

THE RENEWAL OF ANCESTRAL HOUSE UNDER ANCESTOR WORSHIP RITUAL CULTURE: CONSERVATION AND REVITALISATION OF SHICHUAN'GOU VILLAGE BASED ON TYPO-MORPHOLOGY THEORY

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the spatial prototype of ancestral house and its renewal of revitalisation process under ritual culture in modern society by using a case study of Zhang's ancestral house built in Qing dynasty in Shichuan'gou Village (Shaanxi Province, China). Hakka migrants, who moved to Shichuan'gou Village since the 18th century, brought ancestor worship ceremonies from Anhui Province. Shichuan'gou Village has a special culture combining both the Hakka and local folk culture of the southern Shaanxi Province. With a focus on the mixed ancestor worship ritual culture, this paper analyses the architectural form, axis connection, spatial sequence and function organization of 60 typical ancestor halls located in both northern China and southern China. Among which 12 spatial prototypes are analyzed for preserving and reconstructing Zhang's ancestral house.

In the hope of reviving ancestor worship ritual culture and developing the local tourism and economy, the spatial prototype is applied to the Typo-morphology of the settlement level and the courtyard level in Shichuan'gou Village. It helps to form various spatial ritual sequences, reconstruct the core ancestor worship space and reset the function to adapt modern life. By contrasting the new and the old, the renewal of the ancestral house and the adaptive reuse towards development of Shichuan'gou Village are exemplified.

Keywords: spatial prototype, Zhang's ancestral house, Hakka migrants, ancestor worship ritual culture, revitalization

INTRODUCTION

With the influence of urbanization, traditional vernacular villages are facing these problems: The cultural activities of clans in villages are gradually disappearing, the ancestral temples carrying family gatherings, banquets, rituals are no longer the core of the village space. The cultural spaces of clans in villages are lost, dilapidated and abandoned. The new residential space in villages begins to disperse (Zhang Yudong, 2018). Ritual activities are neglected in the conservation process of built heritage (Bai Ning, 2018).

This paper aims to take the settlement of Zhang's ancestral house with ancestor worship ritual culture as the research object, by using typological research on the ancestral temples, extracting the spatial sequence prototype suitable for ancestral worship rituals and applying it to Shichuan'gou Village. It is important to find the conjunction point of ancestor worship culture and space, create genius loci and accommodate more ritual activities so as to promote the protection and revitalization of heritage. This study also discusses that through the development of ritual cultural heritage tourism, rural economy will be revitalized, traditional architectural heritage will be protected, regional development and the revitalisation of traditional dwellings will be promoted.

BACKGROUND

Shichuan'gou Village is located in Gepai Town, Lantian County, Shaanxi Province. It has an ancestor worship ritual culture combined with both the north and the south traditions. In April 2015, Shichuan'gou Village was listed as the first group of Provincial Traditional villages.

In Shichuan'gou Village, Qi's ancestral temple and Zhang's ancestral house undertake the ritual activities of the two families. In addition, almost every family has a small ancestral temple in living rooms. Every household in the central hall has a Memorial tablet of "Heaven, Earth, Monarch, Family and Teachers(天地君亲师)", which means that future generations should respect God, earth god, the gentleman of the dynasty, relatives and friends, and their teachers. (see Figure 1)

