

Study on the Factors That Influence Memory Perception of Conventional Village Space—Taking Luxiang Ancient Village as an Example

Qian Jiao

Gold Mantis School of Architecture, Soochow University, Suzhou, 215127, China

Abstract: *The preservation and inheritance of traditional villages in the future are supported by the study of the elements influencing the spatial memory of these villages, which contributes to a general understanding of their spatial development vein. Using Luxiang ancient village in Suzhou as an example, the study is conducted in terms of spatial imagery, folk culture, regional culture and environmental texture, traditional vernacular landscapes, and interaction place space, respectively, from the two aspects of ideological factors and spatial memory factors. The goal is to provide some references and bases for the future planning of Luxiang ancient village to provide good spatial environments that have spatial memories and are in line with the villagers behavioral needs and living habits. In order to offer fresh concepts for the improved preservation and development of traditional villages through inheritance.*

Keywords: *ancient village; space; memory; factors*

1. Introduction

Villages classified as traditional have a longer history, more abundant natural resources, and important historical, cultural, scientific, artistic, social, and economic values that should be preserved^[1]. Traditional villages are a unique human landscape that captures the spatial and temporal dynamics of human-nature interaction. They are a crucial resource for comprehending Chinese vernacular culture^[2]. However, the situation is dire since Chinese traditional villages are gradually collapsing due to the country increasing urbanization and the harsh effects of modernization.

Accompanied by a number of issues like space shrinkage and hollowing out. The government and people from all walks of life have taken notice of these phenomena and issues, and an increasing number of specialists and academics have started to concentrate their efforts on the study of traditional villages. In addition to integrating many facets of the villagers daily political, economic, cultural, and social lives, the village space is a crucial location for them to contribute to the creation of rural culture^[3]. It is also one of the village most defining characteristics and ambiance, which has a direct impact on the transmission of rural culture to future generations.

Studying the factors influencing the memory perception of traditional village space will offer new perspectives for better protection, inheritance, and development of these villages^[4]. The villagers who have lived in these traditional villages for generations are the masters of these villages, and their memory perception of the rural space determines the success or failure of the protection and inheritance of traditional villages.

2. Synopsis of the study field

2.1 Background

Located behind the Dongshan Island in Taihu Lake, Luxiang Ancient Village gradually developed into a village during the Southern Song Dynasty. According to Song Dynasty South Ferry records, when the Jin State invaded the south during the Song Dynasty, numerous high officials famous and nobles seeluded her. A number of people chose to settle down on Dongshan Island, start building the town with six lanes, and see it develop over time.

There are several points of interest in ancient village. For example, there are three Memorial Arches (Huiyuan Memorial Arch, Xieyuan Memorial Arch, Tanhua Memorial Arch), 34 old lanes on both sides,

and a mile-long Ming Dynasty stone highway known as the "Zishi street" that runs through the village to the east and west of Dongshan Island. Known as the "First Ancient Village in the Taihu Lake," the extant Ming and Qing Dynasty buildings in Luxiang ancient village are numerous, expansive in scale, of excellent quality, and exceptionally well kept. These buildings are unique in the Jiangnan region (Figure 1).

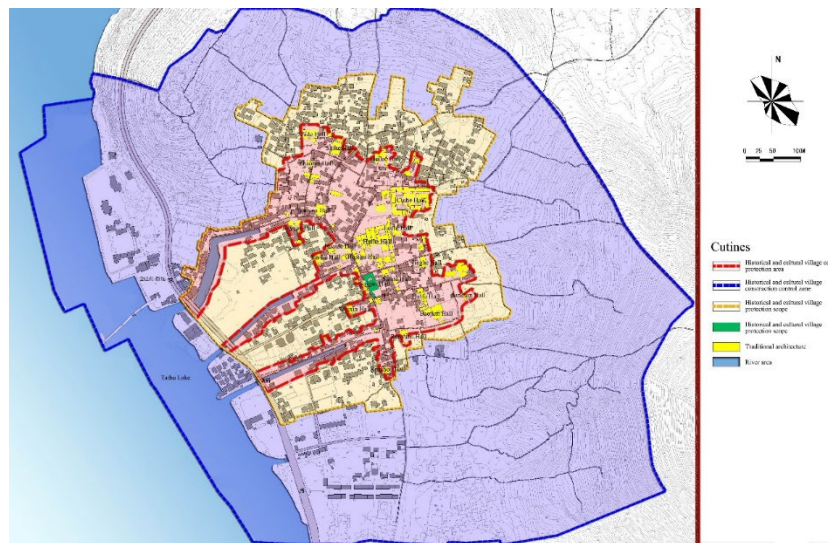


Figure 1: Preservation planning of Luxiang village. Map by Jiangsu government

2.2 State of Development

Even though Luxiang Ancient Village began later than Suzhou Ancient City and other ancient towns in terms of preservation and development, its sustainable building and development model has had a remarkable influence on the state of development today^[5]. As one of the first group of "Famous Chinese Historical and Cultural Villages of China" in Suzhou, Luxiang Ancient Village was acknowledged in 2007.

