

The Cultural Representation of Huizhou Merchants in the Architectural Art of Xidi Village, Huizhou

Tang Xiaoyan

Ccteg Chongqing Engineering Co. Ltd., Chongqing, 400016, China

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Abstract: Huizhou architecture is an important perspective of Huizhou merchants research, and Huizhou merchants culture is the humanistic support of Huizhou architecture. Xidi Village, inhabited by Hu clan, represents the grand occasion of the hometown of merchants in the prosperous period of feudal society and economy with its unique architectural language. Its architectural type and decoration all convey the will of Hui merchants, and it is the entity and psychological guarantee to maintain the ecology of the whole Hui merchants.

1. Introduction

Xidi, one of the world cultural heritages, is located in Fuxian County of ancient Huizhou. It is also called Xichuan and Xixi because of its name of “dongshuixidi”. After more than nine hundred years of development, a magnificent Ming and Qing architectural complex has been formed, which also shows the strong strength and Confucian culture of the Hu clan. The Hu family was originally the descendent of Li and Tang Dynasties. It was moved from Wuyuan by Hu Shiliang, the fifth ancestor, and his family. Because it was passed down from generation to generation, “there is no other way to pass on the family, but to read without farming.”. The expansion of the family forced the alien to move out. Xidi village became a Hu village where people lived together. However, the lack of land resources shook the traditional view of “emphasizing agriculture and restraining commerce”. Hu people began to seek benefits from all sides, to make a living with Jia, and business became the “first class business”. With the development of economy in the middle of Ming Dynasty, the Huizhou business group, which was linked by the relationship between the townspeople, was finally promoted. It has the reputation of “rich in the world”, “no town without emblem”. During the reign of Daoguang in the Qing Dynasty, Hu Guan, the 24 generation ancestor of Hu family, developed economy and politics at the same time, ranking the sixth richest man in the south of the Yangtze River in terms of assets. He returned to his hometown and built a lot of buildings, pushing the development of Hu family to its peak, forming a huge scale with 600 houses and 99 lanes. After 1850, the imperialist invasion and civil war continued, and Xidi declined. After the founding of the people's Republic of China, the concept of clans collapsed, the economic and political pillars collapsed, and the descendants of Xidi fell into the great adjustment of their life style. However, the devastating destruction of the Chinese revolution in the 20th century completely ended the culture of xidishang nationality^[1].

2. The Structure of Village Architecture is the Reflection of Huizhou Merchants' Values and the Product of Economic Materialization

2.1 Folk House is the Architectural Carrier of Huizhou Merchants' Concept of Etiquette

Although it is a business, due to the strict hierarchical system, the construction of Xidi ancient residence follows the etiquette of dignity and inferiority in the housing system since the Tang and Song dynasties. The status of merchants is humble. Even if they are rich and expensive, they still can not meet the official building standards in the area, roof style and color material of the homestead. In the Ming Dynasty, there were “no more than three or five mansions, no brackets or colored decorations”, no double eaves, caisson, Xieshan or corner, even the pattern of tile ridge, the

color of door, the texture of door rings, and the color of beams, buildings and eaves were all regulated by different levels. Therefore, Xidi residential building pursues the simple and elegant, compact and accommodative construction standard under the limited area. Its scale is stable, and it mostly has three patterns. The gable is a hard gable shape, and the overall architectural complex is pure black and white gray. The architectural carving also highlights the natural color and simple texture, and the spatial separation is dignified, orderly and different inside and outside. Of course, it is not the same. With the development of Huizhou's economy, there are more and more rich people and scholars. In the situation of integration of government and commerce, there are also those who break through the old system, but they basically continue the same system of architectural etiquette^[2].

