects the societal emphasis on education and the pivotal role of mothers, acknowledged within the family and society at large.

The Role of the Mother: The mention of the mother in the couplet, particularly in reference to “the ancestors’ collection of writings,” emphasizes the crucial role of the mother in the transmission of family memory. As the bearer of family memory, the mother’s role in educating her children helps perpetuate these memories within both the family and the broader society.

Symbolism and Reproduction of Social Memory:

Cultural Symbolism: In the framework of social memory, the reference to “literature” in the couplet symbolizes not just knowledge and wisdom, but also the spirit of the family. “Literature” becomes a shared goal and symbol of honor and moral heritage within the family.

Reproduction Process: As each generation learns and recites these couplets, they engage in the process of reproducing social memory. By physically encountering these texts and internalizing them, they reshape and reinforce the cultural memory of the family.

Reinforcement and Continuation of Social Memory:

Ritualized Memory: During significant family rituals, such as ancestral worship and major festivals, these couplets often serve as key educational tools. The ritualized repetition of these couplets not only reinforces their meaning but also renews and solidifies the family’s collective memory.

Expansion and Flow of Memory: As family members migrate and the family lineage continues, these memories, encapsulated in the form of couplets, spread and flow outward. Though reinterpreted in new contexts, their core values remain preserved and transmitted.

Couplets Recording the Achievements of Peng Descendants Who Migrated Abroad:



Figure 104. Couplet on the left side of the hall
Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

These couplets commemorate the contributions and successes of Peng descendants who settled in distant lands, preserving the family's reputation and heritage:

“The homeland clan and overseas descendants greatly enhance the family's honor.”

This couplet honors the achievements of Peng descendants abroad who upheld and expanded the family's legacy, making significant contributions to the family's reputation and traditions.

Analysis from the Perspective of Social Memory:

Symbol of Family Honor: This couplet emphasizes the contributions of Peng descendants abroad in enhancing the family's reputation. It not only records their success but also symbolizes the continued extension of family honor across geographic boundaries.

Transmission and Continuation of Social Memory: As the Peng family's culture and values spread to new regions, they continue to be recognized and respected, maintaining the family's cultural identity in broader social contexts.

Honoring Ancestors with Deep Respect and Gratitude

“Trees have roots, water has sources; the ancestors’ virtues are profound, and their blessings continue to nurture future generations.”

This couplet expresses profound respect and gratitude toward ancestors, emphasizing the family’s roots, the deep influence of ancestral virtues, and the wish for the continued prosperity of future generations.



Figure 105. The couplet in the hall of Peng ancestral hall

Source: GuangHui, July. 14, 2024 photographed

Symbolism of Ancestral Virtues and Family Heritage:

"Trees have roots, water has sources": These phrases use natural phenomena to symbolize the origins of the family and the virtues of the ancestors, reminding descendants to remain grateful for the foundations laid by their forebears. The imagery of trees and water underscores the continuity of life, emphasizing the enduring lineage and cultural legacy of the family.

"The ancestors' virtues are profound": This line underscores the deep and lasting impact of ancestral virtues, which not only glorify the family but also provide ongoing protection and blessings for future generations



Figure 106. The couplet in the hall of Peng ancestral hall

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

Cultural Significance and Social Memory:

Feng Shui and Symbolic Meaning: The couplet's symbolism in Feng Shui underscores the importance of protecting the family's spiritual and physical well-being. The imagery of the Kirin, clouds, and scrolls on the doorstone further enhances these meanings, representing the family's prosperity, harmony, and longevity.

Family Memory and Cultural Transmission: As a material carrier of family culture, the doorstone embodies the family's historical memory and conveys the ancestors' values through its motifs. The Kirin symbolizes good fortune and justice, while the cloud and scroll patterns represent vitality and prosperity.

Conclusion

Couplets serve as an essential medium for expressing family values, societal ideals, and cultural continuity within the ancestral hall context. Through the rich symbolism, historical references, and artistic expressions embedded in couplets, families like the Pengs maintain a vibrant connection to their heritage, reinforce their social memory, and foster a strong sense of identity across generations. As traditional

culture continues to evolve, the role of couplets in preserving and transmitting these values remains ever relevant, ensuring that the spirit of ancestral halls lives on in contemporary society.

Summary

This section has explored the cultural significance of couplets, particularly within the context of the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall. It examined how couplets serve as a medium for conveying family values, preserving cultural heritage, and fostering social memory. Through the analysis of various types of couplets—those related to education, family achievements, and moral teachings—the section highlighted how these texts contribute to the transmission of cultural identity across generations. The role of couplets in enhancing family honor, reinforcing educational values, and symbolizing ancestral virtues was also emphasized, demonstrating their importance in maintaining the cultural continuity and social memory of the Peng family.

4.6 Summary

From the late Qing Dynasty through the post-1978 period, Lingnan mural art experienced profound transformations driven by cultural, educational, and social changes. Initially influenced by Western realism, artists like Kang Youwei advocated integrating European precision with traditional Chinese aesthetics. Educational reforms replaced clan-based institutions with Western-style schools, fostering artistic innovation through blending Chinese and Western techniques. The Lingnan School, led by Gao Jianfu, Gao Qifeng, and Chen Shuren, promoted realism to enlighten society and enhance national awareness. Clan culture adapted by integrating modern themes, exemplified in realistic depictions of animals like lions, aligning traditional identities with contemporary nationalism. Post-1978, ancestral hall murals diversified further, embracing modern materials and broader social themes, yet maintained conservative, decorative floral and landscape motifs tailored for tourism and cultural showcases.

CHAPTER V

Analyze the bodily practice and social memory of Peng Ancestral Hall

5.1 Case Study: Ancestral Worship Ceremony in the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall

Regarding the central focus of discussions on art, Professor Wu Hung proposed that the research methodology of historical anthropology involves integrating the analysis of specific case studies with historical textual research. (Wu Hung, 2005) This approach extends beyond the mere examination of historical facts to provide diverse and complex interpretations of cultural mechanisms, spatiotemporal relationships, and historical evolution. This research activity focuses on the annual Spring Festival celebration held at the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall. Since the reform and opening-up, many of the social functions of ancestral halls have gradually been transferred to village committees, but the annual ceremonial activities, particularly the ancestral worship ceremonies involving elders over 70, have been preserved. This ceremony not only passes down traditional culture but also serves as an important occasion for enhancing social identity and bodily practice among family members. This chapter provides a detailed record of the ceremony process and analyzes it from the perspectives of social identity and bodily practice, with reference to the images and murals within the ancestral hall.

According to Paul Connerton's theory, social memory is sustained and transmitted through bodily practice. As Connerton emphasized in *How Societies Remember*, "Ritualized bodily practices serve as tangible vehicles for memory, concretizing collective experiences." (Paul Connerton, 1989) In the ancestral worship ceremonies at the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall, activities such as lion dances, kneeling, and incense burning not only perpetuate traditional culture but also embed the clan's collective memory into the participants through these bodily actions. This bodily practice transforms memory into a "living" cultural process.

Moreover, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus in *The Logic of Practice* (Pierre Bourdieu, 1990) can be applied to explain how the repetitive bodily movements in the rituals of ancestral halls internalize social memory into a long-term

cultural habit. This repetitiveness and ritualization of bodily practices enable memory to transcend the individual and be passed down through collective practices to future generations.

The Peng Clan Ancestral Hall is structured into three sections, and the ceremonial activities are conducted according to this tripartite layout. This structured design not only reflects the spatial hierarchy of the ancestral hall but also underscores the systematic and orderly nature of the ceremonial activities. By following the tripartite layout, the ritual process is imbued with an atmosphere of respect and reverence, thereby strengthening the participants' collective memory and deepening their connection to family traditions and values.

By integrating perspectives from historical anthropology and theories of social memory, we can better understand the cultural significance of the ancestral worship ceremonies in the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall. This combination of spatial layout and ritual practice not only reinforces the clan's social identity but also transforms the ancestral hall into a vital space for preserving memory and transmitting values.



Figure 107. The pattern diagram of Peng's big ancestral hall

Source: Peng Wu village zhi, The village annals was written and organized by the descendants of the Peng family, 30.4. 2006

5.2 Worship Ceremony: The Core of Family Memory



Figure 108. On January 22, 2023, Peng clan people into the ancestral temple worship scene

Source: Peng Wu village committee staff provided. 2023.1.22

The worship ceremony is the initial and most significant part of the ancestral worship activities in the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall. According to the interview with the ancestral hall's head, the ceremony begins with family members gathering in front of the Buddhist shrine of the ancestral temple to perform ritualistic actions, such as incense burning, kneeling, and bowing. These actions symbolize reverence for the ancestors and serve as a medium to connect the participants with their heritage and collective identity.

Ritual Process and Symbolism

The worship ceremony follows a structured and solemn sequence:

Offering Incense: Family members, led by the eldest, approach the shrine to light incense. The rising smoke is believed to carry prayers and blessings to the ancestors, symbolizing spiritual communication between generations.

Kneeling and Bowing: Participants kneel and bow in a specific order, often determined by seniority. This physical act of humility and respect underscores the traditional Confucian values of filial piety and family hierarchy.

Reciting Blessings or Silent Prayers: During the ritual, some family members recite blessings or remain silent in prayer, reinforcing a shared emotional connection with the ancestors and among the living members.

Bodily Practice and Social Memory

Drawing on Paul Connerton's theory of bodily practice, these ritualized movements embed collective memory into the participants' physical actions, turning memory into a lived experience. For instance: The repetitive nature of kneeling and bowing fosters an embodied memory of respect and unity, ensuring that these values are internalized and transmitted to future generations.

The sensory experience of incense—the sight of rising smoke, the smell, and the act of lighting it—serves as a tangible anchor for recalling family traditions.

From the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu's habitus, these ritual practices represent a long-standing cultural habit internalized by participants through repeated enactment over time. The structured nature of the worship ceremony reflects the broader values of order, respect, and unity central to the Peng family's collective identity.

Cultural Significance

The worship ceremony not only preserves traditional culture but also strengthens social cohesion. By physically participating in the ritual, family members reaffirm their connection to the ancestral hall as a sacred space. This shared experience fosters a sense of belonging and reinforces the family's collective memory, ensuring the continuity of their cultural heritage.

พูน บุญเกิด ชีวะ

5.2.1 Banquet and Tea Drinking: Strengthening Social Bonds



Figure 109. On January 22,2023, When the descendants of Peng's men have dinner together, people over 70 will receive 200 yuan in red envelopes
Source: Peng Wu village committee staff provided.2023.1.22

Following the solemn worship ceremony, the Peng family gathers in the central hall for a banquet featuring traditional buns and tea. This collective activity, marked by shared food and moments of interaction, serves as a crucial phase for enhancing emotional bonds and reinforcing familial unity. Each elder present receives a New Year's gift of 200 yuan, which is not only a material gesture of care but also a spiritual expression of respect.

