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The Intangible Sustainability on Tangible Flexibility: A Case Study of Vernacular Architecture in Shangjiayang Village, Taishun, China (1814 -1949)

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Abstract

Shangjiayang is a small village in Zhejiang province whose residents are from one family --- Tsang's family initially. The first generation of these residents were moved from Fujian province (Min region) about two hundred years ago. With time passing, both the layout and the architectural style of the village have transformed, but still, the memory or the spirit, the intangible aspects are kept. It is an important factor that makes the village still survive by now. This paper focuses on how this kind of intangible sustainability has been achieved. At first, it describes the reason and the approach of their resettlement to show how the village was founded. Then it discusses its following development during different times via illustrations about the layout of settlement, the form and function of architecture. Finally, the paper suggests the strategy that the tangible changes appearing on this village modeling the locality, which could inspire the contemporary constructions.

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Keywords: vernacular architecture; sustainability; flexibility; Taishun county; Shangjiayang village

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1. Introduction

Sustainability is always a major topic, but not a new concept among the research of Chinese vernacular architecture. During premodern times, people always thought to construct a long-standing system for their families, even for the whole society. To some extent, the sustainable system does not correspond exactly to an architectural technique or material etc.. It is not a system kept still with no changes at all. Instead, it is a dynamic system realized by flexible constructive methods responding to changing requirements of life during different periods. Meanwhile, a deeply constant about memory, emotion, spirit of locality inside can last for hundreds of years. This paper chooses Shangjiaoyang village as a case study to analyze how the intangible sustainability has been attained by using variable strategies on architecture. What makes the discussion more interesting, is the village’s special background. It shows the influence of immigration as well as the following communication between two different cultures.

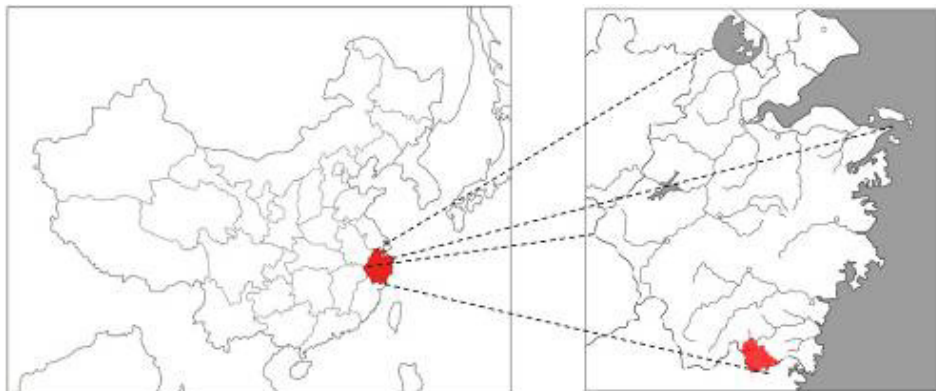


Fig. 1. Location of Zhejiang province in China (left), Taishun county in Zhejiang (right), Source: drawing, 2014

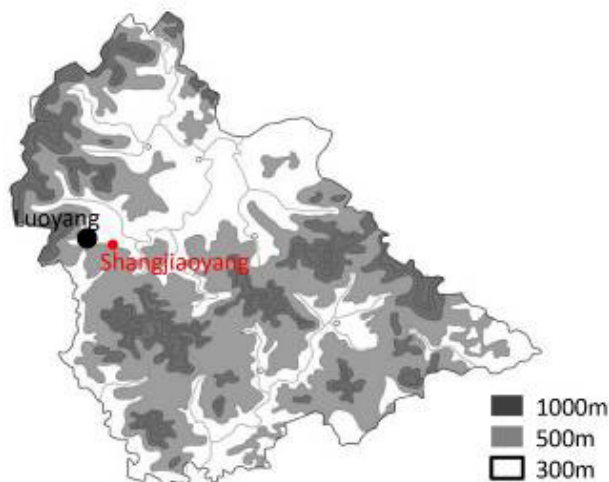


Fig. 2. Location of Shangjiaoyang in Taishun, China. Source: drawing, 2014

In this paper, the first part demonstrates the resettlement of the Tsang family from Fujian to Zhejiang. It explains the reasons why these people decided to leave their hometown and rebuilt their life in a totally strange area far from

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