

## Modern Presentation of Traditional Space-----Village Activity Center of Jintao

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### 1 Relationship Architecture and Urban Space

The design is based on the new rural construction of Shanghai, so the construction of DaYu village should take into consideration the strategy adopted to intervene in the existing environment (Two villages' connection. The block is located in the sanchahekou of collective land, followed by a Sun Valley Farm with each bridge on both sides) (Figure 1). The architect is to use hexagonal geometry as the basic form of the building, and divide six spaces with six radial walls, interacting the building with the terrain and its surrounding landscape and creating a communal space for the villagers, including activities room, tea room, and a small stage.

It is an issue that has been explored



Figure 1

for a long time how to make a good

architectural design with Chinese traditional characteristics. Is there any other possibilities to recognize, explain, and use traditional architecture besides pursuing the forms of it?

Village Activity Center of Jintao (Figure 2) is not a typically case, but a small-scaled public space.

Drama is part of the quintessence of Chinese culture, and theatre is the most important way of entertainment for the ancients. The architect uses simple geometric forms to abstract a stage space. The roof leaning toward the courtyard and the load-bearing wall form a classic small horn type stage, and the front of the stage is a small square (Figure 3).

**Abstract:** Beginning with the spatial structure characteristics of traditional architecture, this paper presents a different design idea. It abstracts a prototype of Chinese traditional architecture, and analyzes it from four aspects: the relationship between architecture and urban space, public space, gray space, and indoor and outdoor cooperation. Focusing on details and forms, the design of Chinese traditional architecture should also grasp the characteristics of the macro, interpret the presentation of traditional space, and inherit the inherent nature of traditional architecture. It should as well be considered the reasons and the adequacy of this cognition.

**Key words:** Traditional space; Urban space; Linear; Gray space; Separation

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Figure 2

The shared activity space should not only satisfy people's requirements of staying, sitting, watching, standing and communicating, but also build the spirit of appearance. The pace of life in modern society is too fast, and public places are mostly positioned as consumer entertainment. Locating a communal space here can give the villagers a chance to enjoy the idle lifestyle in the farming age, and endow the place with a traditional spirit of life.

## 2 Linear Public Space

Whether in an ancient village or in a residential community, public outdoor space of a traditional building community is usually linear, such as streets in towns, tourist routes in scenic areas (Figure 4). In this flow line, there are often a few point spaces (Figure 5) for people to rest, stop,

communicate, etc.. The design is at the junction of the two villages. The villagers come out of their houses and enter the linear public space. The activity room intervenes in this line of public space as a point, connects the two villages, and also constitutes the climax of this public space.

## 3 Gray Space

Jan Gehl divided people's public activities into two categories: one is necessary activity, and the other is optional activity. Optional activity depends particularly on external material conditions. Only when the weather is good and the places and facilities are available, will people choose to play in a certain outdoor place<sup>[1]</sup>. It is because of this reason that this place should not only be open to attract more people, but also be closed to form a certain introverted space,

presenting a dual nature.

In this design, the architect defines the whole space of the six spaces as a spatial structure with a dual nature. Design reduces the difference between indoor and outdoor, but does not define the locations of indoor and outdoor, nor the function of each space (Figure 6). The dual space here is called "gray space". Gray space was put forward by Japanese architect Kisho Kurokawa, which refers to a transitional space between indoor and outdoor space, achieving the integration of indoor and outdoor space. In the traditional architecture of China, gray space is widely used, such as pavilion, estrade, gallery, etc..

Pavilion is a typical example. With more emphasis on the infiltration of external environment to internal (Figure 7), it is not an entity. Each side of the pavilion is empty. The architect uses the pavilion as the prototype design, and the six load-bearing walls to form the column of the pavilion. Removable doors and the vacant openings form a void enclosure. The architecture is without clear indoor and outdoor space. Apart from the walls of the six entities, others are gray space. Gray space is a kind of uncertain space, and the space feeling created is unstable. The essence of the pavilion is gray space, which provides the villagers with a dual space both indoors and outdoors.