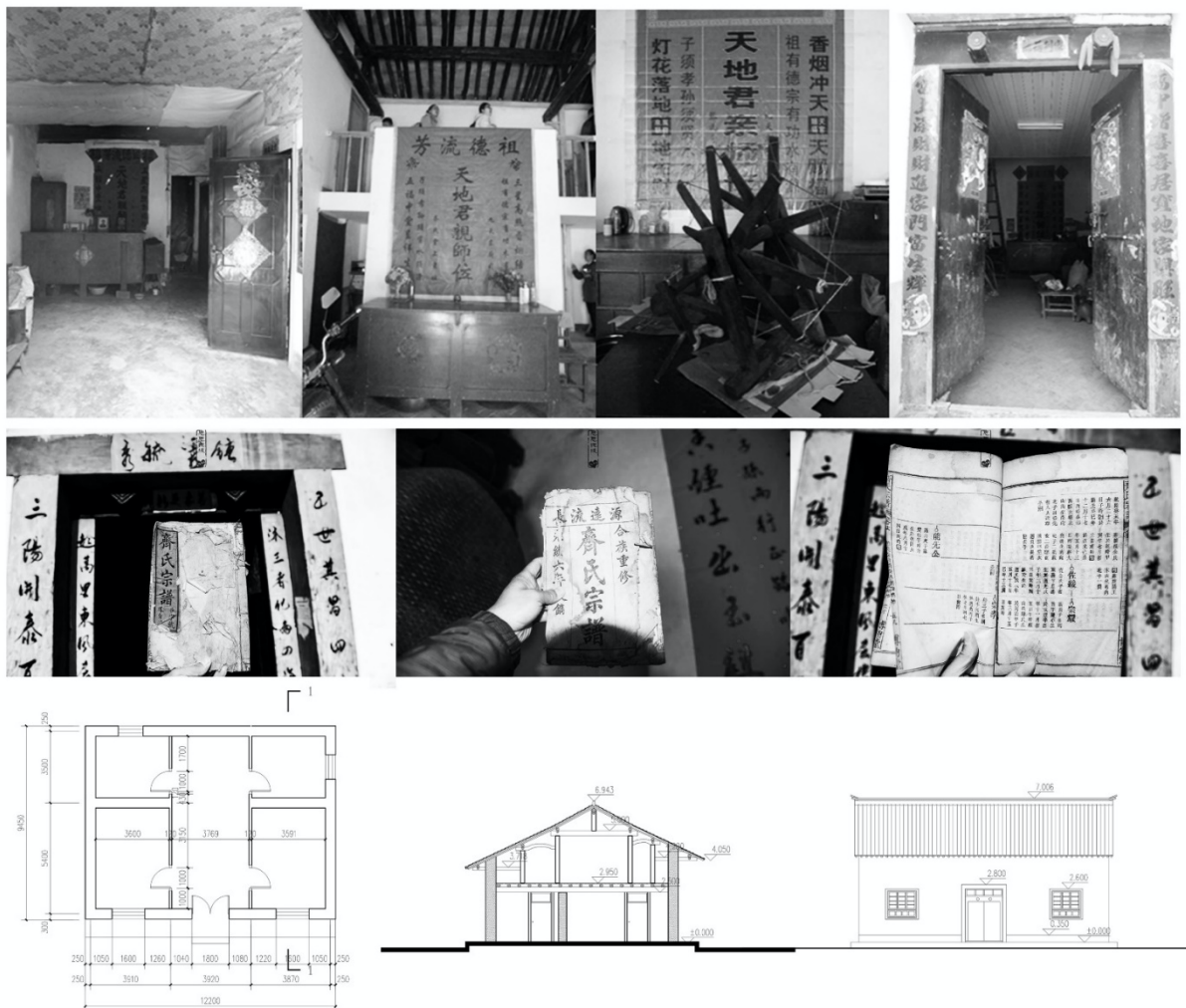


Figure 1. The Memorial tablet of "Heaven, Earth, Monarch, Family and Teachers" (天地君亲师), the Qi's genealogy, the typical dwelling © Author

The word ancestral temple first appeared in "Jia Li (家礼)". The book begins by saying gentlemen would build the house and erect the ancestral temple to the east of the main bedroom. The book also clearly describes the shape of the ancestral temple which combines three bays, middle door, outer door, two steps and surrounding walls. Only these five elements are fundamentally related to the ancestral temple type, Drawing upon the description from "Jia Li", later generations speculated and drew different pictures. This was the beginning of explorations of the new architectural type of "ancestral temple" in Ming Dynasty. It is shown that the "three rooms"

ancestral temple described in the "Jia Li" mainly serves the function of "ancestor worship tablets", Whereas "holding ancestor worship ceremonies" can only be carried out in the empty space under the steps. (see Figure 2) This functional special prototype is extremely simple, but the largest and magnificent hall in the ancestral temple that can be seen today.