5.2.2 Cultural Significance of the Lion Dance

After a dinner with tea and steamed buns, members of the Peng family watch a lion dance at the gate of the ancestral hall. The lion dance, an integral part of Chinese traditional culture, originated during the Northern and Southern Dynasties and has evolved over a millennium into a significant folk activity in Chinese culture. It is not merely for entertainment but also symbolizes blessings, exorcising evil spirits, and attracting wealth.



Figure 110. On January 22,2023, a lion dance was performed at the entrance to the gate of the ancestral temple

Source: Peng Wu village committee staff provided.2023.1.22



Figure 111. On January 22,2023, a lion dance was performed at the entrance to the gate of the ancestral temple

Source: Peng Wu village committee staff provided.2023.1.22

At the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall, the lion dance not only demonstrates respect for traditional culture but also enhances the sense of identity and cohesion among family members through collective viewing. The brightly colored lions dancing in front of the ancestral hall symbolize the family's prosperity and thriving future. This visual feast sets a sacred and vibrant tone for the entire ceremony, reinforcing the participants' sense of family identity and community.

5.3 Visual Art and Ritual Space: A Study of Door Gods and Murals in the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall

Edward S. Casey, in his book *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (2000), highlights the close relationship between visual memory and place. Taking the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall as an example, its visual artworks—such as door gods, murals, and ancestral portraits—utilize symbolic content and spatial arrangements to construct a space imbued with ritualistic and sacred qualities. This space serves not only as a physical venue for ancestor worship but also as an essential carrier for the creation and preservation of cultural memory.

In the ancestral worship ceremonies at the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall, these visual artworks are integrated with ritual practices, using symbolic elements to reinforce participants' identification with family culture. Simultaneously, they embed collective memory into the family's value system and historical traditions.

The Symbolic Meaning of Visual Elements and Cross-Cultural Dialogue
The symbolic significance of visual elements plays a vital role in the ritual practices of the ancestral hall. For example, the red and gold in the door gods signify authority and the warding off of evil, while the cranes and kirin depicted in the murals symbolize longevity and prosperity. These symbolic motifs, when examined through cross-cultural comparative studies, reveal striking similarities with other cultural systems of representation, such as religious murals in medieval Europe. This highlights a universal human pursuit of the meaning of life across different cultures.

Door Gods: Guardians of Visual and Cultural Memory

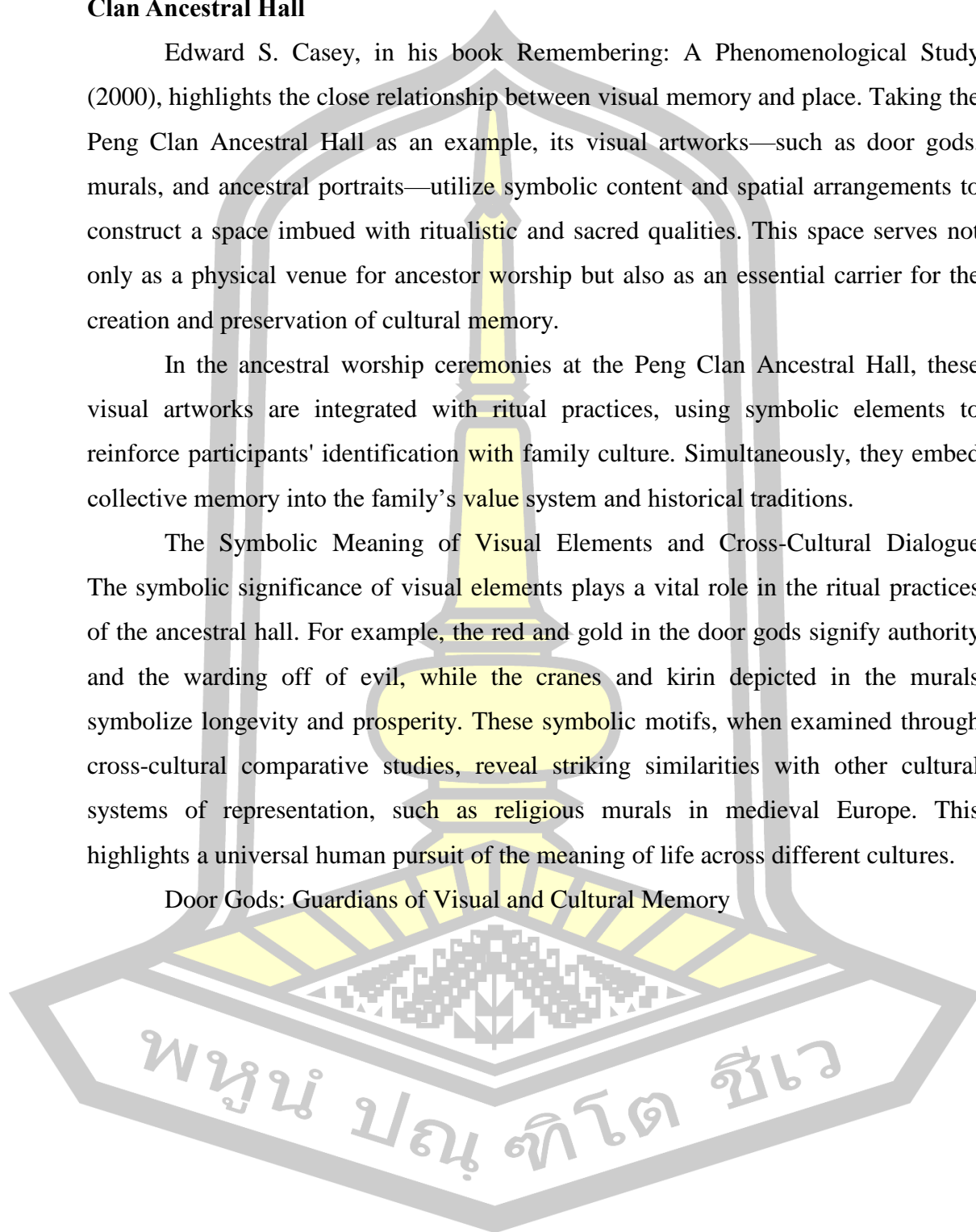




Figure 112. On January 22,2023, The door god at the gate of the Great ancestral hall

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

History and Origins of Door Gods

At the entrance of the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall, clan members are greeted by two imposing images of door gods. Door gods are significant symbols in traditional Chinese culture, typically portrayed as Qin Shubao and Yuchi Gong, representing protective forces for homes and ancestral halls. The door gods embody the dignity and sanctity of the hall while symbolizing the family's adherence to traditional values and reverence for their ancestors.

The tradition of door gods can be traced back to the Tang Dynasty. According to Tales of the Sui and Tang Dynasties, Emperor Taizong of Tang, Li Shimin, was troubled by nightmares and commanded generals Qin Shubao and Yuchi Gong to guard the palace gates to ward off evil spirits. Their images subsequently became the prototypes for door gods, which have since been widely painted on palace and household doors to safeguard homes. This tradition endures to this day, with door god images remaining essential elements in ancestral halls, temples, and residences.

Symbolic Meaning of Door God Images

The two door gods at the main gate of the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall convey a sense of authority through their stern expressions and vibrant colors. Armored and armed, the door gods project an aura of protection and exorcism. Red symbolizes the repulsion of evil spirits, gold represents nobility and authority, and green signifies vitality and hope. These color choices amplify the visual impact of the images and communicate the protective function of the door gods. Through their commanding postures and vivid colors, the door gods protect the hall while preserving the traditional belief in honoring ancestors and safeguarding the family home.

Murals: Artistic Expressions of History and Cultural Memory

The Symbolism of Murals Inside the Main Gate

The murals inside the main gate depict themes such as The Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea, intricate flower-and-bird paintings, and auspicious animals. These murals not only enrich the cultural connotations of the ancestral hall but also carry profound symbolic meanings. The Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea reflects Daoist ideals of transcendence and immortality, while the flower-and-bird paintings symbolize a harmonious vision of humanity and nature. Auspicious animals like the kirin and dragon signify prosperity and power.

As clan members pass through the hall, these visual artworks, encountered first, imbue the space with a sense of sacredness and historical depth. Through the display of these images, participants are subtly guided into a space rich in historical and cultural memory, enhancing the solemnity and cultural experience of the ceremony.

Connection Between Door Gods and Social Identity

During the ancestral worship ceremony, the door god images symbolically safeguard the smooth conduct of the rituals, allowing participants to feel the ancestral protection and spiritual continuity. As symbols of cultural heritage, door gods not only protect the ancestral hall but also represent the values of protection, peace, and family continuity in Chinese culture. Each time family members pass through the guardianship of the door gods, this bodily practice strengthens their identification with family history and values, further enhancing family cohesion and identity.

The murals inside the main gate, such as "The Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea," meticulous paintings of flowers and birds, and auspicious animals, enrich the cultural connotations of the ancestral hall. These images, beyond their artistic value,

convey deep cultural meanings. The Eight Immortals symbolize Daoist transcendence and immortality, the floral and avian images reflect a harmonious vision of nature, and auspicious animals like the Kirin and dragon symbolize prosperity and power.

These visual artworks, encountered as clan members enter the hall, imbue the space with a sense of sanctity and historical depth. Through the display of these images, participants are subtly guided into a sacred space rich in historical and cultural memory, enhancing the solemnity and cultural experience of the ceremony.

5.4 Cultural and Symbolic Significance of Ancestral Portraits

The ancestral portraits of the Peng family, hanging on either side of the central hall, symbolize the presence and protection of the ancestors. The cultural elements within the hall, such as couplets and murals, also play a significant role. These images and texts, viewed and revered by participants, subtly instill the values and blessings passed down by the ancestors into their hearts. In this ritualized activity, participants not only feel the presence of their ancestors but also psychologically and emotionally reinforce their identification with the family culture.



Figure 113. Portrait of two family builders of the Peng Great ancestral Hall

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

These two portraits depict the dignity and nobility of the Peng ancestors, dressed in formal official robes from the Ming and Qing Dynasties, with solemn and dignified expressions. This form of ancestral portrait holds deep significance in Chinese traditional culture, especially in ancestral halls, where it represents not only respect and remembrance of the ancestors but also a symbol of family honor and social status.

