

# The Cultural Value of Pan's Ancestral Hall in She Village and the Continuation of Clan Culture

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**Abstract:** This paper aims to explore the cultural value of Pan's Ancestral Hall in She Village and the continuation of clan culture. As an important carrier of clan culture, the ancestral hall carries family history, ethical values and cultural identity. By combing the historical evolution, architectural features and cultural functions of Pan's Ancestral Hall in She Village, the core role of the ancestral hall in family worship, cultural inheritance and local history is revealed. Family worship activities, genealogical inheritance, family traditions and family precepts constitute the main mechanism for the continuation of clan culture, ensuring the inheritance of family spirit and culture from generation to generation. In the process of modernization, clan culture faces the impact of individualism and social mobility, but its core values are still preserved and carried forward in some areas. Through the study of Pan's Ancestral Hall, this study further enriches the understanding of the adaptation and development of clan culture in contemporary society, and provides a theoretical basis for the protection and inheritance of ancestral hall culture.

**Keywords:** Ancestral Hall Culture; Clan Culture; Pan's Ancestral Hall; Cultural Heritage; Family History

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Research Background and Importance

As the core carrier of traditional Chinese clan culture, the ancestral halls have experienced countless ups and downs for thousands of years, covering rich family history and carrying cultural meaning. Among them, the ancestral halls of Shecun's Pan, which are historical and cultural in accumulation, stand as a symbol of the family group: not only a religious sacrificial place but also a major carrier of family

cohesiveness, identification, and cultural tradition. As one of the typical clan buildings in Fujian Province, the Pan ancestral hall in Shecun reflects the family system, the ritual culture of Ming and Qing Dynasties, and ethnic identity. Its architectural style, sacrificial rituals, and family norms all reflect the clan cultural characteristics of traditional Chinese society [1]. Along with the times, the development of modernization brings a severe test to clan culture: traditional ancestral halls have gradually weakened their functions, clans' cohesive functions are gradually decaying, and related family cultural inheritances appear step by step. It is for this context that the research on the cultural value of She Village's Pan's Ancestral Hall will introduce further understanding of the positioning and role that this traditional culture occupies in modern society, thereby providing a theoretical basis necessary for cultural heritage protection and continuation of clan culture. Therefore, studying the history, architecture, function, and cultural significance of Pan's Ancestral Hall is significant in practice for us to protect and inherit Chinese traditional culture [2].

### 1.2 Research Objectives

This paper is supposed to undertake deep and elaborate research on historical development, architectural features, clan culture function, and cultural value based on the ancestral hall so that its role and meaning in the process of inheriting the family and the clan would be explained. First of all, through the sorting out of the history about the emergence of the Ancestral Hall in She village, discuss its distinctive positioning within the history of family and the culture in this area. Then, further analyze the function and cultural signification of the ancestral hall as a place of family worship and cultural inheritance to show deep-seated clan cultural characteristics and their social values. The paper concludes by researching the change and continuance of clan

culture on modern society, paying special attention to the adapting development of Pan Ancestral Hall culture and providing the theoretical foundation for safeguarding and inheritance of ancestral hall culture.

## **2. History and Current Status of Pan's Ancestral Hall in She Village**

### **2.1 Historical Evolution of Pan's Ancestral Hall**

The history of the Pan's Ancestral Hall in She Village dates back to the Ming and Qing Dynasties; its construction is closely related to the prosperity of the Pan family. Pan's Ancestral

Hall was an important symbol of family unity and cultural heritage and has carried multiple functions during the course of family development. This is no less a place of religious worship but also a discussion center when important family issues are tackled. Ancestral hall construction shows not only the rise in social status but also an epitome of changes that outline historical events [3]. From the building and expansion to the gradual formation of scale, the historical evolution of Pan's Ancestral Hall reflects the role played by local clans in social development and at the same time reflects the integration and interaction of local culture and clan culture in a specific historical period.