2.2 Ancestral Hall is the Architectural Product of “Clan View” of Huizhou Merchants

There are many ancestral temples in Huizhou. According to the records of Shexian County, “the old patriarchal clan system was emphasized in the custom of the town. Each surname has its own ancestral temple, which is divided into different factions, and then back to branch ancestral temple.”. Xidi clan lived together. In Ming and Qing Dynasties, 28 ancestral halls were built, including 1 ancestral hall, 2 general branch ancestral halls, and the rest were branch ancestral halls and family ancestral halls. In the development of the village, a pattern of respecting the hall of the general branch has gradually formed, which expresses the Hui people's adherence to the concept of loyalty and filial piety of Confucianism and the sacred sense of “glorifying the ancestors”. The ancestral hall is mainly responsible for the five functions of respecting, honoring, encouraging, discussing and enforcing the law. Among them, the implementation of public welfare projects, such as relief, school building, bridge building and road building, all depends on the wealth of the clan property, that is, the economic strength of the clan. In addition to the ancestral heritage, bank loan and various kinds of revenue, most of the accumulation of clan property comes from the self raised donation of businessmen with abundant bags and full suitcases and famous officials. They regard the value-added and generation by generation inheritance of clan property as great filial piety. Therefore, Xidi ancestral hall has a large scale of construction, with superb engineering technology and plastic arts. The area of the hall of adoration is more than 1800 square meters. It is magnificent, rugged and simple, with precious materials, and its carving technology is of great artistic value. These are the materialized results of Huizhou merchants' economy^[3].

2.3 Academy is the Architectural Derivation of “Jia er Hao Ru Guan”

The reason why Huizhou merchants become the strong force of dominating the business world is that they attach great importance to education. Hui merchants are a group of merchants with high cultural attainment. Some of them are from Confucianism to Confucianism, some of them are from Confucianism to Jia, and some of them are from Confucianism to Jia. The long-term influence of Confucianism of Confucius and Mencius in ancient Huizhou and the profound accumulation of Neo Confucianism of Cheng and Zhu make the official standard thought of reading deeply rooted in the consciousness of Huizhou people. Therefore, the great merchants of Huizhou were rich and thought about education, and consciously donated money to the construction of academies. Bao baiting, the merchant of Huizhou, put forward the idea that “wealth and education can not be postponed”. Hu ShangTao, a Western delivery merchant, even abandoned JIAYE in his later years, and devoted himself to supervising the scholars. Among many other successful merchants of Huizhou, there was no lack of abandoning commerce and returning to Confucianism, and joining the ranks of officials, which made ancient Huizhou develop into an area with developed education. In the village of households, reading is not abandoned. At that time, there were 54 academies in Huizhou, most of which were founded by Huishang merchants. Hu Yuanxi and Hu Jicheng, merchants of Xidi, donated silver 5000 to Ziyang Academy in Shexian county. Hu Shangyi donated silver 18000 to build Biyang Academy in Shexian county and 15000 mu of school fields to support the Academy. There were no less than 10 private academies in Xidi such as “Taoli garden”. According to statistics, Huizhou accounted for 19 of the 112 top scholars in the Qing Dynasty, ranking first in the whole country, while xidi granted hundreds of officials in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. On the other

hand, it is also a shortcut for Hui merchants to cling to feudal forces and communicate with bureaucrats. The establishment of academies is the evidence of Hui Merchants' political vision^[4].

