Yu Ancestral Hall, Yuyuan Village

Ancestral Hall Of The Yu Family

Yuyuan Taiji Astrology Village is famous among China’s first batch of famous historical and culture villages. It is the China’s folk culture village, China’s civilized village and the historical and culture protection area of Zhejiang Province. The ancient architecture complex of Yuyuan is among the second batch of National Intangible Culture Heritages. Yuyuan village is located in southwest of Wuyi county, it is 20km away from Wuyi downtown, and 45km away from Jinhua downtown. It was first built in Song Dynasty, and Liu Bowen, the founding adviser of Ming Dynasty, designed and renovated this village according to the celestial astrology arrangement. The village has seven wells that correspond to the Big Dipper, which is an important constellation in Taoist astrology. Also, the 11 mountains that surround the village plus the village itself represent the 12 palaces of the zodiac. There are 760 families and 1830 villagers in the village, which is one of the largest habitations for Yu Family in China. In the village, there are 1072 ancient buildings dating back to Song-Yuan-Ming-Qing Dynasty, which cover 34,000 square meters, including fork houses, ancestral halls, stores, temples, libraries etc. In the ancient buildings, wood carving, title carving and stone carving are exquisite and delicate.

Legend

1. Entrance
2. Opera stage
3. Inner court yard
4. Village model
5. Clan hall
6. Ancestral Hall Of Yan Family

Detailed Description Of building

The largest and most famous building is the Ancestral Hall of the Yu Family. It was built by four sons of Yu Lai in 1374. There are five flagpoles in front of the main gate, each representing an important figure in the family.

The high threshold is a symbol of status. The higher the threshold, the higher the social status of a family. Normally, the front door is closed. It is opened only on special occasions, such as a high level official visit, ancestor worship and updating the family tree. On Double Ninth Festival, residents over 70 years old are allowed to cross this threshold. According to tradition they receive a gift of pork.

In the past, ancestral hall was a symbol of privilege and power. The first court yard of the hall has an opera stage, which enjoys a reputation as ‘the most beautiful stage in Jinhua’. It has eight pillars, decorated with beautiful stone, wood and brick carvings. The outer four are notable. The upper parts are made of wood while the lower parts are made of stone. This foundation is therefore durable and moisture-proof. There is a hole shaped like an upturned well on the roof, which acts as an amplifier.

There is a sculpture in the hall which has a lion’s limbs and a pig’s nose. This implies that the family’s descendants will stand out and make their ancestors illustrious.

The second hall is called Xiang Tang which means Echo Hall. It is also known as ‘The Amazing House Without Five Things’, namely, spiders, dust, termites, mosquitoes and sparrows. It is also very cool in summer.

In the past, there were several ancestor worship days. On those days, children who had reached sixteen years old and men who passed the imperial examination at the county level had to go into the hall to offer sacrifices to the ancestors.

There are bricks of different colors on the ground. It is said that if children wanted to enter the hall, they should only step on the white bricks.

Yin and yang beam: From one side, the beam appears to be the highest one. However from the other side, it can be seen that there is a higher one. During the Second World War, some Chinese soldiers were being pursued by Japanese soldiers. The villagers helped the Chinese soldiers to hide in this space. They succeeded in escaping.