According to the illustrations of Anhui ancestral temples in the genealogy of Qi's family, the three courtyards are the same as most ancestral temples in Huizhou. Yet the appearance of gardens and wells are quite unique. Through the evolution of the ancestral temple architecture from "Jia Li" to the present, the shape and style of the ancestral temple may have changed with the changing region and time, however, the special prototype of the most essential core of the ancestral temple architecture has not been changed.

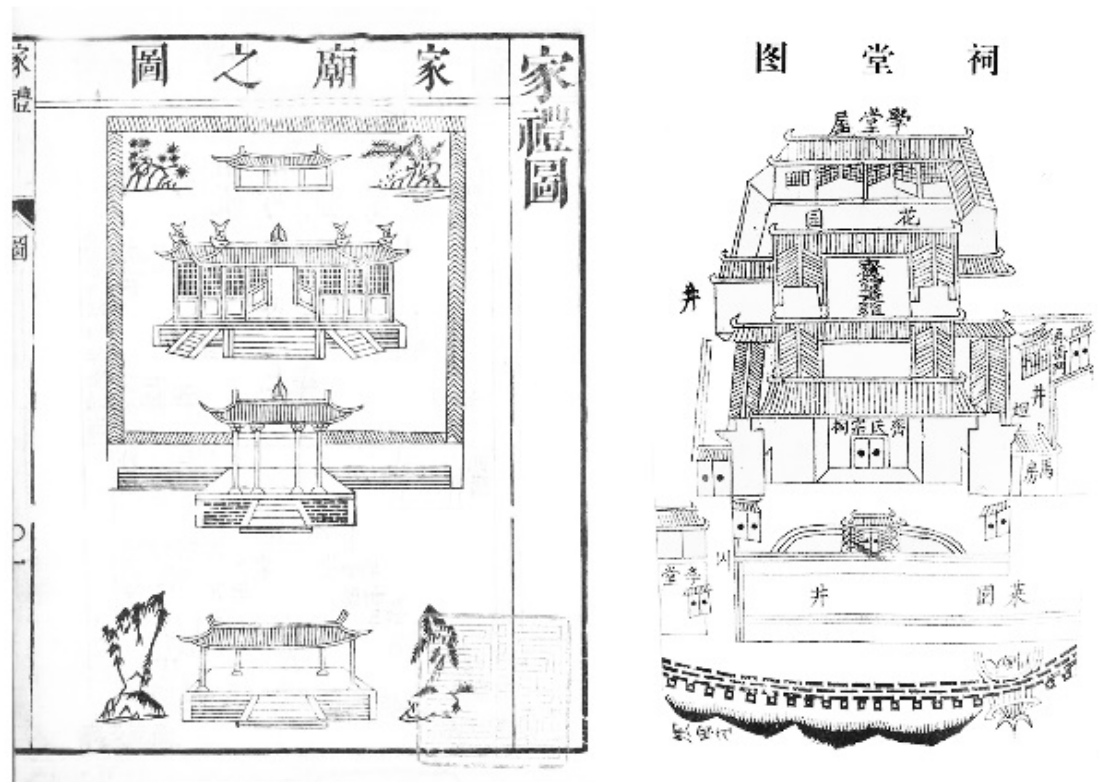


Figure 2. Illustration of ancestral temple of "Jia Li" and Qi's family in Shichuan'gou Village © "Jia Li" and author

METHODOLOGY

Contemporary typology was proposed by the Italian architect Aldo Rossi in the 1960s. Its typological theory has two basic attributes: one is the connotation of history; the other is the abstract characteristics. The so-called "type" is formed according to the common characteristics of things, which can identify the essential characteristics of things (Aldo Rossi, 2006). In this paper, using typological research methods, the basic working method is based on the perspective of theoretical analysis and image interpretation. Through a large number of researches, deconstruction, classification and summary of ancestral temples, the generation principle and internal mechanism of local traditional dwellings are explored. It is conducive to follow certain elements in the renewal and design of residential buildings in the future. It creates the lifestyle which not only contains historical feelings and regional culture, but also adapt to modern human production and life.