**Figure 1. Pan's Ancestral Hall in Shecun Community**

### **2.2 Architectural Features and Spatial Layout of the Ancestral Hall**

Among all the family halls in the village, the ancestral hall of the Pan's family was renowned for its excellent craftsmanship and scientific spatial layout and was hailed as a model of local traditional ancestral hall architecture. The overall layout adopts traditional central axis symmetry, and includes an front yard, main hall, and back hall in its basic makeup. Each part has different functions and is integrated, forming a rigorous architectural pattern. The Pan's ancestral hall is richly decorated in terms of architectural details, including wood carvings, stone carvings, and brick carvings. The themes involve historical figures, auspicious patterns, etc., which fully show the strong local characteristics and reflect the family's spiritual pursuit of respecting etiquette and pursuing culture. The ancestral hall attaches great importance to the real needs of family activities

in spatial design, so it is both a ceremonial and practical place. That is a high degree of combining traditional clan culture with architectural art [4].

### **2.3 Current Status and Protection Status of the Ancestral Hall**

In the changing times with acceleration of the modernization process, the original function of the Pan's ancestral hall in She Village has weakened. The protection status also faces some challenges. Some buildings were in structure damage because the facilities are out of repair for many years. It includes wall crack and leak of roof. In the process, the cultural function and social value of the ancestral hall also gradually faded. As a result, the younger generation's identification with clan culture was weakened, which eventually led to a decline in activities within the ancestral halls. Through continuous promotions by the government and society as a whole, protection work on the ancestor hall of

Pan's has gradually come into being, building repairs, and cultural value excavations included [5]. However, it is still plagued by problems like inadequate funding and concepts in protection lagging. It is urgent to strengthen the social participation in the protection of cultural heritage, promote the transformation of the ancestral hall from historical relics to cultural communication and education functions, and realize the modern inheritance of its cultural value.

### **3. The Cultural Value of The Pan's Ancestral Hall in She Village**

#### **3.1 The Ancestral Hall as a Carrier of Clan Culture**

The ancestral hall of the Pan family in She Village represents not only a religious building but also a symbol and a carrier of culture for the Pan family. The ancestral halls are the core area where clan cultures have been preserved. Ancestors' temples bear such things as respect that family pays to ancestors, remembering home history. Sacrifice ceremony Family laws Genealogy In ancestral temples continue to tell about one cultural Self-consciousness and beliefs. The participation in every activity of the ancestral hall by each generation strengthens understanding and appreciation of family history and culture in order to make contributions toward continuing family traditions. In this respect, the uniqueness in traditional Chinese society is fully expressed through the construction and the functional layout of the ancestral halls. It is the bond of emotional connection and cultural identity of family members, inheriting the moral ethics, historical stories, and etiquette norms of the family. In such an ancestral hall, it is not only that the blood ties among family members are maintained but continuously strengthening the presence and influence of clan culture to ensure stability and prosperity in society. Therefore, the ancestral hall is not only a historical relic but also an active cultural transmission field, and its cultural value cannot be ignored [6].

#### **3.2 Family Worship and Cultural Inheritance in the Ancestral Hall**

Family worship activities are one of the most core functions of the ancestral hall, and it plays a pivotal role in the Pan's ancestral hall. The annual regular sacrificial ceremony is not only a

respect and commemoration of the ancestors but also a gathering point for the spiritual world of family members. The sacrificial activities can transmit the family values of respecting ancestors, virtues, and keeping trustworthy in the strict etiquette procedures. Also, it is an important time when family members can pass on some cultural knowledge and enhance their sense of family membership. Ancestral worship in the Pan's ancestor hall has rich contents that not only include ancestors' meritorious service, family historical incidents, but also the family traditions and precepts transmission. Family members can comprehend, by doing so, that they have gained wisdom from ancestors to recognize family rise or decadence. Moreover, the ancestral hall family culture is also inherited through the protection and inheritance of the genealogy. As a witness to family history, the genealogy condenses the roots of the Pan family and becomes an important document carrier for the inheritance of clan culture. Therefore, sacrificial activities and cultural inheritance in ancestral halls are a way to continue clan culture, but also reflect family spirit and a value system.