2.4 Bridge Road is the Witness of Hui Merchants' Concept of Benevolence and Righteousness

The combination of the Hui merchants and the Confucian and the Jia merchants emphasizes Confucianism and Taoism in business, and the pursuit of fame and high reputation after becoming rich. The so-called “taking profits as morality in the current world, and being rich with benevolence and righteousness attached to Yan”. Their works of righteousness and good deeds are most remarkable in the construction of roads and bridges. Huizhou has a lot of water and bridges since ancient times, with the appearance of “rivers like rivers, like rivers, like heaven, and Huizhou has ancient bridges for thousands of years”. There are dozens of bridges around the village, such as Huiyuan bridge and Gulai bridge. For Hui merchants, the bridge has a special significance to realize the dream of wealth in the outside world, so it is not only a consolation for this spiritual sustenance, but also a good deed for the benefit of the local people to build a bridge and pave the way after returning home. Despite Hu's family motto of diligence and frugality, they are always generous in the donation activities of social public welfare undertakings. Although the bridge construction project is huge and the cost is huge, they still donate spontaneously and even spend all their savings. Many Huizhou merchants are known as “charity givers” and “rich and good gifts”, which are many in Huizhou county annals and genealogies A touching record. Hu Guansan, a Xidi businessman, once undertook the construction of Hexi bridge in Shexian County alone. He closed 12 banks and pawnshops to raise money. He also donated heavily to rebuild Dengfeng bridge in Xiuning and lay slate Avenue from Xiuning to Shexian and Qimen. Therefore, he was praised by Cao Zhenyong, then the Minister of military aircraft of the Qing Dynasty, and married as a child and daughter. The streets of Xidi village were built by Hu Guansan with a lot of money to meet Cao Zhenyong and show the economic status and family power^[5].

3. Architectural Decoration and Image Are the Explicit and Implicit Communication of Huizhou Merchants' Culture

3.1 Dominant Business Culture

The characteristics of Anhui merchants in Xidi architecture decoration are mainly manifested in three carving techniques, currency patterns and couplets and plaques. First of all, restricted by the strict hierarchy, Hui merchants are rich but not expensive, so they have to find a new way to build their houses. They pay attention to the exquisite building components. Brick, wood and stone carvings emerge at the historic moment, which not only enhances the residence for the rest of the world, but also satisfies the mentality of competing for wealth with the rural party. In addition, the influence of Xin'an School of painting, Huizhou engraving and Jinshi seal cutting has a cultural taste. It is not only the product of Huizhou's profound artistic heritage, but also the result of the wealth of Huizhou merchants. Because the size and quantity of carving area, the level of techniques, and the color treatment after carving are all tests of the owner's financial strength. As for the subject matter and style of sculpture, although Huizhou merchants have a wide range of knowledge and different aesthetic standards and pursuits, most of them are landscape, flowers and birds, and playwrights, especially for the Three Kingdoms. It can be seen that the achievements of Huizhou merchants are not exempt from the deep understanding of the ballad “look at the Three Kingdoms, generate strategies”. Secondly, the figures symbolizing wealth are frequently used in the architecture, and the commercial characteristics are remarkable. For example, the gate is very exquisite, the door cover looks like a treasure, and the overall framework formed by the gate looks like the word “Shang”, which shows a strong psychology of gathering money, and also reflects the self-esteem of Hui merchants. Because no matter who passes under the gate, the word “mouth” of Shang is supplemented, and “Shang” becomes the only way to enter the hall; The water hole cover is also a symbol of copper coin. Because the water is the owner of wealth, the water flowing into the money hole implies that the source of wealth will never be lost; the road in front of the hall is

paved with a circular square hole pattern, which symbolizes the meaning of studying in the hall and seeking officials and making money in the front door; most of the copper coin patterns carved on the windows of buildings are built by overlapping blocks and continuous in all directions. Moreover, the couplets displayed in the room further set off the business culture atmosphere of the family's courtyards, which is the focus of the connotation of the environment and the life experience of the successful businessmen on the philosophy of management and handling affairs. They are like textbooks that directly admonish the successors. For example, dujingtang's "reading is good, business is good, and efficiency is good; it's difficult to start a business, to keep success, and to know whether it's difficult". Ruiyuting's "happiness comes from hard work, and more cheapness comes from loss". Among them, the word "Xin" is more horizontal, and the word "loss" is more, which means more hard work, more loss, and often more profit, but the loss should be on "point"^[6].