Unlike Qi's genealogy, which has clear records of ancestral temples, Zhang's genealogy and ancestral temples lack historical sources. The absence of historical source and the gradual disappearance of village ancestor worship ritual culture with the passing of the elderly in the village means it is important to use methods such as the typological research to revitalize the traditional ritual culture. It is hoped that the essential characteristics of ancestral temple buildings can be identified through the study of ancestral temple types. The application of this typology can be divided into two steps: 1. Type Selection: obtaining prototypes from the restoration (abstraction) of historical models; 2. Type Conversion: restoring prototypes to forms by combining specific circumstances. This paper process of form-prototype- new form is the concrete embodiment of the application of typology in form construction.

FINDINGS

The architectural characteristics of Shichuan'gou Village originated from Anhui Province, and at the same time integrated the local characteristics of architecture in southern Shaanxi Province. In the early stages of the typological research, the selection of research materials of the ancestral temples in the north and south areas mainly focused on the southern Anhui and Northern Shaanxi areas. The basic spatial characteristics of 60 typical ancestral temples were systematically sorted out and typified. By classifying one courtyard surrounded by the number of building: one-in- one dwellings (独院), three-in-one dwellings (三合院) and four-in-one dwellings (四合院) through shape, spatial sequence, plan streamline, axis relationship and organizational form, 12 prototypes of ancestral temples spatial structure were extracted. (see Figure 3)

The spacial structure of the ancestral temples takes one axis as the main axis, and three spacial modes: courtyard space (white block), half-outdoor grey space (grey block) and building space (black block). They are combined in series. The core axis is determined by the ritual sequence function of the ancestral temples ritual activities. The other three spatial modes are similar to the traditional Chinese courtyard buildings. The ancestral temple is a part of folk dwellings and based on its spatial organization, forming different sequences and experiences through the combination of three spatial modes. The difference between Northern and Southern architecture lies in the color brightness of these blocks. Southern architecture is dominated by courtyard and grey spaces with the courtyard wider and longer than its counterpart in the North. In the North, the courtyard and building space are mostly narrow. (see Figure 3)