Symbolism of Attire and Identity

The ancestors in the portraits are dressed in official robes, indicating their social status during their lifetimes. The patterns and colors on these robes are usually subject to strict hierarchical regulations, thus reflecting the ancestors' high social standing. This choice of attire not only showcases the ancestors' identity but also conveys a value system of respecting tradition and honoring ancestors, inspiring descendants to uphold the family's honor and traditions.

Artistic Style and Cultural Transmission

These portraits, created using traditional meticulous brushwork, exhibit rich and elegant colors that highlight the ancestors' dignified appearance. This artistic form is closely linked to the Chinese concept of venerating the elderly and wise and is an important part of cultural transmission. The portraits are usually hung in the central hall, symbolizing the ancestors' central role in the family, ensuring that their spirit continues to protect future generations.

Social Memory Function of the Portraits

These ancestral portraits serve not only as visual memories of the ancestors but also as carriers of the family's collective memory. When family members face these portraits during ancestral worship or other major ceremonies, they not only remember the ancestors but also strengthen their social identity and cohesion through this ritual practice. On the level of social memory, these portraits bear witness to the family's history, conveying the family's honor, traditions, and values, becoming vital carriers of family cultural transmission.

When family members dine in front of the ancestral portraits, this act is not merely part of daily life but a highly symbolic bodily practice. During this process, the honor, family history, and social status embodied in the ancestral portraits subtly influence each family member. This combination of visual and behavioral elements

ensures that the ancestors' spirit and family traditions are naturally transmitted in daily life.

Moreover, these portraits not only symbolize the ancestors' honor but also, along with the murals in the hall, convey the core values of Confucian culture and traditional auspicious meanings. The dignified and solemn faces of the ancestors in the portraits, dressed in luxurious and elegant official robes, serve as a reminder to future generations to uphold the family's fine traditions and, through visual guidance, educate family members to respect history and carry forward the spirit of their ancestors.

Within this space, the blessings and educational significance of the ancestors are reflected through the interaction between the paintings and real life. This subtle influence manifests not only in the respect shown by family members towards their ancestors but also in the reinforcement of Confucian culture and traditional values through daily behavior, ensuring that the family maintains cultural and spiritual continuity across generations.

5.5 The Construction of Collective Memory: The role of space and visual symbols in the Rear Hall

5.5.1 The Construction of Collective Memory: The Role of Space and Visual Symbols

Maurice Halbwachs, in *On Collective Memory*, emphasized that collective memory does not exist in isolation but is constructed through specific social groups and spaces. (Maurice Halbwachs, 1992) In the ancestral worship ceremonies held at the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall, participants reinforce the family's collective memory and identity through shared ritual practices. The preservation of this memory relies not only on oral traditions but also on the coordination of spatial arrangements and visual symbols. This dual mechanism ensures the intergenerational continuity of memory and further strengthens the emotional bonds among family members.

In the offering area of the shrine, an incense burner is placed before the ancestral tablets, and above them hangs a portrait of Peng Zu, symbolizing the strong identification of Peng descendants with their lineage from Peng Zu.



Figure 114. The descendants of the Peng family will come to worship on special days such as the New Year and having children

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed



Figure 115. This image is a portrait of Peng Zu, a legendary figure in Chinese mythology known for his longevity and expertise in the art of health preservation. He is regarded as an important symbol of health and Daoist culture.

Source: <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1612550030947158171>

5.5.2 Ancestral Portraits: Visual Representation and Social Memory

In analyzing ancestral portraits, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus can be applied to explore how visual representation reinforces the family's social memory and value system. The vibrant colors, solemn expressions, and formal official robes in

these portraits not only highlight the ancestors' dignity and status but also transmit the family's history, honor, and core values through ritual activities. By displaying these visual symbols, the portraits play a dual role in cultural education and value transmission within the ancestral hall space.

Ancestral Worship Ceremony and Cultural Symbolism: Analysis of Peng Zu's Portrait

In the offering area of the shrine, an incense burner and ancestral tablets are placed, with a portrait of Peng Zu hanging above. This portrait symbolizes the strong identification of Peng descendants with their lineage and carries profound cultural and symbolic meanings.

Symbol of Honor and Identity

As the progenitor of the Peng surname, Peng Zu holds a revered position in Chinese history and culture. Even though the family's genealogy may not accurately trace back to Peng Zu's direct descendants, the hanging of Peng Zu's portrait remains a significant symbol of family honor and identity. This symbolic act not only reflects the family's recognition of their own honor but also strengthens family cohesion and identity through their association with this historical figure.

Collective Memory and Cultural Transmission

The display of Peng Zu's portrait also serves as a means of constructing collective memory. As the spiritual ancestor of the Peng family, the visual representation of Peng Zu in the ancestral hall establishes a shared historical and cultural memory among family members. This memory reflects the family's exploration of its origins and, through the combination of visual symbols and rituals, ensures the intergenerational continuity of culture and spirit.

Symbolic Family Honor

Despite possible breaks in the genealogical record, the hanging of Peng Zu's portrait remains a symbolic representation of family honor. This act signifies the spiritual connection between the Peng family and Peng Zu, expressing pride in their ancestor. It is not only an internal display of honor but also enhances the family's status and identity in broader society through social recognition.

Psychological Comfort and Moral Education

Peng Zu's portrait provides psychological comfort to family members. In the absence of traceable lineages after 500 years, reverence for Peng Zu offers a spiritual anchor. As a symbol of morality and wisdom, Peng Zu continues to play an educational role within the family, guiding descendants to uphold the family's traditional virtues and ethical standards. This subtle influence persists in daily life.

Conclusion

Regardless of whether the genealogy can precisely trace back to Peng Zu's direct descendants, the hanging of Peng Zu's portrait in the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall holds significant cultural and social importance. It serves as a symbol of family honor and identity and strengthens family cohesion through collective memory and cultural transmission. Through this symbolic expression, the Peng family establishes a spiritual connection between history and modernity, ensuring the continuity and development of family culture and values.

5.5.3 Cultural and Symbolic Significance of the Ancestral Shrine



Figure 116. Peng ancestral hall worship hall, this table is mainly dedicated to the deceased ancestors in the family, there are ancestral tablets

Source: GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

In the image of the ancestral shrine in the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall, we can see the ancestral tablets being enshrined. The following is an analysis of the cultural and symbolic significance of this shrine:

1. Overall Layout and Design

This shrine is meticulously designed, reflecting the traditional Chinese ancestral hall culture's reverence and respect for ancestors. The structure is divided into three tiers: the top tier features decorative dragon patterns and cloud motifs, symbolizing auspiciousness and nobility. The middle tier is the main area for enshrinement, where neatly arranged ancestral tablets are placed against a solemn backdrop, creating an atmosphere of reverence. The lower tier is the offering area, where sacrifices and incense are placed. This layout not only shows respect for the ancestors but also emphasizes the ancestral hall as the core space for family rituals.

2. Symbolism of Tablets and Images

The background painting behind the tablets depicts a typical Chinese landscape, representing the traditional Chinese concept of harmony between humanity and nature. This painting not only adds visual depth to the shrine but also symbolizes the unity between the ancestors' spirits and nature.

This shrine, which enshrines the ancestral tablets in the ancestral hall, is flanked by carvings of auspicious animals and plants that carry deep symbolic meanings beyond decoration. Each carved element embodies traditional cultural connotations, and through these symbols of good fortune, they express blessings for the family's descendants.

3. Carved Patterns and Cultural Connotations

Bat (蝠): In Chinese culture, bats are associated with "fu" (福), meaning good fortune, hence symbolizing luck and prosperity. The appearance of bat patterns on the shrine expresses a wish for enduring prosperity for the family members.

Plum Blossom (梅): Plum blossoms symbolize resilience and purity. Blooming alone in the cold winter, they represent strong character and indomitable spirit. This symbolism also conveys hopes that the family's descendants will uphold noble virtues.

Kirin (麟): The Kirin is an auspicious mythical creature in Chinese culture, symbolizing peace, prosperity, and good fortune. Its presence signifies the family's flourishing and the safety and happiness of future generations.

Chrysanthemum (菊): Chrysanthemums symbolize longevity and health. As the "hermit of flowers," chrysanthemums also represent transcendent character, encouraging descendants to maintain inner purity and resilience in a complex world.

Deer (鹿): In Chinese culture, deer symbolize longevity and wealth, as "lu" (鹿) is a homophone for "lu" (禄), which means official salary and good fortune. The deer carved on the shrine convey wishes for the family members' long life and prosperity.

Willow (柳): Willow trees symbolize vitality and flexibility, as they sprout quickly in spring, often representing new life and hope. Their presence signifies the family's continued prosperity and vitality.

Bear (熊): In ancient Chinese culture, bears are often associated with strength and courage, also seen as symbols of peace and stability. The bear carvings on the shrine express protection and guardianship for the family.

Lotus (莲): The lotus symbolizes purity, nobility, and spiritual transcendence and is closely associated with Buddhism, representing the wish for the family's spiritual purification and moral elevation.

4. Poetic Significance

The poem "蝠梅麟菊，鹿柳熊莲" cleverly links these auspicious images, expressing the family's desires for good fortune, longevity, prosperity, and health while also reflecting the pursuit of noble character and resilience in life. The presence of these elements on the shrine not only enhances the aesthetic value of the ancestral hall but also conveys the ancestors' blessings and expectations for their descendants through rich cultural symbolism.

5. Social and Family Memory Function of the Shrine

The shrine is the core place for family worship of ancestors and also carries the collective memory of the family. Through regular worship ceremonies, family members express respect for their ancestors while reinforcing the family's cohesion

and identity during these rituals. This collective act is not only a remembrance of the family's history but also a source of spiritual support for the family's future development.

6. Integration of Tradition and Modernity

In modern society, ancestral halls and their shrines continue to hold significant cultural and religious functions in some regions. Even as times change, this traditional culture of worship remains deeply rooted in the daily lives of family members. Through these formalized rituals, the family's values, ethics, and cultural traditions are passed down and preserved.

7. Summary and Conclusion: The Shrine as a Carrier of Family Culture and Values

The shrine in the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall serves not only as a material carrier for ancestor worship but also as a critical symbol of family cultural transmission. By enshrining ancestral tablets, family members express respect and remembrance for their ancestors. At the same time, these practices subtly convey the family's spirit and cultural values, ensuring their continuity across generations. In contemporary society, such ritual spaces remain instrumental in uniting family members and maintaining longstanding traditions.