3.2 Recessive Business Culture

The merchants of Xidi believe in Fengshui. They have the auspicious concept of seeking wealth and protecting wealth in the aspects of village layout, architectural form and location, which conveys the psychology of Huizhou merchants in a more obscure way. At the beginning of the village site selection, the ideal layout and modification of the village environment were made by using Fengshui theory, so as to meet the hope of the Hu people for the prosperity of the clan, wealth and culture. The Hu people compare Xidi village to a ship hull, and there is a saying that "the ship goes to Xidi, great auspicious Italy". The construction of the village also maintains the shape of a ship with two sharp ends and a wide middle. In order to cope with the external expansion caused by the expansion of scale, the clan management should be used to restrict and modify the overall layout, so that the overall layout always follows the two principles of "ship to Xidi" and "love hall to the middle", so as to be close to the ideal of Fengshui. In addition, Xidi's village is located on three converging streams, which is in line with the esteem of calm, clear and reunited water in Fengshui. In Fengshui, water symbolizes wealth. "The husband and the water are the masters of wealth. When the door is opened, the wealth will come, and the household can't use up its wealth". Therefore, almost all the entrances of all the houses in the village are facing the water, or facing the mountain peak and the mountain pass. The door of the respectful hall has the refinement of "the hundred peaks of Han Dynasty, the water flowing from the west", which means to receive wealth continuously. It can be seen that the gate is endowed with a special symbolic significance. The misfortune and auspiciousness of the house are all in the gate. It is the throat of entrance and exit, the breath of breath, and the display of wealth and scale. Throughout the history, most of the residences around the country believe in the north-south orientation, taking the southeast as the best choice for "qinglongmen", but the gate of Xidi merchants does not open to the south. Because Xidi merchants are the first class of their business. Since the Han Dynasty, there has been a saying in the book of Lun Heng by Wang Chong that "merchants should not go south, and families should not go north". Five elements in the south are fire, fire, gold, and bad luck. Secondly, "south" and "difficult" are homophonic, and it's not advisable to go out to Zhengnan (difficult); thirdly, Zhengnan is respected, and it's afraid of being guilty of taboo. Not only that, each door should not open to each other, or to the alley entrance, tile head, wall corner, etc. otherwise, the method of staggering the axis should be used to resolve, or to set up a wall, stick door gods, place Taishan stone, etc. to shield the "evil spirit" in front of the house.

The geomantic omen of the residence of Xidi merchants is also reflected in the design of the patio. The patio is the communication between the house and the nature in the vertical dimension, bearing the sunshine, rain and snow, and has the effect of gathering wind and gas. In Fengshui theory, the patio is related to "wealth and wealth". In Volume III of *xiangzhaijingzhuàn*, it is said that "the inner hall and outer Hall of Fandi's house all take the patio as the place of Mingtang and wealth and wealth". Therefore, the patio and the Patio Pool of Xidi residence play the role of gathering money and accumulating wealth. The rainwater flowing into the patio from the eaves is called "four water return hall", which is in line with the simple psychology of Hui merchants that "fat water does not flow into the field of outsiders". At the same time, the patio is also a centralized

drainage place. The waste water from all parts of the house is first collected in the patio, then the water outlet is opened at the Jixiang place, and then it is discharged into the drainage system in the public roadway. As a result, the underground drainage of the house is bound to be zigzag and long, which is in line with the folk saying that “zigzag water will stay but not go”. It can be seen that Fengshui concept has a strong constraint on Huizhou merchants and a potential shaping force on the formation of Xidi architectural image^[7].