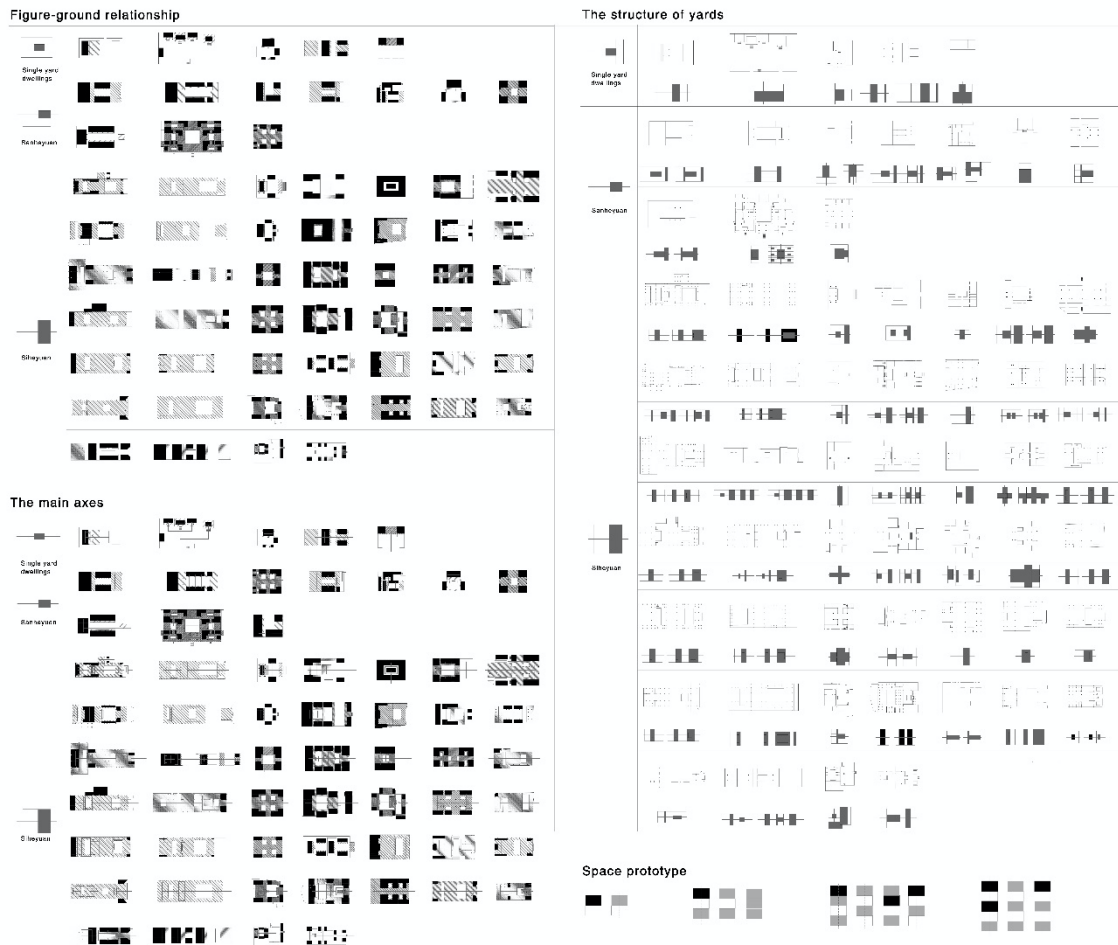


Figure 3. Typology of ancestral temples in North and South China © Author, Li Zhengchu, Duan Yanran

Based on the excavation of local ancestor worship ritual culture and sources on typology of traditional ancestral temples, the theme of reviving traditional ancestor worship ritual culture in Shichuan'gou village and carrying out various tourist experiential ritual activities are established. Designing a variety of ritual tours, repairing damaged texture of the village, strengthening the spatial structure of ancestral temple types, and ritual axis and route.

Zhang's ancestral house settlement is located in the center of Shichuan'gou Village. There are village committees, villagers' activity centers and Zhang's ancestral house settlement. As the core settlement, Zhang's ancestral house settlement is suitable to develop ancestor worship ritual culture and tourists experience activities. Through literature research and ancestral temples typology research, combined with the existing topography and architectural circumstances, nine types were selected and applied to Zhang's ancestral house group. Combined with the existing intangible cultural heritage and other ritual activities in Shichuan'gou Village, such as natural worshipping, farming civilization, ritual ceremonies, god worshipping, genealogy worshipping, filial piety singing, dragon dance, Yao Wang Temple, ancestor worshipping, well sacrifice, and so on, the introduction of modern functional needs, forming a number of tour routes. On the basis of the original type of sacrifice, modern functions are added, which reflects the theme of "worship" through space revitalisation and reuse. (see Figure 4)



Figure 4. Spatial prototype application in Zhang's ancestral house settlement © Author

Three-in-one dwellings type

In this type, the group of dwellings on the hill is regarded as the farmer experience group for the development and reconstruction of dwellings. The original dwellings here are seriously damaged, for most of them are used by left-behind elderly people. There are also many empty houses that no one lives in, so it is suitable to develop the short-rent residential mode that tourists will live together with the villagers. On the basis of the original architectural texture, two U-shaped courtyard groups with rotating axes are weaved and repaired. By adding new houses as residential accommodation for tourists, some old houses and new houses are connected to form shared residential accommodation.

Four-in-one dwellings type

The Four-in-one dwellings type takes the surroundings of the village committee as the public activity key points of the whole village. In order to strengthen the connection between the villagers groups on both sides of the main road and build corridor bridges on both sides, the square in front of the village committee can be used as the performance space, and the farmhouse music and tea room on the other side can be used as a platform to watch the performance on the opposite side. At the same time, the platform can be combined with the mountain situation to form a ladder. The water system has become wider and wider here, so water carts and platforms are added to attract tourists and villagers to gather.