The wooden carvings inside the ancestral hall replace text with images, featuring motifs such as "bats, plum blossoms, Kirin, chrysanthemums, deer, willows, bears, and lotuses." These motifs carry profound symbolic meanings, representing noble character and spiritual values. For instance, bats symbolize good fortune, plum blossoms stand for resilience and purity, and Kirin represent peace and prosperity. These visual elements work together to reinforce the ancestral hall's cultural connotations.

Notably, the murals within the hall avoid depicting human figures or classical stories. Instead, they focus on intricate renderings of flowers, birds, and landscapes, emphasizing symbols of longevity like cranes. These artistic choices express aspirations for a long and prosperous life. During ancestral worship, these symbols, perceived through bodily practice and visual engagement, integrate into the collective memory and social identity of the family members. They play a vital role in connecting participants to their cultural heritage.

Conclusion: A Space of Memory and Values

The shrine is far more than a physical space for housing ancestral tablets. Through its elaborate carvings and symbolic imagery, it becomes a vehicle for transmitting family values and cultural beliefs. For instance, the carvings and poetic phrase "蝠梅麟菊, 鹿柳熊莲" encapsulate wishes for prosperity, health, and noble character. These elements are not merely decorative; they provide spiritual support and moral guidance for the family's descendants.

Furthermore, the symbolic imagery fosters a profound emotional connection between the family's history and its present-day members. Through daily rituals, these symbols quietly but powerfully reinforce respect for ancestors and promote the understanding and transmission of core family values. This integration of ritual, visual symbolism, and cultural meaning ensures that the ancestral hall continues to be a vibrant center of family tradition, identity, and cohesion.

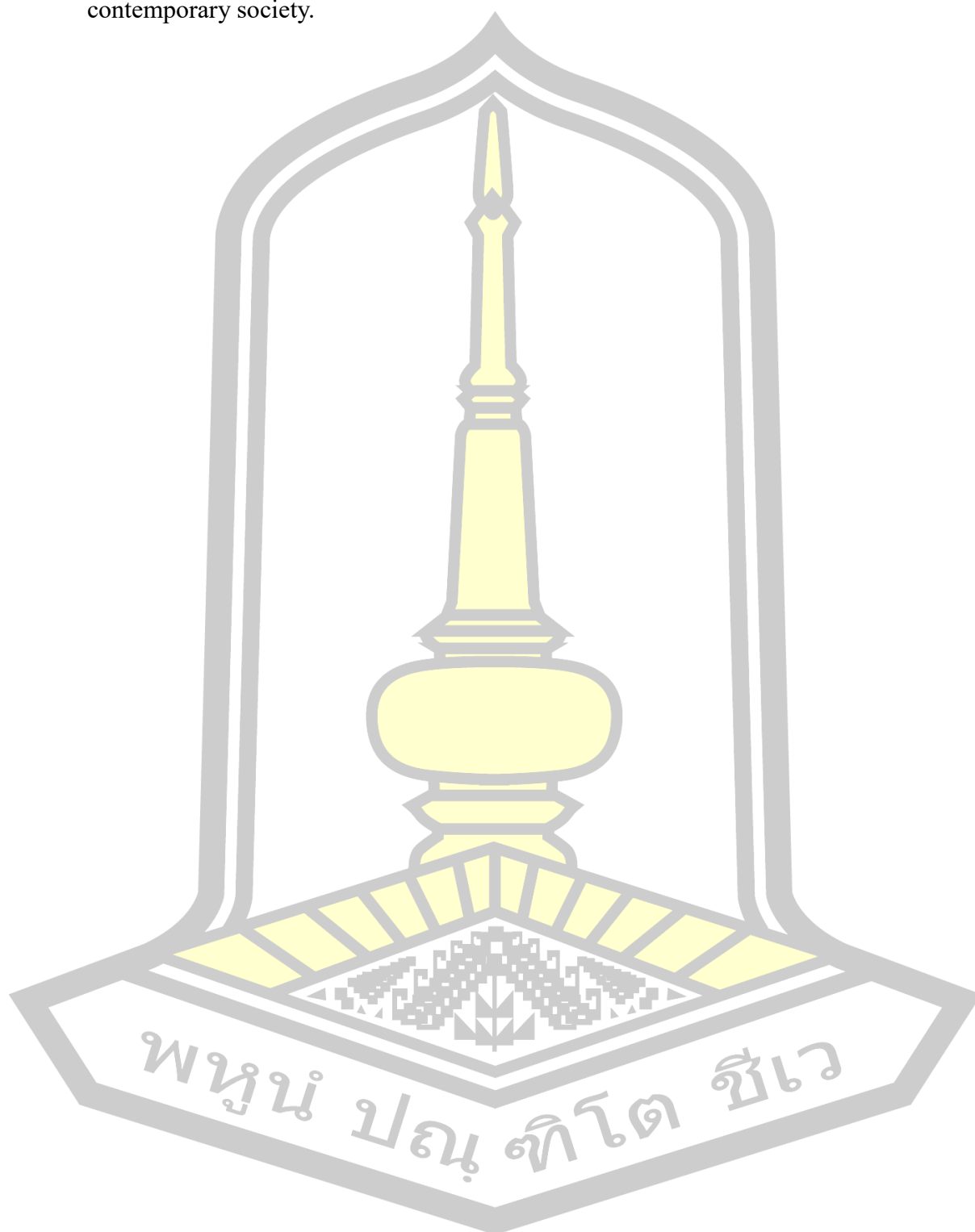
5.6 Summary

The ancestral worship ceremony at the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall is not merely a traditional religious activity but also a vital component of the family's social memory. Through the combined roles of the lion dance, door gods, murals, and ritual design within the ancestral shrine, participants reinforce their sense of family identity through bodily practice while also experiencing the deep cultural heritage of the family on both visual and psychological levels.

As a cultural space, the ancestral hall carries the family's historical memory and transmits the family's values and social ideals to every participant through a series of symbolic ritual activities. These ritual designs ensure that the ancestral hall retains its cultural and social significance in modern society, serving as a crucial link for sustaining family identity and cohesion.

By integrating "visual symbols" with "bodily practice," the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall establishes a mechanism for the transmission of cultural memory while embedding individual emotions into the collective memory and the family's value system. This spatial design and ritual expression ensure the intergenerational transmission of

culture, enabling the ancestral hall to continue its cultural and social functions in contemporary society.



CHAPTER VI

Create the inheritance cultural activity of Peng Ancestral Hall

6.1 Case Study Painting of Memory: Ancestral Worship Ceremony in the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall

In interviews with villagers near the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall, I found that those over the age of 30 rarely entered the ancestral hall and lacked in-depth knowledge of the cultural elements inside, such as the poetry and murals. As the elderly Peng clan members pass away, many cultural stories that carry the family's memory become less known. This phenomenon is closely related to the development of modern society, where people's attention has increasingly shifted outward, reducing their connection with their own ethnic group. The methods of material production and lifestyle have also changed significantly from the past.

In the mural activities I organized, I further realized that many Peng descendants knew little about the cultural elements within the ancestral hall, but they showed great interest in learning and passing on this culture to future generations.



Figure 117. Dongkeng town Peng wu shares economic joint conference, the conference was held in the ancestral hall. The function of the ancestral temple is closely combined with the contemporary development.

Source: Peng Wu village zhi, The village annals was written and organized by the descendants of the Peng family, Apr.30,2006



Figure 118. In the Pengwu village Committee, we had an in-depth conversation with the village and deputy village heads, mainly discussing the details of the next art activities in the Peng Great ancestral hall

Source:GuangHui, Feb. 1,2023 photographed

The Chinese government currently places great emphasis on the protection and transmission of intangible cultural heritage, not only to help people remember their history but also to promote the development of the local tourism economy. In the area where the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall is located, local government has introduced several policies in recent years to stimulate and promote tourism development. During interviews, I learned that the village government also hopes that younger members of the clan will better understand and pass on this cultural history.

Furthermore, a survey of art students from a local university revealed that the younger generation's understanding of ancestral hall culture is limited to basic levels. I interviewed a total of 15 local undergraduate students, of which 71.43% stated that they had some basic understanding of ancestral hall culture, while 14.29% reported no understanding at all.

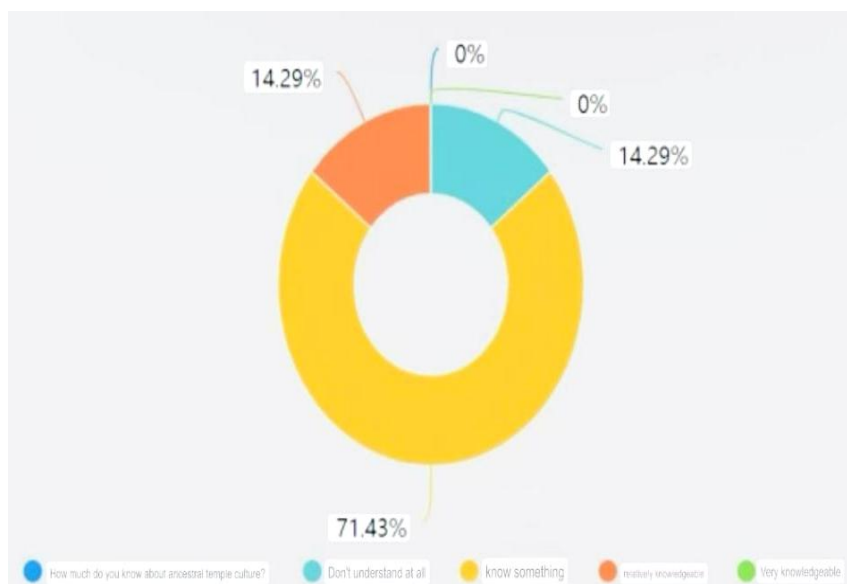


Figure 119. A survey of 15 local art students revealed limited knowledge of ancestral hall culture. 71.43% had basic understanding, while 14.29% had no understanding at all.

Source:GuangHui, July. 14,2024 photographed

However, these students expressed a willingness to learn more about this culture in their future studies. Of them, 80% wanted to learn about the history and culture of the ancestral hall to enhance their artistic appreciation. 60% hoped to improve others' communication and cooperation, and 46.67% wished to participate in creative practices. The survey showed that most students believe that cultural promotion activities related to ancestral halls help enhance personal historical and cultural literacy and provide creative inspiration. Although these students are not descendants of the Peng clan, their attitudes reflect a common issue among contemporary young people—a general lack of understanding of traditional culture.