3. Influencing how memory perceives space

3.1 The role of ideological considerations

3.1.1 Spatial Imagery

The layout and choice of sites in Luxiang Ancient Village consider feng shui, ecological, and security requirements. First, seen from a positional perspective, it is a typical sort of village situated on the mountains and encircled by water; all sides of the terrain are level, offering abundant resources, a more great view, and a superior geographic location. Second, the village enjoys good seclusion from the outer world since it is tucked away in the mountains and water, at the confluence of rivers, streams, and mountains.

In addition, it has a good view of the outside world because it is situated on the mountains, facing the lake. Furthermore, the community takes use of the first geographic potential, with the mountains behind it and the water facing the sun. It has a nice and distinctive view of the ancient villages since it is surrounded by verdant woods and can feel the Taihu Lake. Due to Luxiang ancient village excellent location, its inhabitants have enjoyed their home for generations. This has a lasting effect on the area of Luxiang ancient village in their subconscious memories.

The living environment in which is rich in natural beauty, verdant trees, plenty of resources, and arable land. Additionally, the arrangement of the residential buildings follows a certain genealogy, the order of the young and old, and the branch structure of the clan. The staggered layout of the residential buildings at the base of the mountain creates a fascinating reflection of the surrounding tea gardens and fruit trees. The greatest location to view the entire historic town of Luxiang ancient village and take in its distinct flavor of spatial imagery is atop the Hangu Mountain (Figure 2) to the north of the village^[6]. When a result, when one climbs, one's impression of the valley vastness deepens and widens, allowing

one to take in the beauty and tranquility of the surrounding environment^[6].



Figure 2: Hanshan Mountain

3.1.2 Traditionalism

The long history of Luxiang ancient village is the source of its meticulous and elaborate folk traditions. The village has successfully inherited the folklore and old tradition of the Taihu Lake and continues to uphold many customs and habits from the time of farming civilization.

Unique temple fairs, fierce generals, and marriage customs are just a few examples of the folklore and festivals that are preserved. The internal space of the building also upholds the ancient custom of phasing when performing tasks, and there is the custom of hanging auspicious objects and evil spirits on the lintel of the main door of residential houses—all of which are folklore inherited from life history. Labor-intensive activities such as human-powered tea picking, tea frying, and fruit picking are also preserved. Additionally, there is the unique Dongshan Island boat catering method, allowing visitors to enjoy "Taihu Lake fresh" wonderful place. A distinctive tea custom and the atmosphere of "only in Luxiang ancient village, you can really drink Dongshan Biluochun, the original flavour" have also been formed due to the abundance of Biluochun. The Xiangshan Gang craftsmen left behind many traditional architectural relics, including the Jiehe Hall, Suigao Hall, and Huihe Hall (Figure 3), as well as exquisite decorative relics like stone, brick, and wood carvings, all of which serve as priceless examples of Jiangnan craftsmanship.



Figure 3: The model of Huihe Hall. Photo by author

The wealth of traditional handicrafts, building techniques, nature worship, traditional festivals, and folklore found in Luxiang Ancient Village all suggest a harmonious coexistence between man and nature, reflecting the philosophical idea of "Taoism and nature, the unity of mankind and nature" and the distinctive cultural essence of the Taihu Lake people and their elegant temperament—ideas that are ingrained in the folk culture of the Lu Xiang people. The folk culture of the Lu Xiang people is imprinted with this kind of memory, which subtly shapes the way of life of those who live in the historic village of Luxiang^[7].

3.1.3 Regional Culture

Dongshan Island is one of the many islands in the Taihu Lake that was formed before the last century. There are interspersed with numerous historic settlements that have breathtaking beauty. One thing unites these villages: a significant number of old structures, including temples, ancestral halls, bridges, and pathways, have been maintained. These structures can be used to illustrate the local civilization. One example of such a village is Luxiang Ancient village.

Luxiang ancient village originated in the Southern Song Dynasty, which had a lush landscape, an abundance of vegetables, and a lovely setting. The Wang and Ye families became part of the Central Plains culture when they isolated themselves in the historic Luxiang village. This resulted in the formation of a traditional vernacular regional culture led by farming culture. Luxiang ancient village traditional culture and technological advancements have been inspired by Taihu Lake.