Long-sequence type

By sorting out the planning, Zhang's ancestral house is the most important ritual point in this settlement. Zhang's ancestral house is located in the higher part of the village. There was only one dirt road up the hill, which was very difficult for the elderly to walk. On the basis of improving the

original road, the original scenes of ritual lifestyle are introduced to restore the space and activities of rituals, which are hold again in ancestral temples. Using two time lines, the functions of ordinary use and ritual use are different, and the streamlines are also different. Additional daily streamlines for climbing and ritual streamlines near the water will serve villagers and tourists.

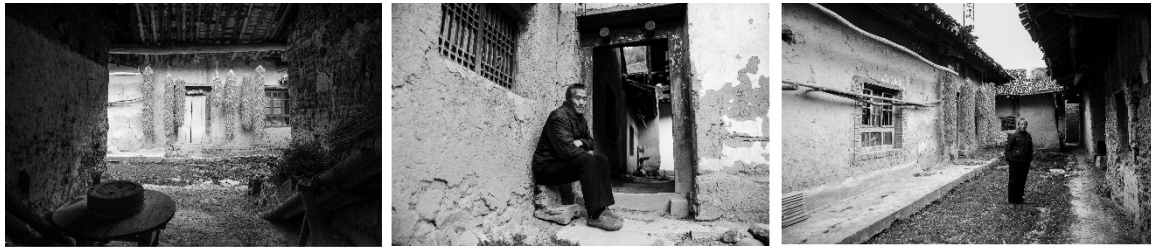
Multi-axis type

The rest of the dwellings are scattered, unable to form groups, having more axes to enter the building and more courtyards or vegetable gardens available around the building. Tourists can join in the agricultural experience, vegetable garden planting, agricultural products processing, and ritual experience activities of farming culture, giving new functions and experience items to each axis.

Zhang's ancestral house is composed of five or six buildings, all of which were built in the Qing Dynasty. The most important one is Zhang's ancestral temple, which belongs to the second group and is located on the central hillside of Shichuan'gou. It was built in the Qing Dynasty, with the form of Hui style. Zhang's ancestral temple is mainly used for worshipping ancestors. In addition, it serves as a place for marriages, funerals, birthdays and celebrations of the grandchildren of each house. In order to discuss important affairs within the clan, the clan relatives often hold meetings in the ancestral temple. The building area is about 55 square meters. The beam-lifting girder frame has a bucket arch structure. The structure is generally preserved. The tiles are complete and the details of doors and windows are well preserved. The wall surface has been repaired.

Zhang's ancestral temple is renovated by the plenty use of series connection of temple types, through admission place, columnar, Pan Chi (泮池), Yong Dao (甬道), hall, corridor, stage, pavilion, archway, courtyard, ritual gate, courtyard, main gate, ancestor worship hall, shrine and patio. These traditional ancestral temple functional spaces, combined with the hillside, form a ritual path from the hill to the countryside. Zhang's ancestral house is located in the mountain. The old long mountain road hinders many elderly people from coming to ancestral temples to worship their ancestors. The newly built mountain road gradually passes through the memorial archway, shines on the wall and water pool, experiencing the lengthy steps of traditional sacrifices, thus the number of tourists increased.