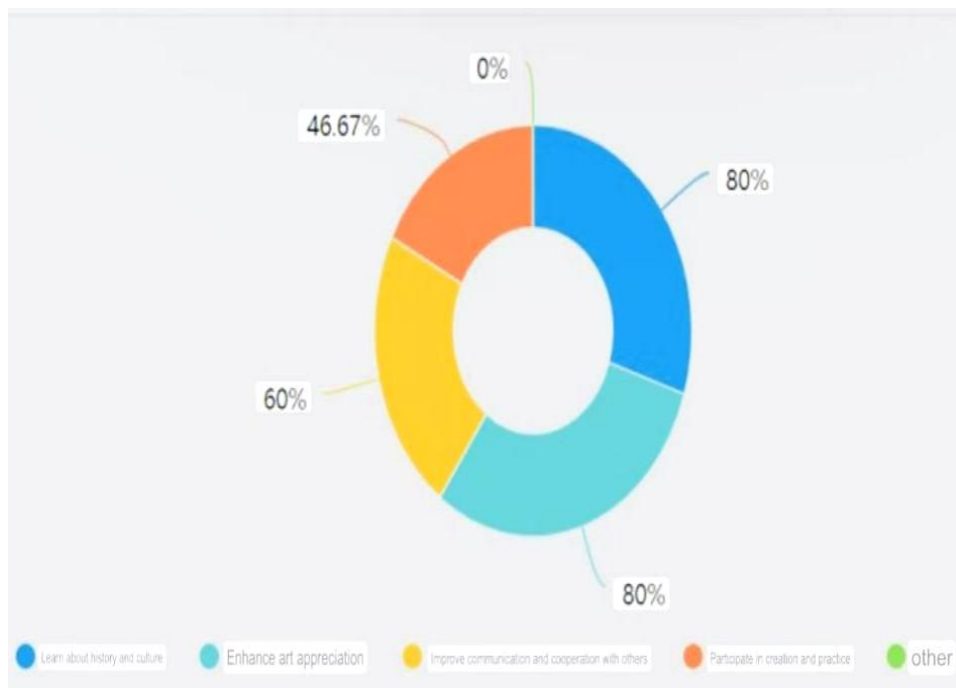


Figure 120. Most students showed interest in learning ancestral hall culture, with 80% focusing on history and art appreciation, 60% on communication, and 46.67% on creative practices. This highlights the cultural value for young people.

Source: GuangHui, July. 14, 2024 photographed

These intergenerational differences in cultural understanding highlight the issue of cultural transmission gaps that urgently need to be bridged through cultural activities. By organizing relevant activities, not only can the resources of the ancestral hall be revitalized, but the Peng clan and the younger generation can also better identify with and inherit the cultural traditions of their ancestors.

2. Activity One: Mural Painting Workshop





Figure 121. The first wall painting activity. The five people in the photo are all descendants of the Peng family. The third from the left is a cadre of the Peng family village committee, mainly responsible for the external affairs of the ancestral temple.

But not a descendant of the Peng family.

Source:GuangHui, JAN. 10,2024 photographed

Background and Objectives

In the fast-paced development of modern society, enhancing awareness and protection of traditional cultural heritage through cultural activities has become a significant concern. The murals in the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall, as an important cultural heritage of the Guangfu region, not only carry rich historical memories and cultural value but also serve as a key medium for family identity and social memory. These murals, selected by the ancestors and painted by craftsmen, subtly convey the ancestors' expectations and values to future generations.

To raise awareness and encourage participation in the preservation of this precious cultural heritage, the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall organized a themed event called "Mural Colors: The Essence of Guangfu Culture."

Objectives

Enhance participants' understanding and appreciation of the cultural heritage of the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall.

Promote cultural exchange between different age groups through interactive experiences.

Combine traditional art with modern society to spark interest and identification with traditional culture.

Activity Process



Figure 122. I was explaining the origin of the door pillow stone to the participants

Source:GuangHui, JAN. 10,2024 photographed

1. Opening Ceremony:

A brief opening speech introducing the significance and process of the event.



Figure 123. I was explaining the origin of the door pillow stone to the participants

Source:GuangHui, JAN. 10,2024 photographed

2. Mural Appreciation and Interpretation:

A guide leads participants through the murals in the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall, explaining the historical background and artistic value.

Through the interpretation of elements such as characters, animals, and flowers, the guide conveys the auspicious meanings, techniques, and stories behind these elements.



Figure 124. Participants in the activity are painting the murals, which are the works of the ancestral hall

Source:GuangHui, JAN. 10,2024 photographed

3. Painting Experience:

Provide painting tools and materials, inviting participants to create works based on the mural themes, encouraging them to incorporate their understanding into their creations.

The creation process deepens participants' understanding and identification with the ancestral hall culture.

4. Sharing and Exhibition:

Invite participants to share their paintings, explain their inspiration and meaning, and foster exchange and learning among participants.

5. Collaborative Mural Creation:

Invite participants to collectively create a large mural, demonstrating the family's cohesion and cultural transmission through collective wisdom and cooperation.

6. Closing and Feedback Collection:

A brief closing speech, thanking participants and volunteers, recognizing the best paintings, and awarding prizes or souvenirs.

Collect feedback to improve and optimize future events.



Figure 125. The six people participated in the activity, five of them were descendants of the Peng family, and the woman from the left was a staff member of the Pengwu village government, mainly responsible for the daily affairs of the Peng family of the big ancestral hall.

Source:GuangHui, JAN. 10,2024 photographed



Figure 126. Participants in the activity are painting the murals, which are the works of the ancestral hall

Source:GuangHui, JAN. 10,2024 photographed

Interview Feedback and Impressions

To better understand the impact of the event, we interviewed participants. Here are some typical responses:

Feedback from Peng Clan Members: This interactive experience strengthened their connection with other clan members, particularly through the collaborative mural creation, which reinforced their familial bonds. One clan member said, "I not only learned a lot about the history of the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall but also deepened my understanding of traditional culture through the painting experience."

Feedback from Art Enthusiasts: Participants interested in painting expressed that the event provided an opportunity to learn and practice traditional painting techniques while also enhancing their understanding of Guangfu culture through interaction with others. One enthusiast mentioned, "This event helped me learn more about Guangfu culture and the history of the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall, especially through mural appreciation, where I gained knowledge that I didn't know before."

Survey Analysis

Based on the survey results, the following points were summarized:

Enhanced Cultural Identity: Participants gained a deeper understanding of the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall and its mural art, strengthening their identification with Guangfu culture.

Significant Impact of Interactive Experiences: Activities with strong interactivity, such as painting experiences and collaborative mural creation, received high praise from participants, enhancing their engagement and interest.

Intergenerational Exchange: The event promoted communication between different age groups, particularly through collaborative mural creation, strengthening the bonds between family members and community residents.

Activity Summary

The mural painting activity successfully integrated traditional culture with modern society, enhancing participants' understanding and identification with the cultural heritage of the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall. By allowing participants to paint the ancestral hall murals themselves, it not only increased their appreciation of traditional art but also reinforced their identification with and transmission of ancestral hall

culture. The success of the event, supported by participants' positive feedback, provides valuable experience and reference for future cultural transmission activities.

6.2 Case Study Meaning of Painting and Literature: Practical Activities to Inherit and Preserve Ancestral Hall Culture



Figure 127. The four people participated in the activity, three of them were descendants of the Peng family, and the woman from the right was a staff member of the Pengwu village government, mainly responsible for the daily affairs of the Peng family of the big ancestral hall.

Source:GuangHui, JUN. 20,2024 photographed

Background and Objectives



Figure 128. Participants will draw the works on display

Source:GuangHui, JUN. 20,2024 photographed

To further promote the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage, I planned and hosted the "Case Study Meaning of Painting and Literature: Practical Activities to Inherit and Preserve Ancestral Hall Culture" at the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall. This event not only continued the appreciation and creation of mural art but also introduced a poetry recitation segment. The reason for combining these two elements is to deepen participants' understanding of the spiritual and intellectual aspects of ancestral hall culture through poetry appreciation. Poetry, as a vital carrier of traditional Chinese culture, when combined with murals, can more comprehensively convey the essence of ancestral hall culture. The poems recited were composed by the Peng Clan ancestors, but over time, many descendants have ceased to read or fully understand their profound meanings. By guiding participants to engage with these poems, the event aimed to help them absorb the wisdom and insights of their ancestors, which offers significant inspiration to the younger generation when facing life's challenges.

Objectives:

Enhance awareness of the cultural heritage of the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall.
Foster interaction and communication across different age groups through participatory experiences. Promote the integration of traditional arts with modern society.

Activity Process

1. Opening Ceremony:

A brief opening speech introducing the significance and process of the event.



Figure 129. I was telling the people who participated in the activity about the poems created by the ancestors of the ancestral temple. All three of them were descendants of the Peng family

Source:GuangHui, JUN. 20,2024 photographed

2. Mural Viewing and Explanation:

A guided tour of the murals, with explanations of their historical and artistic value.

Through interpreting elements in the murals, further convey the ancestors' values of respect for etiquette and societal contributions.



Figure 130. The murals organized in the Peng hall painted the activity scenes

Source:GuangHui, JUN. 20,2024 photographed

3. Poetry Recitation Segment:

Participants were invited to recite poems written by ancestral hall forebears, deepening their understanding of family culture and drawing inspiration from the ancestors' wisdom for contemporary life.

4. Interactive Mural Creation:

Materials were provided for participants to collaboratively create artwork themed around the murals, reflecting the expectations and teachings of the ancestors for future generations.

พหุ ประถมศึกษา



Figure 131. The scene painted by the mural. The left and right sides are the descendants of the Peng family. In the middle is the head of the Pengwu village committee.

Source:GuangHui, JAN. 10,2024 photographed

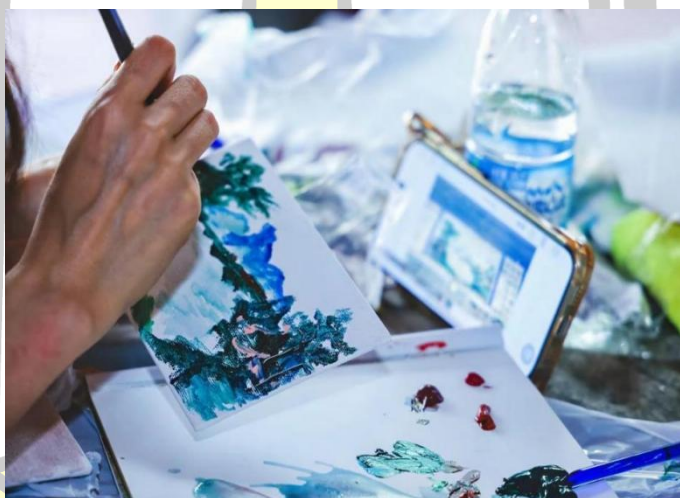


Figure 132. The painters first take pictures of the murals on the wall, and then draw them with oil painting.