Numerous streams and wells were once utilized to stop floods, and the Central Plains farming civilization later affected the region methods of production and way of life. As commerce grew, more people ventured out to conduct business and eventually established the "Dongting Merchants," who were well-known and wealthy across the world. "They took an active part in building their hometowns, learning to read and write, and plowing and weaving after coming home. Ever then, there has been a common belief in working hard, taking risks, reading much, and being polite. Furthermore, the "Chancellor Culture" has developed into one of Luxiang old village distinctive "business cards" over time.

The traditional Chinese family system ancient village culture is also evident in the village overall spatial layout and name, Luiang ancient village. The familial blood relationship demonstrates the Luxiang ancient village memory component, which strengthens and extends people's affection and attachment to their homeland (Figure 4).

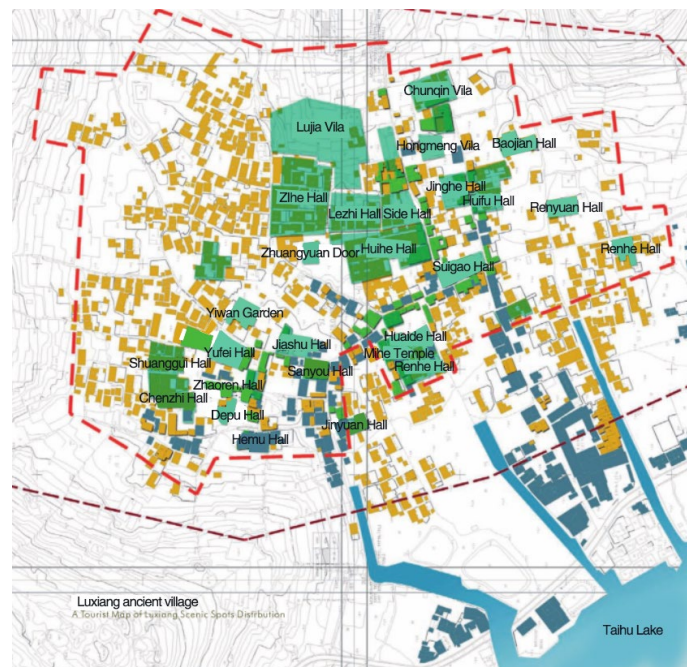


Figure 4: Tourist attractions map of Luxiang village

3.2 Morphological Factors of Spatial Memory

3.2.1 Texture of the environment

The spatial structure of Luxiang ancient village is arranged in the form of a finger, exhibiting a typical combination of mountain dock and lake bay layout. The plan form is said to have a "horseshoe" appearance. Still clearly present today is "a street, six lanes, three harbours," the framework structure made up of streets, lanes, and harbours. Since the start of the Luxiang ancient village settlement, six families have shared the site. To make it easier for them to share the Taihu Lake water surface, the Lake Settlement chose to open up a street, six lanes, and three rivers by using every two families to share a model of the river dug.

In order to provide drainage and water storage, three rivers were dug, with one river bank shared by each of the two households. It can be noted that great attention is taken in everything from the ventilation and lighting of the homes to the village drainage and water storage system to the assessment of the road level^[8]. Zishi Street, one of the main thoroughfares, gets its name from the granite stones used for paving that have purple veins in them. The "Six Ancient Lane" (Guxi lane, Jiangjia lane, Hanjia lane, Flagpole lane, Wenning lane, and Kangzhuang lane) intersect with Zishi Street in turn along the mountain. "Three

Harbours" (Jiangwan Harbour, Hanshan Harbour, and Luxiang Harbour) serve as the main support for external contacts and serve as an important harbor during the period of developed water transport in the historical Taihu Lake. It is approximately one mile long and two meters wide, and it is the primary route connecting external traffic. The interface is curved and features a rich spatial landscape sequence (Figure 5).



Figure 5: The model of Luxiang ancient village. Photo by author

3.2.2 Conventional Vernacular Scenery

The streets and lanes that make up Zishi Street are a significant component of the traditional space of Luxiang ancient village. They are also a vital area for business dealings and the daily interactions of the villagers. The shores that line the streets are also the most concentrated, and Zishi Street was reportedly the most magnificent during the Ming and Qing Dynasties.

Even now, you can see the symbols of the upper and lower sedan chair, the upper and lower horses and the marks of the cars printed on the stone streets on both sides of the street. The "T" layout of the three stone columns of wooden pagodas is where the most humanistic meaning and sense of historical vicissitudes are located, respectively, in the Zishi Street to the southeast and north of them. The pagoda, the most recognizable monument in Luxiang ancient Village, one of the group of old villages on Taihu Lake in Suzhou, was constructed in honor of a professor in the Ming Dynasty who won three consecutive honors.