4. Typical Building Type System is the Maintenance of Hui Merchants' Group Ecology

4.1 Horse Head Wall is the Guarantee of Financial Security of Huizhou Merchants

In ancient times, there were ten men and seven merchants in Xidi. Huizhou merchants who operated outside often spent more than half of their money on the construction of their houses, so the safety of their houses became a top priority. As a unique form of Huizhou architecture, horse head wall is an important symbol of Huizhou architecture image. Its rhythm, rhythm and form color have profound aesthetic meaning, but the most important is its strong defense function. Huizhou buildings are made of many wooden structures, which are easy to be destroyed by fire. According to records, there were frequent fires in history. In the second year of song Shaoxing, 19 government buildings were burned in Huizhou City, totaling more than 520, and more than 1500 houses were damaged. In the song and Yuan Dynasties, there were eight and six fires recorded in Huizhou's official records alone, and as many as 12 fires were recorded 14 years ago in the Ming Dynasty. In the end, Huizhou people's defense of fire led to the birth of horse head wall. Matou wall, also known as “fire sealing wall”, is mainly of masonry structure. The high and wide wall forms the boundary between the residents and the residents, which makes each hospital relatively independent. In case of fire, it can effectively achieve isolation and prevent the spread of fire. At the same time, the high wall thickness of horse head wall is insurmountable, and the image has a sense of deterrence, which can prevent thieves from entering and leaving. Not only that, because it covers a wide area, can shade in summer, can resist cold in winter, and has a certain regulatory role in the alternation of cold and summer. Therefore, the house security realized by the horse head wall plays an important role in stabilizing the mentality of the wandering Hui merchants.

4.2 Memorial Archway is the Spiritual Pillar of Huizhou Merchants' Cultural Heritage

The ancient memorial archway of Huizhou is a typical architectural system, which is juxtaposed with the ancient residences and ancestral halls of Huizhou. The number, craft and type of the ancient memorial archway of Huizhou are the most in the world, which shows the deep-rooted economic strength and patriarchal clan power. The memorial archway is very important in the mind of Huizhou merchants. It is the act of honoring virtue, inheriting empress Mu's kindness, and pursuing the highest value in their whole life. It is not only a symbol of Huishang family's glory, but also a symbol of defending the ethics, the rights of the husband and stabilizing the family. The ethnic custom of Hui people's learning business from generation to generation makes it a unique and common social phenomenon in Huizhou area that the wives of merchants stay at the court empty for three and a half years and nine years for ten years. In order to maintain the traditional ethics, pure family weathering and stable mentality of Huizhou merchants, the chastity of Huizhou prevailed under the concept of the supremacy of husband's power and the nobility of husband and wife. The government and the clans worked together to improve the system of honorific medals. The latest memorial archway in Huizhou is a collection of 65070 chaste women by the government during the reign of Guangxu. After making a fortune and returning to their hometown, Hui merchants not only made great efforts to revitalize their homes, but also invested heavily in the construction of archways and ancestral temples to increase moral restraint. It's no wonder that Zhao Jishi, a Qing Dynasty native, lamented that “Xin'an has the most martyrs, and one city is the half of other provinces”. In the history of Xidi Village, out of the 15 memorial archways and archways, the chastity archway accounts for the majority. All of these reflect the history of Huizhou merchants' women who were deeply harmed under the feudal ethics, as well as the clannish concept and the

characteristics of Huizhou merchants. However, it is the self-defense of Huizhou women's marriage concept and the family continuity that give the most powerful comfort to the long-distance merchants.

4.3 Zoumalou is a Bridge Connecting the Government and Business

Huizhou merchants are deeply influenced by Confucianism. Although they are the first-class students, they still advocate subjectively that “the first-class good thing is reading”. Objectively, in the process of the development of Huizhou merchants, the situation and interests will inevitably drive them to establish a close relationship with the officials. They maintain their own interests by relying on the political forces, seek political protection umbrella for the sake of preservation, or obtain the privilege of monopoly management, expand their influence, improve their reputation, and enhance competition. In short, the combination of officials and Confucianism determines the nature of Huizhou merchants. And Xidi has always been a place of Confucian businessmen, and there are many people who are both businessmen and officials, all of which are related to Xidi Village's unique architectural idea. A horse walking building was built by Mingjing lake at the head of Xidi village. It was originally called “Lingyun Pavilion”. It was built by wailang hujicheng, a member of the household department in the guangnian period of the Qing Dynasty. It was intended to encourage Lingyun's ambition. It is a “salon” for merchants, scholars and officials to gather and communicate in Xidi. With the help of the clan's kinship, all kinds of personages can communicate with each other, expand their horizons and improve their accomplishment. The common language they can connect with is still Confucianism culture. Xidi Zoumalou, a typical architectural system, realizes the mutual aid between the government and the merchants, which is rare in other ancient villages in Huizhou. This is the support and maintenance of Xidi Hu family for the ecology of Huizhou merchants. But just because of the close relationship between the officials and merchants, it directly led to the final fate of Hui merchants, and inevitably went to the same prosperity and wither with the feudal society(Figure 1, Figure 2)^[8].