Source:GuangHui, JAN. 10,2024 photographed

5. Closing and Feedback Collection:

A brief closing speech thanking participants and volunteers, followed by feedback collection to optimize future activities.



Figure 133. Mals are painted in the hall of the Peng ancestral hall

Source:GuangHui, JAN. 10,2024 photographed

Interview Feedback and Insights

I interviewed 15 participants who attended local mural activities twice. The table below summarizes their progression in understanding mural culture:

Aspect	Initial Understanding	Post-Activity Understanding
Familiarity with Murals	Not familiar or unaware	Became familiar through participation
Knowledge of Content	Limited or no knowledge	Matched analysis provided during sessions
Interest and Enthusiasm	Limited	Significantly increased enthusiasm and enjoyment
Personal Experience	Limited	Enhanced understanding and appreciation
Intergenerational Communication	Low initially	Improved intergenerational communication

Adult Feedback: Adults highly appreciated the poetry recitation segment, noting that it helped in understanding and preserving family culture while drawing strength from ancestral wisdom to face current life challenges. **Youth Feedback:** The youth found that the mural creation and poetry recitation enhanced their interest in traditional culture and team collaboration skills, reinforcing the importance of ancestral teachings.

Survey Analysis

Diverse Activity Format: Combining poetry recitation with mural creation met the needs of participants across different age groups, increasing the appeal of the

event. **Cultural Transmission and Innovation:** The event innovatively combined traditional culture with modern activity formats, which was well-received by participants.

Social Impact: The event fostered cultural exchange within the family and community, enhancing cultural identity and social cohesion.

Conclusion

By integrating murals with poetry recitation, the Peng Clan Cultural and Art Festival not only showcased the profound historical culture of the family but also strengthened participants' cultural identity through interactive experiences and cultural transmission. Through these activities, the wisdom and values of the ancestors were perpetuated, infusing new spiritual strength into modern society.

4. Overall Reflections and Suggestions

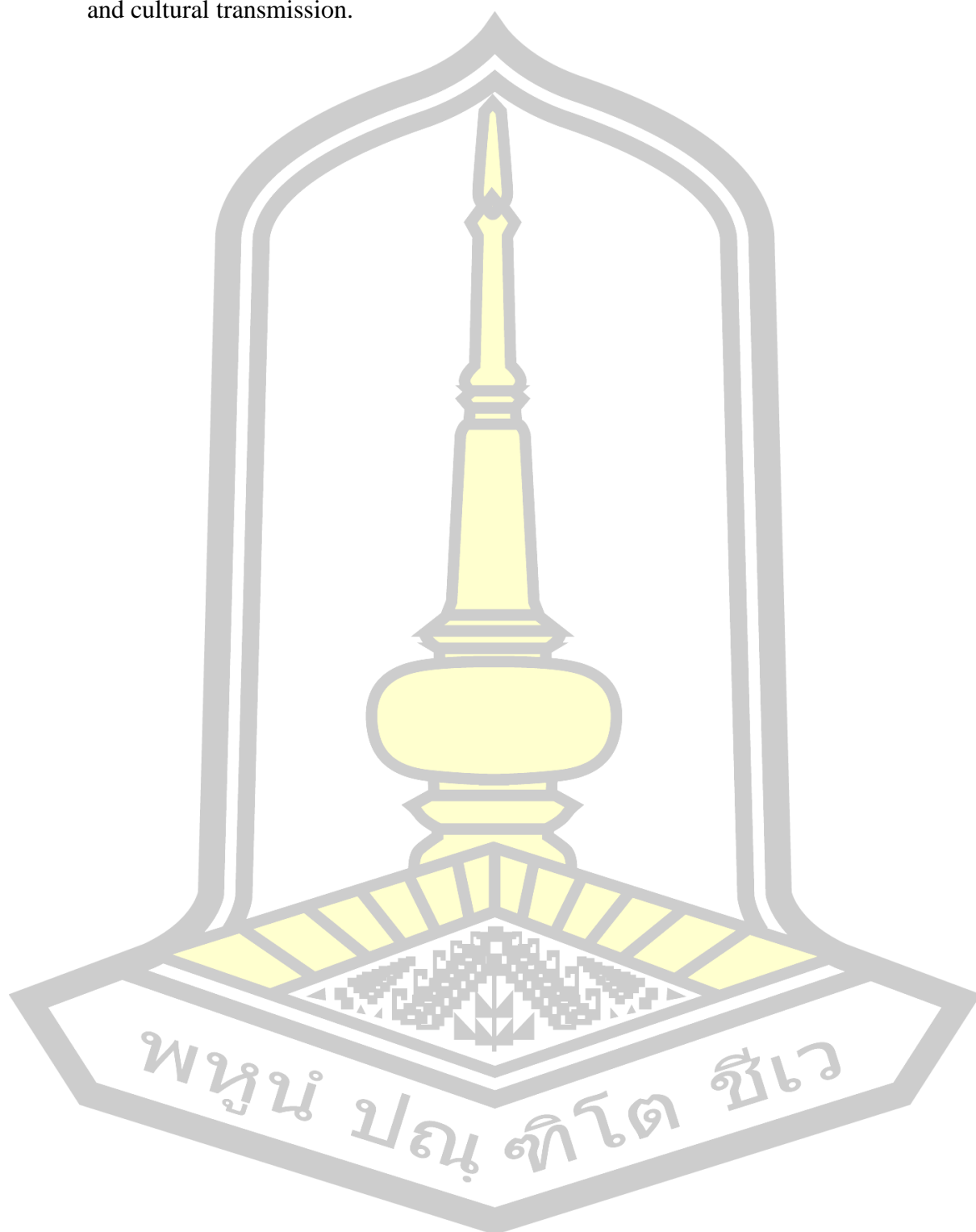
Reflections on Successes and Shortcomings: Here, you can reflect on the successes of the event, such as the increase in participant numbers and positive feedback. You can also point out some shortcomings, such as participant limitations or resource constraints.

Future Improvements and Development: Based on the reflections, propose some suggestions for improvement, such as expanding the scale of the event, introducing more diverse cultural activities, or increasing promotional efforts. You could also discuss how to better utilize ancestral hall resources in the future to encourage more young people to actively participate in cultural transmission.

6.3 Summary

Villagers aged over 30 rarely engage with Peng Clan Ancestral Hall, lacking detailed knowledge of its cultural elements. Younger generations display limited understanding but show significant interest in learning and preserving their ancestral culture. Through organized mural painting workshops and poetry recitations authored by ancestors, these activities effectively enhanced cultural understanding, appreciation, and intergenerational collaboration. Participants provided positive feedback, highlighting the meaningful impact on preserving ancestral wisdom, fostering cultural identity, and increasing youth involvement. Overall, the innovative cultural initiatives at the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall successfully bridged generational

divides, revitalized heritage appreciation, and strengthened community engagement and cultural transmission.



CHAPTER VII

Conclusion and Research Result Discussions

7.1 Major Research Findings

Objective 1: Study the Historical Development of Peng Ancestral Hall as a Material Artifact

Chapters 1 and 2 systematically examine the historical development of the Peng Ancestral Hall, tracing its evolution from its founding in the Ming Dynasty to its transformations in the modern era. The study highlights the hall's role as a vital carrier of familial culture, encapsulating rich historical memories while demonstrating remarkable adaptability to social and political changes. For example, the analysis of its architectural design and symbolic elements, such as the doorstone and roof ridge decorations, reveals the hall's central position in transmitting Guangfu familial cultural traditions.

Objective 2: Analyze the Artistic Techniques and Functions of Peng Ancestral Hall

Chapter 3 delves into the artistic techniques and functions of the ancestral hall's murals. These murals encompass diverse themes such as portraits, landscapes, and floral motifs. They not only convey family values but also exhibit high artistic quality. Notably, the incorporation of Western painting techniques during the Republican period and after the Reform and Opening-Up era enriched the artistic diversity of the murals. This diversity enhanced their aesthetic appeal while reflecting the cultural pluralism and historical context of their time.

Objective 3: Examine Bodily Practices and Social Memory in Peng Ancestral Hall

Chapter 4 explores how bodily practices—through rituals, visual arts, and spatial interactions—construct and transmit social memory. The research demonstrates that individuals engaging in hall activities, such as observing murals, participating in ancestral rites, and engaging in cultural education activities, dynamically connect personal memories with family history. These practices endow the ancestral hall with the capability for the dynamic reproduction of cultural

practices, ensuring the intergenerational transmission of family values and historical memory.

Objective 4: Design and Evaluate Cultural Activities for the Preservation of Peng Ancestral Hall

Chapter 5 focuses on cultural activities such as mural creation and poetry appreciation to highlight their role in preserving the hall's cultural heritage. These innovative activities deepen participants' understanding of family culture and imbue the ancestral hall with new social functions. For example, mural activities effectively bridge tradition and modernity, attracting active participation from younger generations. These initiatives reinvigorate the hall's cultural relevance and establish its significance as a hub for modern community cultural education.

7.2 Explanation of Research Object Selection

The Peng Ancestral Hall was chosen as the focus of this study for several critical reasons, underscoring its unique value and representative status in the cultural landscape of Guangfu ancestral halls.

Historical Significance: The Rarity of Ming Dynasty Constructions

The Peng Ancestral Hall, established during the Ming Dynasty, is one of the few well-preserved Ming-era ancestral halls in Guangdong Province. Unlike later or reconstructed halls, the Peng Ancestral Hall retains the quintessential architectural features of Ming-style halls, offering invaluable insights into the formation and continuity of family culture during this period. Its longevity and historical authenticity make it a rare and valuable object of study.

Completeness of Cultural and Artistic Elements

The Peng Ancestral Hall is distinguished by its rich array of cultural and artistic elements, including murals, poetry, and couplets. These features provide ample material for a comprehensive exploration of cultural inheritance within ancestral halls. Although the hall's murals were restored in 1984, the restoration adhered closely to the original style and content, faithfully preserving the artistic essence of the original works. In comparison to other ancestral halls in the Guangfu region, where cultural elements have often been lost due to age or lack of

maintenance, the Peng Ancestral Hall offers a remarkably complete sample for studying mural art and its cultural functions.

Continuity of Function

Unlike many ancestral halls that have been abandoned or repurposed, the Peng Ancestral Hall remains in active use, hosting ancestor worship rituals and clan gatherings. As a central venue for community culture, the hall continues to play a vital role in fostering family bonds and transmitting family values. This functional continuity makes it an ideal site for observing the dynamic cultural practices associated with ancestral halls.