Luxiang Ancient Village currently possesses 2 province cultural relics protection units, 23 municipal cultural relics protection units, and 4 control protection units, according to the census data of immovable cultural treasures. The best available resources are listed below. Built in the Ming Dynasty, Yude Hall is a municipal cultural heritage protection unit known as "The First Flower Hall in Jiangnan." Huaigu Hall, a provincial cultural heritage protection unit, was also built in the Ming Dynasty and is known as "Wang Family Ancestral Hall". Huilao Hall, a provincial cultural heritage protection unit, combines the styles of the Ming Dynasty, Qing Dynasty, and the Republic of China in multiple eras and is currently a five-star hotel.

Folk performance forms like Chutaige and Mengjianghui are currently included in Jiangsu Province inventory of intangible cultural assets. The excellent traditional vernacular landscape of Luxiang ancient village has been preserved, making it a dependable physical research object for the current investigation of the village.

3.2.3 Space of interactions

The layout of Luxiang ancient village activity space is still "one street, six lanes, and three harbours," with the wharf and harbor, street and lane intersections, waterfront spaces (well platforms, waterfront steps), ancestral halls, temples, and other buildings serving as the main elements of the village lively hubs of activity^[9]. Different human landscapes with people temporality, seasonality, and purpose are presented via streets and lanes.

The variations in street width, the variations in the spatial enclosure along the roads and lakes, and the variations in the terrain undulation all contribute to the creation of extremely fascinating and varied places of interaction in the ancient village of Luxiang ancient village. These places are essential to people's daily lives and embody the most vibrant and compassionate rural landscapes of Luxiang ancient village.

4. Summary

The spatial memory of traditional villages and the passing down of history and culture today, in the process of protecting and developing traditional villages, symbolize both the villagers desire for a better living and the development needs of traditional villages in the current period. Therefore, the study will offer fresh suggestions for the improved preservation and inheritance development of traditional villages by examining and analyzing the impact of the internal space of traditional villages on the people' memory factors.

The "one street, six lanes, and three harbours " area as well as the village important ancient buildings and structures—which are still accessible to and frequently used by the villagers—are the primary focal points of the residents of Luxiang ancient village overall perception of space. Additionally, culture serves as the focal point of folk activities. In order to better preserve traditional villages, protection planning for them must take into account not only the need to preserve the architectural elements of the village but also the need to preserve the memory of the factors that will be passed down through the generations. This way, the physical structures and the culture will complement one another.

References

- [1] Yan Hu, Sheng C, Wei C, et al. *The Concept and Cultural Connotation of Traditional Villages*[J]. *Urban Development Studies*, 2014.
- [2] Yonghui S, Xuegan M. *Landscape Pattern and Driving Mechanism of A Traditional Village in South of Henan Province: A Case of Dingliwan Village, Xinxian County* [J]. *Areal Research and Development* [2023-10-20].
- [3] Chladek G, Marcin Wrzu-Wieliński. *Evolution and Development of Space for Traditional Villages in the World Heritage Sites: Taking the Case of "Tomb Village" in The Ming Tombs Scenic Area*[J]. *Huazhong Architecture*, 2010, 12(3):75. DOI:10.1016/j.actbio. 2009.06.027.
- [4] Hang M A. *Persistence and Transformation of Chinese Traditional Villages—Rethinking the Planning of Traditional Settlements* [J]. *Urban Planning Forum*, 2006. DOI:10.1016/S1005-8885 (07) 60042-9.
- [5] Pwalia A. *Perception Of Personal Security And Its Influence On Tourism: The Case Of Ghana*[J]. 2016.
- [6] Bohua L I, Can Z, Yindi D, et al. *Change of human settlement environment and driving mechanism in traditional villages based on living-production-ecological space: A case study of Lanxi Village, Jiangyong County, Hunan Province*[J]. *Progress in Geography*, 2018.
- [7] Zhe C, Yu J, Hantao Z, et al. *A study on the evolution and adaptation of traditional Chinese villages based on complex adaptative system (CAS)* [J]. *Architectural Journal*, 2014.
- [8] Schwendel B H , Wester T J , Morel P C H , et al. *Corrigendum to "Invited review: Organic and conventionally produced milk—An evaluation of influence factors on milk composition" (J. Dairy Sci. 98:721–746)*[J]. *Journal of Dairy Science*, 2015, 98(4):2831-2831. DOI:10.3168/jds.2015-98-4-2831.
- [9] Jixian Z, Di Z, Zhixian S, et al. *Production of Space and Identity in Traditional Village Tourism Destination—A Case Study of Luxiang Traditional Village in Suzhou City*[J]. *Resource Development & Market*, 2019.