Fig.1 Roof

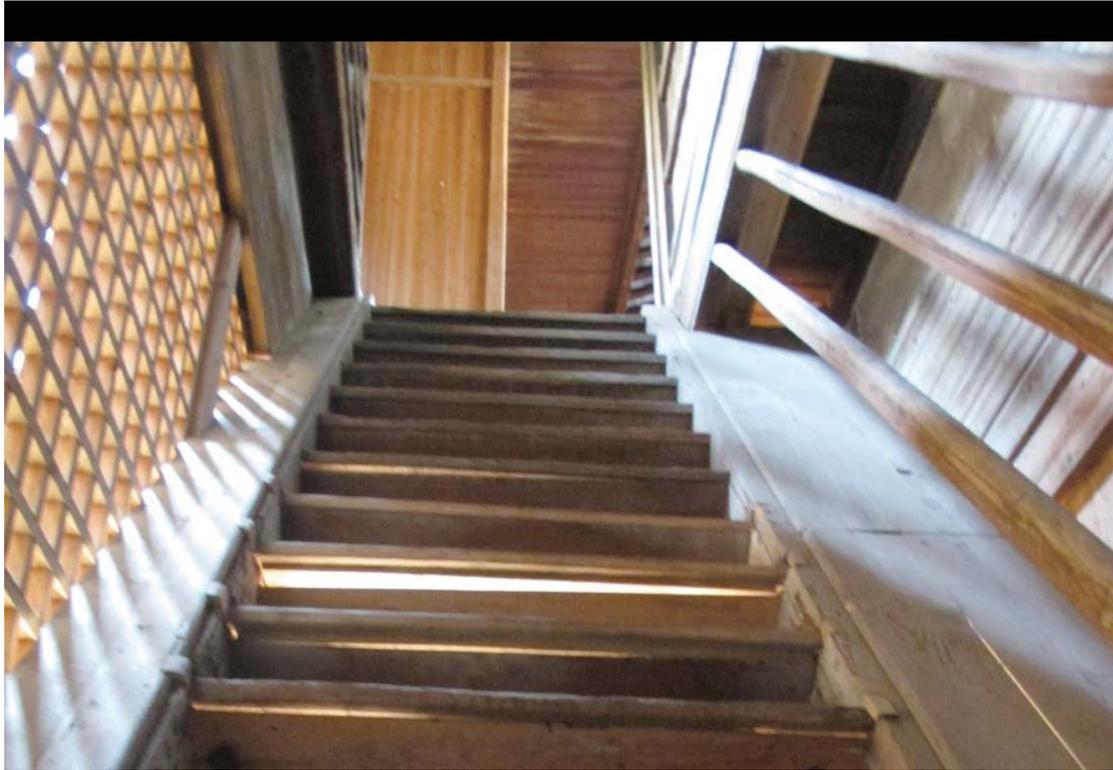


Fig.2 Stairs

5. Conclusion

Huizhou architecture is an important perspective of Huizhou merchants research, which is the historical and cultural support of Huizhou architecture. As the epitome of Huizhou merchants' group, xidi family is good at Confucianism and adheres to the traditional Confucian norms and clan concepts in the gathering place. Ancient houses, ancestral temples, academies and archways are all the manifestation of Hui Merchants' will, financial resources and political views. The internal factors that maintain the inheritance of Huizhou merchants' culture are the chastity spirit of Huizhou merchants' women to their husbands and their families. Therefore, Xidi architecture, as a typical representative of Huizhou architecture, is permeated with strong characteristics of Huizhou merchants in various aspects such as village composition, building type, architectural decoration and image, which is the representation of Huizhou merchants' culture.

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