Heritage Protection and Social Significance

Recognized as a protected cultural heritage site by Guangdong Province and Dongguan City, the Peng Ancestral Hall has substantial historical and cultural value. As a local cultural landmark, it attracts numerous tourists and serves as a vital platform for promoting Guangfu culture. The hall not only provides rich resources for academic research but also contributes significantly to local cultural dissemination and economic development. Compared to ancestral halls lacking formal protection or management, the Peng Ancestral Hall demonstrates exceptional societal influence and cultural transmission capacity.

Comprehensive Analysis

The Peng Ancestral Hall was selected for its extraordinary typological and representative significance in historical, cultural, and social dimensions. By conducting an in-depth study of this ancestral hall, the research aims to illuminate the role of ancestral halls in preserving and transmitting clan culture in the Guangfu region, while also exploring the adaptability and developmental pathways of ancestral hall culture in contemporary society.

7.3 Comparative Analysis of Related Studies

Spatial Structure and Local Identity

Previous studies, such as *Clan Identity: A Local Identity Based on Blood and Cultural Ties*, have emphasized the ancestral hall as a material carrier of local identity. These works primarily focus on the historical functions of ancestral halls in clan-based societies, highlighting their role in maintaining cultural continuity through

shared heritage. However, they often overlook the dynamic interactions between individuals and the spatial structure of ancestral halls in reconstructing social memory. This research introduces the concept of bodily practice to explore how rituals and visual arts within ancestral halls dynamically activate family memory. By emphasizing participatory practices, this perspective provides new insights into how ancestral halls, as living spaces, function in the continuous negotiation and reinterpretation of social identity.

Cultural Activities and Social Memory

Studies like *The Contemporary Cultural Value of Clan Halls* stress the significance of ancestral halls in fostering community life and maintaining cultural cohesion. While these studies make valuable contributions, they often neglect the experiential and interactive aspects of cultural transmission. This research addresses this gap by integrating mural art with cultural practices, demonstrating how social memory is dynamically reconstructed through participatory activities. For example, through ceremonies, performances, and artistic engagement, ancestral halls become spaces where personal and collective memories are interwoven, reflecting the evolving nature of cultural heritage.

Integration of Art and Culture

Research on Chinese architectural decoration began with early explorations by Japanese scholars, such as Itō Chūta's *Chinese Architectural Ornamentation*. This seminal work not only summarized the basic principles of architectural ornamentation patterns and colors but also laid the theoretical foundation for subsequent studies. In recent years, domestic scholars have delved deeper into traditional architectural decoration. For instance, Shen Fuxu and Shen Hongming's *Origins and Cultural Evolution of Chinese Architectural Decoration Art* systematically examines the origins and cultural characteristics of traditional architectural decoration. Lou Qingxi's *Traditional Chinese Architectural Decoration* provides detailed analyses of categories such as wood carving, stone carving, brick carving, and painted decoration, with an emphasis on the cultural connotations and universal principles inherent in decorative art. Meanwhile, works by Lu Yuanding and Lu Qi, such as *The Decorative Arts of Chinese Vernacular Dwellings*, focus on folk architectural decorations, exploring their connection to local culture and lifestyles.

In the context of mural and architectural studies, Zhu Zhongshou's *A General History of Chinese Murals*, *A General History of European Murals*, and *A General History of Oriental Murals* systematically analyze the developmental trajectories and characteristics of murals in China, Europe, and other parts of Asia, emphasizing the inseparable relationship between murals and architectural space. Additionally, Wu Hung's *Art in Ritual Contexts* integrates anthropological and sociological theories to explore the interaction between architectural forms, murals, and human behavior and cognition. His work also addresses the reconstruction of visual environments and the examination of the social functions of artworks, offering crucial perspectives for understanding the role of murals in ritual and spatial contexts.

Building upon this foundation, this research focuses on the intersection of the aesthetic representation and memory-activation functions of murals. By analyzing murals as cultural carriers that connect individuals, families, and social memory, the study further elucidates their dual role in both aesthetic and cultural dimensions. This perspective not only enriches the understanding of decorative art but also deepens the analysis of murals in terms of their cultural and social significance.

7.4 Innovations of This Study

Integration of Bodily Practice and Social Memory

The murals in the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall serve as more than static decorative art; they become central elements in embodied cultural experiences. For example, during events like the "Case Study Painting of Memory: Ancestral Worship Ceremony in the Peng Clan Ancestral Hall" participants actively engage with the murals through guided tours, where they learn about the symbolic meaning of depicted elements like auspicious animals and flowers. Painting workshops further immerse participants, transforming them into cultural practitioners who internalize ancestral teachings through creative expression. This bodily engagement not only reinforces cultural identity but ensures the dynamic continuation of social memory.

Dynamic Reproduction of Social Memory

The ancestral hall murals act as living artifacts that bridge historical values with contemporary cultural practices. Through activities like collaborative mural painting and poetry recitation, social memory is continually revitalized. For instance,

participants in the " Case Study Meaning of Painting and Literature: Practical Activities to Inherit and Preserve Ancestral Hall Culture" festival recited poetry composed by Peng Clan ancestors while interpreting mural themes in their creations. This integration of traditional and modern practices strengthens the collective memory of the family, fostering intergenerational exchange and deeper appreciation of ancestral wisdom. Moreover, the feedback from participants—such as their expressions of strengthened familial bonds and newfound cultural knowledge—illustrates how these practices dynamically sustain and evolve social memory.

7.5 Research Result Discussions

Based on the comprehensive study and practical exploration of the Peng Ancestral Hall, this research has identified and discussed the following key findings:

(1) From a historical perspective, Peng Ancestral Hall clearly illustrates the evolution of ancestral hall culture in the Guangfu region as a tangible cultural artifact. The historical changes in the hall's architecture not only reflect transformations in social contexts and political-economic environments but also demonstrate how familial culture continually expresses and transmits its identity through physical elements such as doorstones and roof ridge decorations. These tangible elements not only store familial memories but also provide a stable physical space for cultural memory transmission.

(2) Regarding the analysis of artistic expression and functions, this study found that the murals of Peng Ancestral Hall possess significant artistic and cultural value. The diversity of mural themes and the incorporation of Western artistic techniques have enriched artistic expression and reflected historical intercultural exchanges. As crucial visual cultural symbols within the hall, murals effectively convey traditional values such as familial ethics and morality, continuously influencing the cultural identity and value formation of family members.

(3) The study of bodily practices and social memory revealed that ritual activities and artistic interactions conducted within Peng Ancestral Hall significantly facilitate the transformation of individual memory into collective memory. Observations indicated that participants engaging in rituals, artistic creations, and

spatial interactions within the hall not only activated personal familial memories but also strengthened social cohesion among family members. Such dynamic bodily engagement effectively activates interactions between space and memory, promoting the dynamic reproduction of familial memory and culture.

(4) In terms of cultural activity design and practice, innovative cultural inheritance activities such as mural creation and poetry recitation were successfully implemented, achieving notable practical outcomes. These activities significantly attracted younger generations, reinvigorating the hall's cultural and educational roles within the community. Participant feedback indicated enhanced understanding and identification with familial culture, underscoring the crucial role of cultural inheritance activities in the preservation and development of ancestral hall culture.

Overall, this study affirms the significance of Peng Ancestral Hall in historical and cultural inheritance, emphasizing the necessity of integrating cultural preservation with social practice. The findings and practical experiences provide important theoretical support for protecting intangible cultural heritage in the Guangfu region and offer methodological insights for future research in related fields.

7.6 Suggestions and Recommendations for Further Studies

Innovation in Mural Techniques:

Current mural activities primarily utilize paper or canvas, which differ significantly from the original materials used in ancestral halls. Future research should explore innovative methods and mediums that align more closely with the structural characteristics of ancestral halls.

Design and Promotion of Cultural Activities:

Activity designs should be more diversified, catering to different age groups and cultural interests while incorporating co-creation to enhance participant engagement. Additionally, media promotion through social networks and news outlets can amplify the social impact of these activities.

Diversification of Research Methods:

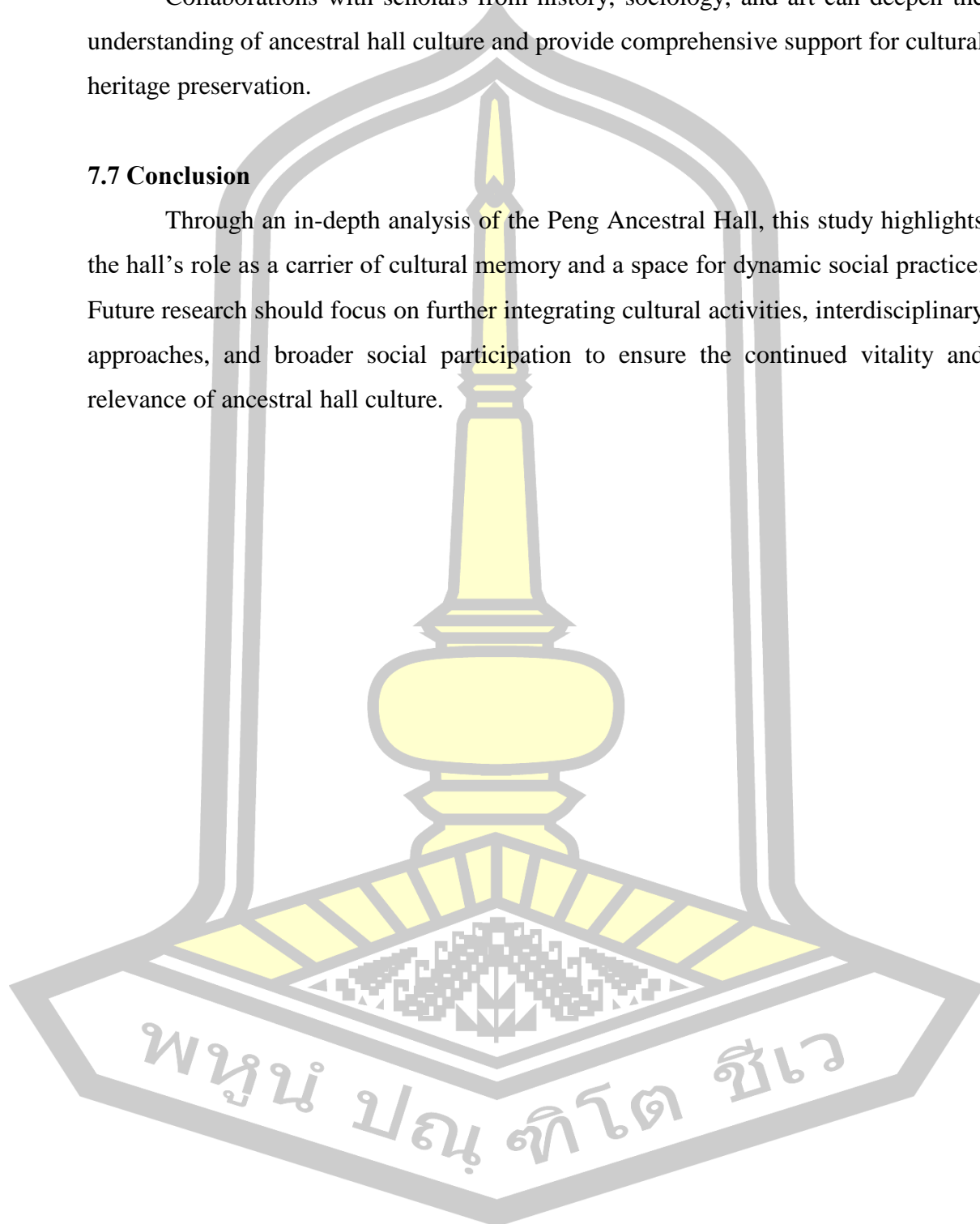
Expanding the research population beyond local communities to include tourists, young adults, and elderly groups can provide a broader perspective on the social impact of ancestral hall culture.

