

<<中国房子>>

图书基本信息

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前言

We regard Chinese houses as a medium of social aesthetic values. Through recording and description, we seek after a visualized analytical system by revealing the hidden meaning of individual houses. How can we find the aesthetic values of Chinese houses ?

We believe that by representing matters as they are, we are interpreting them. Houses are the most obvious and handy objects of observation in our living space. A Chinese house embodies the culture and customs of the Chinese people, more importantly, it reflects the fundamental aesthetic views of the Chinese. What we did is to observe and present the images. Among Chinese architectures, the most iconic one is perhaps the Qian'anmen Rostrum, followed by the Bird Nest that has recently become a national symbol, or the new building for CCTV designed by Rem Koolhaas. But how many people have closely observed the little-known common houses that abound in quantity in cities, counties, towns and villages ?

They can't provide news pegs; history hasn't bestowed the plain houses with any memorable events; nor can they offer any sparkling architectural concepts worthy of discussion. Compared with the famous landmarks, numerous ordinary houses have provided the space for most Chinese people's daily activities: living, doing business, enjoying leisure, working, studying, even paying homage to deities... These houses that are hard to describe and neglected by most people have formed the normal state of Chinese architecture. China is experiencing waves of construction unseen for centuries or even millenniums. From infrastructure construction with national investment to real estate business that affects the life of every Chinese, the topic of Chinese architecture covers a wide spectrum. Discussions over Chinese architecture have been heated, with most studies launched from the urban point of view. All the debates, experiments and earnest appeals have taken the city as the assumed target. But even inside the urban sphere, the explorations have been confined within official buildings and massive commercial structures. On the contrary, common Chinese houses have been ignored with their familiarity and plainness. We have been walking in cities and villages, taking photos of grassroots houses and trying to reveal their aesthetic values.

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内容概要

Has anyone seriously observed the houses scattered in China's metropolis, counties or towns ?

Huge in number, these plain buildings have nothing to catch news headlines. History hasn't conferred them any special meaning, nor can they supply food for debates with ingenious design. However, such common houses represent the fundamental aesthetic awareness of contemporary Chinese.

书籍目录

PrefacePublicSpaceFolk ResidencesCommunitiesDoor,Window,WallCourtyardTemporary Buildings

章节摘录

插图：Department stores have replaced movie theaters to become the town center. The oldest shopping area in any town or city is often called Baihuo Dalou - Grand Building of 1 00 Commodities. Such old-fashioned stores have been replaced by trendy shopping malls or commercial streets, which are the throbbing heart of a modern city. However, to catch a glimpse of the residents' real life, one can visit the vegetable market. Whether in small towns or cosmopolis, such markets are surprisingly similar. The stalls line up in rows, with inadequate lighting throughout the year, but attracting customers who display the same eagerness in bargaining over a dazzling array of vegetables, fruits and others. Many housewives would drag small carts or carry a basket to the market. Wandering among the stalls displaying the season's freshest crops or meat, a housewife would carefully select the materials for nutritional meals of the day. Without spending too much, she can get both green leaves and tender pork. A Chinese housewife's ability to cook wonderful meal with limited cash can be amazing and admirable. Many Chinese would follow the same route on their daily shopping rounds. Perhaps very few people really care about the building of the market. Without care, these buildings are invariably dusty and gray, or simply hidden behind billboards and various ads. Compared with shopping malls, shops in counties and towns are less glaring but more amiable. Residents may turn a small part of their apartment that faces the street into a small shop which sells daily necessities like vinegar and soy sauce. Such shops may function as a mini community center, as neighbors lounge about on chairs provided by the shop owner, exchanging latest news in town. Such unobtrusive shops that scatter everywhere have provided much convenience to the neighborhood. For students, the most important public building is their school. The classroom and the playground are where they spend most of the day. For most Chinese children born in an average family, studying remains the only channel to change their fate. If a teenager succeeded in the examinations to enter a prestigious senior middle school or a university, he or she will definitely be regarded as a model by anxious parents in the community. An old tale goes that a diligent young man hung his hair on the beam and thrust an awl at his leg to keep himself awake while reading deep into the night. Such stories have remained popular in the nation as the pressure of the huge population forces people to strive hard for any chances. For those who have succeeded, donating for public education always wins applause. Many middle schools and universities would name a building or a laboratory with the name of the generous philanthropist. Architectures will remain standing for many years in normal times, thus it's wise to turn cash with undulating value into something tangible. The Hope Project has gained numerous people's support. Some donate money, others volunteer as teachers, they've all joined in the surging torrent of sending warmth to underprivileged children. Dilapidated rural schools may lag behind luxurious private schools in many ways, but the sound of children's chanting is equally soul-touching, symbolizing the hopes of a family and an entire nation.

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