Figure 3

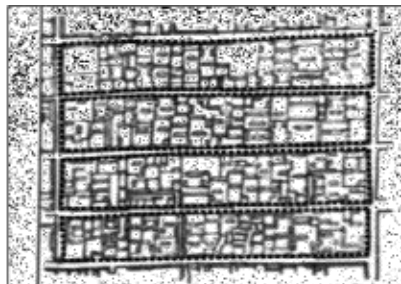


Figure 4

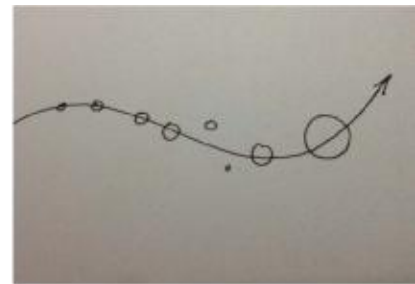


Figure 5

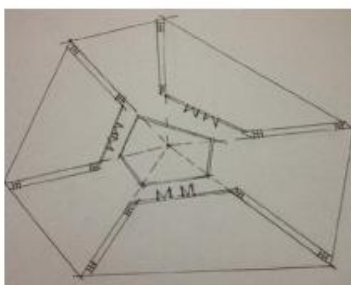


Figure 6



Figure 7

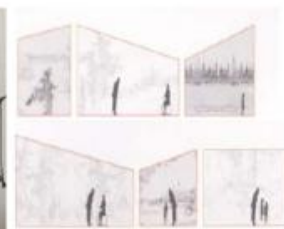


Figure 8

## 4 Indoor and Outdoor Cooperation

An obvious feature of Chinese traditional architecture is that each room opens to the exterior space of the building (Figure 8). This phenomenon is due to the fact that most activities of Chinese are using both indoor and outdoor space at the same time (Figure 9). In traditional architecture, indoor furniture's layout and space structure point to outdoor space. The indoor and outdoor spaces cooperates with each other. Indoor and outdoor space forms a unit, and combination of different functions of the indoor and the outdoor space can form different functional units, thus to form the entire building (Figure 10). In this design, the architects followed the relations of cooperation for traditional building internally and externally, so that the door can open to the inner court, and the inner court can lead to the external environment of construction. The activity room is formed by the external environment

and inner part of the building, so as to form the basic elements of traditional architecture (Figure 11).

## 5 Critical Summary

Hypotaxis and parataxis are the most commonly applied methods in the heritage of the traditional architecture. Hypotaxis is a kind of imitation of traditional architecture. Parataxis is a kind of expression of traditional architecture<sup>[2]</sup>. But if we divide the architectural design into three processes which include the macro (the establishment of the cognition and conception of the big environment), the meson (formal design), the micro (form depth and detail design), it can be seen that the design of hypotaxis and parataxis is still on a micro level. The difference of this work is the fact that it grasps the characteristics of traditional architectural space from the macro level, and extracts the characteristics of traditional architecture, and then uses simple geometric form to operate, totally

reflects the characteristics of traditional space. However, there are still some problems in the design:

### 5.1 Courtyard Space

Courtyard is an important part of the traditional architectural space in China. Whether the north courtyard or patio in southern architecture has a courtyard space (Figure 12). Courtyard is a buffer space with clear orientation, unity, semi-privacy and it has a clear separation from the external environment (Figure 13). In this design, the homogenization of the building design makes the courtyard not have a clear direction, all the positions are equally open without adequate privacy. It leads to the instability of yard, making the yard only available from the outside environment into the buffer space, but not forming a half private space for communicating, removing the essence of the courtyard space.