Interdisciplinary Research:

Collaborations with scholars from history, sociology, and art can deepen the understanding of ancestral hall culture and provide comprehensive support for cultural heritage preservation.

7.7 Conclusion

Through an in-depth analysis of the Peng Ancestral Hall, this study highlights the hall's role as a carrier of cultural memory and a space for dynamic social practice. Future research should focus on further integrating cultural activities, interdisciplinary approaches, and broader social participation to ensure the continued vitality and relevance of ancestral hall culture.



REFERENCES

Anonymous. (1909). The Lion image in 1909."Wushen Year Pictorial," , Issue 15, Vol. 5, PP. 5.

Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Family Letters"1

Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Family Letters"2

Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Family Letters"3

Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Family Letters"4

Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Family Letters"5

Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Family Letters"6

Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Family Letters"7

Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Family Letters"8

Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Family Letters"9

Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Family Letters"10

Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Family Letters"11

Baoyuan Hupo Keng Peng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Family Letters"12

Baoyuan Keng Family Genealogy. (1547). Vol. 3 "Home"

Bourdieu, P. (1990). The Logic of Practice. Stanford University Press.

Casey, E. S. (2000). Remembering: A Phenomenological Study. Indiana University Press.

Casey, E. S. (2000). Remembering: A Phenomenological Study. Indiana University

Press.

Chen Shou. (1999). *Records of the Three Kingdoms: The Biography of Zhuge Liang*.

Retrieved from <https://ctext.org/>

Chen Zehong. *Guangfu Culture* .(2007). Guangzhou: Guangdong People's Publishing House.PP1

Chen,xiaohui.Huanghaoyuan.(2024).Dongguan: From the change of industrial master machine, the "world factory" is upgraded.Xinhua Daily Telegraph

Cheng, W. R. (2008). *Chinese Modern Clans*. Shanghai: Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences Press.

Cheng, W. R. (2008). *Chinese Modern Clans*. Shanghai: Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences Press.

Connerton, P. (1989). *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge University Press.

Faure, D. (2010). *Emperor and Ancestors: State and Clan in South China*. Nanjing: Jiangsu People's Publishing House.

Faure, D. (2010). *Emperor and Ancestors: State and Clan in South China*. Nanjing: Jiangsu People's Publishing House.

Feng Jiang. (2010). *Transition of Ancestral Halls in Canton Prefecture .During Ming and Qing Dynasty.A Dissertation Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*. PP296

Feng Jiang. (2010). *Transition of Ancestral Halls in Canton Prefecture .During Ming and Qing Dynasty.A Dissertation Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*. PP12

Feng Jiang. (2010). *Transition of Ancestral Halls in Canton Prefecture .During Ming and Qing Dynasty.A Dissertation Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of*

Philosophy. PP158

- Gao, Q. (n.d.). Supreme Sovereignty [Artwork]. Beijing: Sanjianfang (Beijing Arts and Crafts Import and Export Corporation) Collection. Photographed by Guang Hui, July 14, 2024.
- Guangzhou, Fuzhi. (1879). The Frequency of the Term "Lion" in National Newspaper Index by Year, National Newspaper Index.<http://www.cnki.net/>
- Halbwachs, M. (1992). On Collective Memory. University of Chicago Press. https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Special:CiteThisPage?page=Princess_Pingyang&wpFormIdentifier=titleform
- Huang Yanhong, translation.(2015). The Memory Field [M].[Fa] Pierre Nora (Pierre Nora). Nanjing: Nanjing University Press.
- Ito, C. T. (2006). Chinese Architectural Decoration (Part 1) (Translated by Liu Y. J.) [M]. Beijing: China Architecture & Building Press.
- Kang, Y. W. (1918). Wan Mu Cao Tang Collection Catalog of Paintings. Shanghai: Shanghai Changxing Bookstore. Preface.
- Kang, Y. W. (1918). Wan Mu Cao Tang Collection Catalog of Paintings. Shanghai: Shanghai Changxing Bookstore. Preface.
- Li, L. K. (2011). Research on Architectural Paintings in the Yingzao Fashi [M]. Nanjing: Southeast University Press, pp. 76–81.
- Li, N. (2006). On Gao Jianfu's Ideas for Reforming Traditional Chinese Painting. In Editorial Committee of the Collection of Essays on 20th-Century Chinese Art History (Ed.), The History and Reality of Art: Topics on 20th-Century Chinese Art History (1900-1949) (pp. 117–121). Chengdu: Sichuan Fine Arts Publishing House.

Li, bolin. (2024). China Academic Journal Electronic Publishing House. PP17

Liang weiming. (2016). Analysis and Research on the Integration of Huang Quan and Xu Xi: A Comparative Study of Flower-and-Bird Paintings by Xu Xi and Huang Quan ,in Popular Art.

Liu, H. X., & Luo, C. A. (2008). The Art of Ancient Architectural Murals [M]. Xi'an: World Publishing Xi'an Company, p. 2.

Lou, Q. X. (1999). Traditional Chinese Architectural Decoration [M]. Beijing: China Architecture & Building Press.

Lu, Y. D., & Lu, Q. (1992). The Decorative and Interior Design Arts of Chinese Residential Architecture [M]. Shanghai: Shanghai Science and Technology Press.

Luo, X. L. (1992). Collected Papers in Memory of Professor Luo Xianglin [M]. Hong Kong: Chu Hai College Press, p. 1.

Maurice Halbwachs. (2002). On the collective memory. [Fa], Shanghai People's Publishing House.

Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting. (2016). People's Fine Arts Publishing House. PP46

Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting. (2016). People's Fine Arts Publishing House. PP587

New World Encyclopedia contributors. (2015). *New World Encyclopedia*.

Ou, chu, Wang, guizhen, Qu, dajun. (1996). Ou Chu, Wang Guichen. Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, PP16

Palmer, M. J. (2012). Expressions of Sacred Space: Temple Architecture in the Ancient

Near East. University of South Africa. Retrieved from CORE

Peng, Wucun. (2023). from.https://www.dg.gov.cn/dk/gk/xzqh/content/post_3940933.html.

Peng Wu village zhi. (2005). Pengwu village committee office printed

Platt, V., & Squire, M. (Eds.). (2017). *The Frame in Classical Art: A Cultural History*. Cambridge University Press.

Shen, F. X., & Shen, H. M. (2002). *The Cultural Origins of Chinese Architectural Decorative Arts* [M]. Wuhan: Hubei Education Press.

Sima Qian. (1993). *Records of the Grand Historian: Qi Taigong's Hereditary House* (B. Watson, Trans.). Columbia University Press. (Original work published in 91 BCE)

Situ, S. J. (2013). *Cultural Geography of Guangdong: Revised Edition* [M]. Guangzhou: Guangdong People's Publishing House, p. 342.

Wu, H. (2005). *Art in Ritual: Selected Essays on Ancient Chinese Art by Wu Hung (Part 1)* [M]. Beijing: Sanlian Publishing House, p. 3.

Wu, Y. (2007). *Dong You Ji (The Travels to the East)* (4 vols.). Beijing: Beijing Zhangyu Interactive Culture Communication Co., Ltd.

Xie, Yantao. (2018). *Study on the traditional architectural murals of Guangfu* A Dissertation Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. PP110

Xie, Yantao. (2018). *Study on the traditional architectural murals of Guangfu* A Dissertation Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. PP11

Xie, Yantao. (2018). *Study on the traditional architectural murals of Guangfu* A Dissertation Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. PP15-16

- Xie, Yantao. (2018). Study on the traditional architectural murals of Guangfu A Dissertation Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. PP157
- Xu Beihong. (1926). "Short Story Monthly," .Vol. 17, Issue 6, PP. 4
- Xu, L. H., & Liang, H. (2017). The Beauty of Ancient Pearls. Nanning: Guangxi Normal University Press.
- Yang Zan. (1926)."Student Literary Anthology," , Vol. 3, Issue 5, PP. 4
- Yang, Tianya. (2024). On Peng Zu's cultural memory.Appreciation of famous works.PP73
- Yao, Shengliang. (2024). Qu yuan's Identity with Hua-xia culture and Its Influence on Chu Ci.Zhongzhou journal
- Zhang, Mingxue. (2007). Taoism and the paintings of the Scholars in Ming and Qing Dynasties.PP1
- Zheng, Wuchang. (1930). Study on the history of Chinese murals.Eastern Miscellany
- Zhu, C. S. (1995). A Brief History of Chinese Murals [M]. Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House.
- Zhu, C. S. (2000). A Brief History of European Murals [M]. Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House.
- Zhu, C. S. (2005). A Brief History of Oriental Murals [M]. Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House.
- Zhu, Wanzhang. (2010). Study on Guangdong painting history in Ming and Qing Dynasties.Guangzhou: Lingnan Fine Arts Publishing House.PP:118

BIOGRAPHY

NAME	Hui Guang
DATE OF BIRTH	April 30,1988
PLACE OF BIRTH	JinZhong, Shanxi Province, China
ADDRESS	HaiZhu Road, GuangZhouCity, GuangDong Province, China
POSITION	Teacher
PLACE OF WORK	GuangDong, China
EDUCATION	2011 (B.A.) Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts 2019 (M.A.) Sun Yat-Sen University 2025 (Ph.D.) Fine and Applied Arts Research and Creation,School of Fine and Applied Arts Research and Creation, Mahasarakham University, Thailand