#### **3.3 The Relationship between the Ancestral Hall and Local History and Culture**

As it is rooted in the local history and culture, the Pan Clan Ancestral Hall has been closely related to the local historical development and social changes in She Village. The ancestral hall construction and family rise and fall reflect the historical process of the local society directly; especially in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the important role of clan cannot be ignored. The Pan Clan Ancestral Hall not only recorded family history and witnessed the development and changes in economy, politics, culture, and other layers of the region but also incorporates some local cultural elements into the artistic form of the architectural style with distinct regional characteristics. By studying the building history and architecture of the surname ancestral hall, one attains great insight into the traditional style reflected in that region and the historical concepts behind the same [7]. Besides these, family activities and cultural practices in the ancestral hall hold a demonstrative role in view of local society, especially ethnical identity and social morals, having played an indispensable leading role. Ancestral halls in inheritance not only hold the family's cultural heritage but also carry local cultural

identification and historical memory. By studying the ancestral hall of Pan, we can better understand the formation and development of local historical culture, the interaction between the ancestral hall culture and the local society, and promote the continuation and innovation of local culture.

#### 4. The Continuation and Change of Clan Culture

##### 4.1 The Connotation and Characteristics of Clan Culture

Clan culture is a kind of cultural system that takes shape with the family as its foundation by the common life, the regulations of behavior, and the historical inheritance shared in this family. The basic concept of clan culture relies on a blood relationship. This theory highly regards the worshiping of ancestors, family ethics, the style of the family, family educations, and creates an exclusive cultural meaning. The most typical core characteristic of clan culture lies in familism. Familism includes: it insists on "honoring ancestors", the succession among generations and ethnic cohesion. Family culture often influences the identity and social behavior of family members. The clan culture in traditional society gave the living order, behavioral norms, and spiritual support to family members for the reproduction and stability of the family. Moreover, it also recorded and inherited the history of family culture through family trees and clan rules, forming a particular mechanism of cultural inheritance for generation and generation. Not only these characteristics play a

role within the family but also affect local society and history formation and developing process.

##### 4.2 Continuation Mechanism of Clan Culture

It is very important that clan culture could be continued through a series of traditional mechanisms. As Figure 2 shows, the main channels include ancestral halls, family trees, and family sacrifices. First of all, ancestral halls refer to the core carriers in the transmission of clan culture and are an important place for every member to take part in some activities that could strengthen family identity [8]. The frequent sacrificial activities but mean one way to pay their tributes to ancestors, and through those rituals, strengthen the identification of family members with culture and values. The family tree, being a kind of document in recording family history, has great importance in terms of bloodline inheritance and cultural transmission within family members. The family tree recorded not only the rise and fall but also the inheritance of this family; it undertakes the function of family norms and moral education step by step. The final words and deeds of the elderly in the family, as well as the inheritance of family traditions and precepts, form an important part of continuation in clan culture. With the influence of culture and education within the family, family culture can be passed on at each generation. All of these mechanisms work together to ensure the inheritance and continuation of clan culture in particular historical and social conditions.