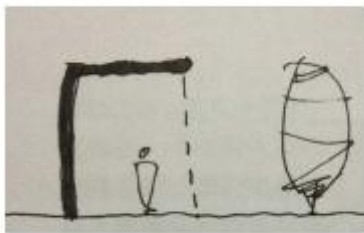


Figure 9

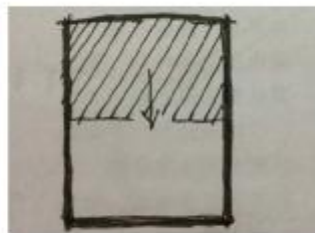


Figure 10

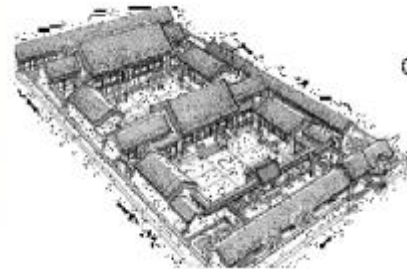


Figure 11

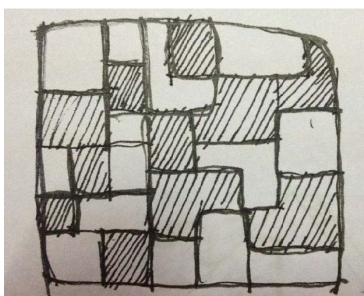


Figure 12

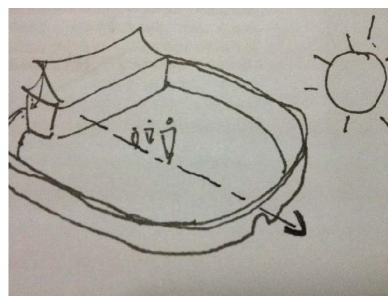


Figure 13

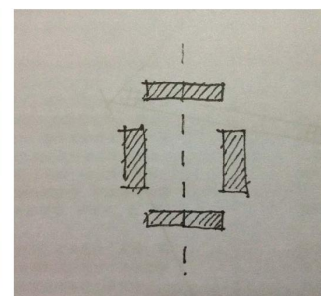


Figure 14

### 5.2 Space Sequence

Traditional architecture gains a deep impression that the space is isolated by many layers. The separation is

usually formed by walls, houses, large areas of water, mountains and so on. The separation here is the blocking of sight (Figure 14). This design abstracts the concept of roofs, walls, doors and windows, and constructs the separation of buildings in a whole form.

All the building elements make up the partition of the building. The external environment, building, and courtyard form a certain sense of space sequence. But in this design, the relationship between the inner perspective and architecture

perspective is similar so that the building has no perspective changes,

weakening the sense of space sequence (Figure 15).

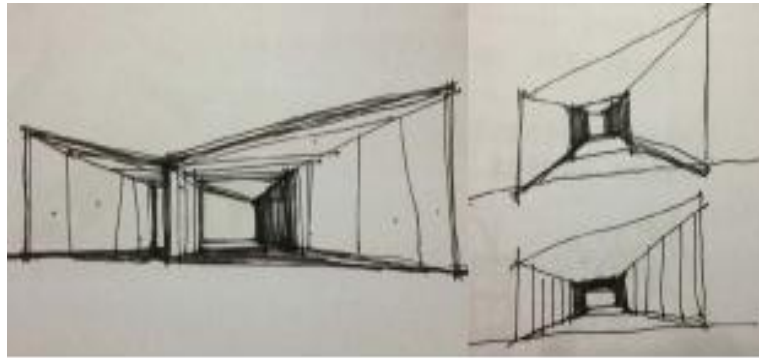


Figure 15

Through the above discussion, this paper values the pursuit of the traditional architecture of hypotaxis and parataxis. Today's architectural design should not be confined to hypotaxis and parataxis of architecture, but pay more attention to the construction of logical problems and the inherent nature of traditional architectural space. Traditional architecture is not the shackle but the

precious wealth of inspiration for designers.

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