The function of Zhang's ancestral temple has also changed. Ancestral temples were used to convey family precepts and teach children of the family. Now it is a primary school for the villagers. Abandoned ancestral temples are surrounded by many subsidiary buildings, the surrounding academies, tea rooms, exhibitions, meetings and many other cultural activities are also open to the villagers in the spare time. Unlike the traditional ancestral worshipping venues, the altered ancestral temple has a variety of platform space to watch the worship. Tourists can drink tea upstairs and watch the ceremony. Children can run around on the outdoor corridor. Roofs provide rest for tourists. At midnight, all of them are blessed by their ancestors. (see Figure 5)



Axonometric drawing analysis :
Function transformation and reconstruction
strategy of Zhang's ancestor house

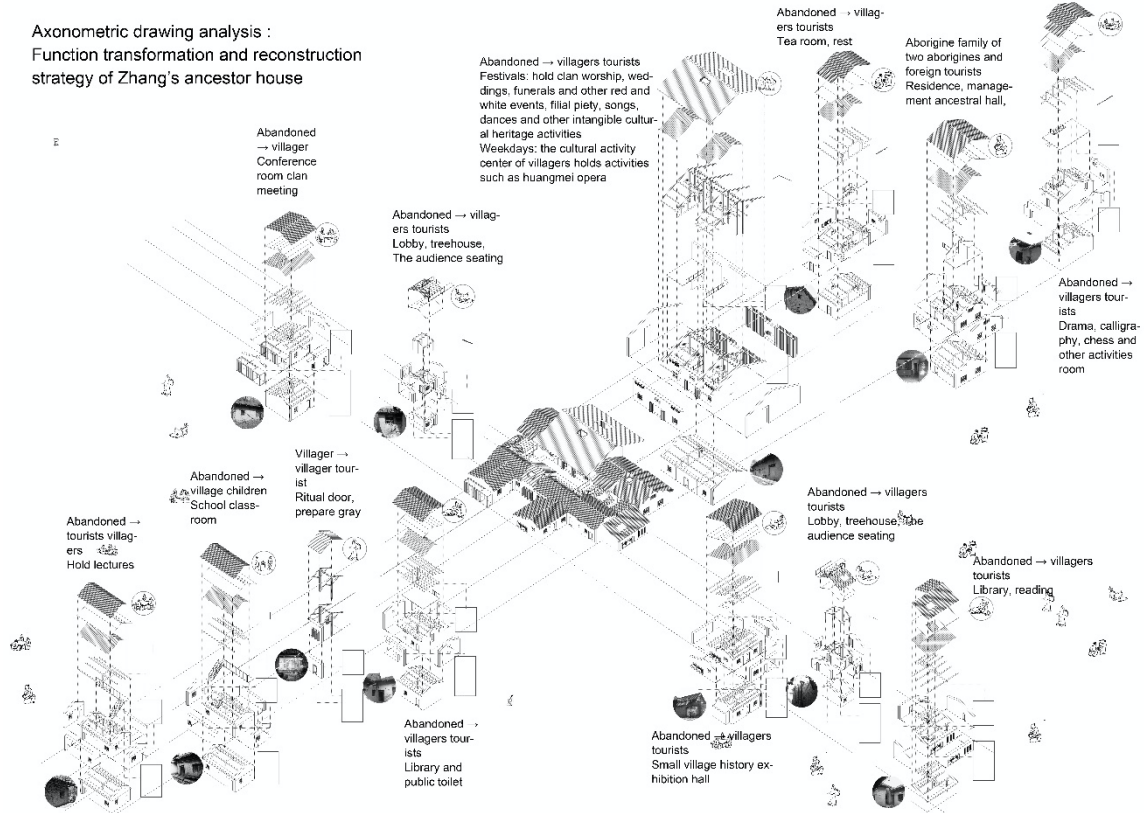


Figure 5. Function transformation and reconstruction strategy of Zhang's ancestral house ©Author

CONCLUSIONS

The ancestral temple is changing, the traditional rural life and the ritual ceremony are also changing. In the new era, new ancestral temples and ritual cultures will also be created in our countryside. But the only thing that remains unchanging is the memory of the old house. It is the ancestral temples, the home and the atmosphere in the memory of our ancestors from childhood that will be restored.

The study of typology provides a way of thinking and method for design. By comparing the changes of ancestral temple form from the perspective of types, we can further understand its relationship with the rise and fall of villages and the life of villagers, and how ancestral temple space is integrated into villages. The interdependence of ancestral temple and villages is an important building logic of Chinese houses.

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