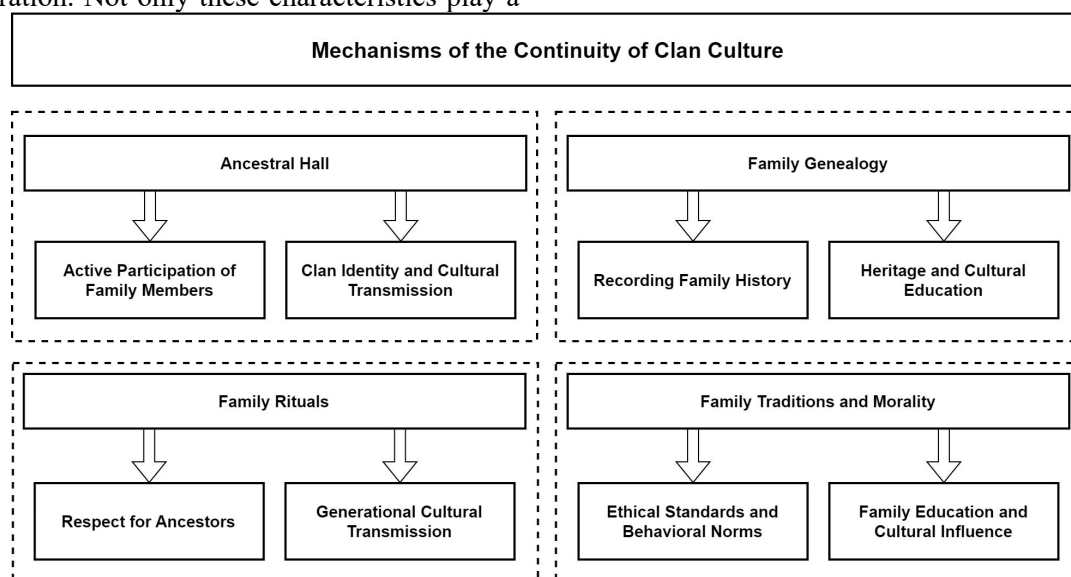


Figure 2. Mechanisms of the Continuity of Clan Culture



### 4.3 Changes in Clan Culture in Modern Society

During the modernization process, with the urbanization of society, traditional clan culture will face unprecedented challenges and changes. Modern society advocates individual freedom, equality, and the rule of law. Familism, hierarchy, and the blood relationships emphasized in the social functions of traditional clan culture are gradually weakened, and cohesion and influences of clans are greatly reduced. Especially with the changes in family structure and the increase in the floating population, participation in clan activities has declined sharply. The sense of identity with the traditional clan culture among many young generations has gradually weakened; the frequency of use of such traditional cultural carriers as the ancestral halls has also dropped greatly. Besides, diversification of values and lifestyles has made traditional clan culture fall behind modern society. While in decline, a portion of core values of clan culture has been preserved and passed on among specific areas or families, for example, family responsibility or inheritance of family tradition. Changes in clan culture have not been entirely lost but have sought new forms of life and ways of development under the background of a new society.

## 5. Conclusion and Prospect

### 5.1 Research Conclusion

This study will uncover the importance of the ancestral hall in the transmission of family history and culture through a detailed analysis of the history, architecture, cultural value, and continuity and change of the clan culture of the Pan Clan Ancestral Hall in She Village. First of all, the Pan Clan Ancestral Hall in She Village is not only used for family worship but also served as an important carrier in the realization of the identity of Pan Clan culture, family ethics, and social responsibility. Due to its being a repository of clan culture, the ancestral halls bear witness to the respect bestowed upon ancestors by family members and enshrine remembrance of family histories, and are therefore of important cultural value. It guarantees the continuation of clan culture effectively through the family worship mechanism and cultural inheritance. Through a

family tree, family traditions, family precepts, clan culture could be passed on, down, and carried forward from generation to generation by family members. Clan culture faces historical and social environmental changes in modern society, while core values are still kept up to now in some areas. By studying the Pan Clan Ancestral Hall, we can further understand how clan culture seeks to adapt and develop in the process of modernization and provide reference for the protection and inheritance of clan culture.

### 5.2 Practical Significance of Ancestral Hall Culture Protection

The protection of ancestral hall culture is not only the repair of a building, but also the inheritance of traditional culture, family values and local history. As a representative of local clan culture, the protection of Pan's ancestral hall in She Village has important practical significance. First, the protection of ancestral hall culture helps to maintain the multicultural structure of society and promote the harmonious coexistence of traditional culture and modern culture. As a cultural bond between the family and the local society, the ancestral hall can strengthen the cultural identity of family members and enhance the cohesion of society through restoration and revitalization. Secondly, the protection of ancestral halls can provide a material basis for the inheritance of local cultural heritage and promote the development of local cultural tourism and historical education. By restoring the cultural function of the ancestral hall, we can not only enhance the society's attention to traditional culture, but also give the ancestral hall new vitality in modern society. Finally, the protection of ancestral hall culture is not only a respect for family history, but also the inheritance of ancestral spirit and cultural heritage. It still has a value and role that cannot be ignored in modern society.

### 5.3 Future Research Direction

This paper, through the presentation of the cultural value and continuity and change of Pan clan's ancestral hall in She village, basically conducts some preliminary discussions. But still, there are quite a number of aspects that could be worthy for further research: For example, future research might examine further the interactive relationship of clan culture with local society-particularly the role of clans in local politics, economies, and social life. We could

also, through the role analysis of clan influences for local governance and community construction, fathom clan culture functions in multi-dimensional features. This brings us to the next point: as the function of clans is also liable to change with social changes. In the future, we will combine the contemporary social background to study how to protect and transform clan culture effectively in the process of modernization and explore the path of modern adaptability and innovation of clan culture. Lastly, with greater development of globalization and cultural diversity, the clan culture is facing a challenge from global cultural collision and conflict. As research might continue, it has two themes: the relationship of the clan culture and globalization. How to protect the tradition and inherit the culture from their local clan in conditions that promote globalization, that makes different cultures exchange, even be integrated.

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