HOME BEYOND THE HOUSE: THE MEANING OF HOME FOR PEOPLE LIVING IN YANXIA VILLAGE, ZHEJIANG PROVINCE, CHINA

BY

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DISSERTATION

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Under the guidance of a new policy released by China’s central authority in 2006, which calls for “Building a New Socialist Countryside,” newly planned settlements with rows of nearly identical houses have rapidly emerged in rural China. As a result, rural residents, who, for generations, have lived in the same village in the countryside, are relocated to new settlements. Historic and vernacular houses were demolished; social relations among residents were broken down due to the relocation; cultural traditions were forgotten as the result of their detachment from associated cultural landscapes. The reason behind this phenomenon is the common understanding embraced by scholars and local government officials that new and modern houses are the foundation for creating the new socialist countryside. This policy has broad implications for Chinese society. According to the latest census in 2010, there are 674 million people living in rural China, over 50 percent of the Chinese population, many of whom live in traditional and vernacular built settlements that retain rich and diverse cultural heritage. The reconstruction of the built environments and the relocation of the residents have detached residents from the built environments where their cultural heritage has been rooted and nurtured.

This dissertation examines the ways in which tradition has affected the physical, psychological, and social constructions of home for the residents living in Yanxia. This dissertation argues that, in the context of rural China, the nature of vernacular settlements calls for an understanding of place and certain aspects of Chinese culture challenge the spatial boundary of house. Thus, the meaning of home for people living in Yanxia goes beyond the physical boundary of the house or the legal boundary of the homestead and is attached to cultural traditions embraced by individuals or shared by the residents of Yanxia. Specifically, the meaning of home for the residents living in Yanxia ties to their bound kinship structure established in the early fourteenth century, their family-based economic practices since the 1850s, and, more importantly, the land on which their houses have been situated for generations.

This dissertation integrates the methodologies of ethnographic fieldwork and archival research. In particular, participants were asked to take photographs of aspects of their jia that are meaningful to them. Semi-structured and in-depth interviews then followed focusing on the contents of the photographs. This dataset was triangulated with data obtained from archival research and observations.
Situated between the scholarship on place, home, and tradition, this dissertation offers a unique understanding of the role of tradition in the physical, psychological, and social construction of home within the context of the historic and vernacular built environment in rural China. This dissertation expands and advances the literature on place, home, and tradition in vernacular environments and non-western cultures.

Moreover, the use of the method of photovoice, empowers the participants, who represent more than 50 percent of the Chinese population yet belong to a social group that is underrepresented in scholarship and underserved in modern China. Finally, this study provides guidance for the local practice of the policy of Building a New Socialist Countryside, which helps to preserve cultural traditions recognized by the residents and to sustain meanings of home.
For 674 Million People Living in Rural China
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GLOSSARY


consanguineous: related by blood. Fei (1992, p. 120) defines a consanguineous society as a society within which “a person’s social position derives from relationships that are fixed by the fact of procreation.”

consanguinity: people’s rights and obligations are determined by kinship (Fei, 1992, p. 120).

di: place, earth.

diwei: the social status or position (literally means the physical location in space).

fanghao: the name of a branch of the family.

gengfan: ceremonial meals for the death.

guoji: a form of adoption; someone who does not have any male heirs adopts a boy from another family.

guzheng: a classical Chinese instrument with 21 strings.

Hangzhou: the capital city of Zhejiang Province.

Hugong Dadi: the local deity enshrined on the top of Fangyan Mountain.

hongbao: a red envelop with money inside; it is a cultural tradition to give hongbao at the Chinese New Year or at weddings.

hukou: a form of household registration system in China.

jia: a construction with dual meaning of both home and family. The Chinese character of jia, 家, pictographically depicts a pig underneath a roof, which suggests that the original concept of jia represents an economic entity for both production (pig-making) and consumption (pig-eating) (Jervis, 2005).

jian: “As a fundamental measure of width, a jian is the span between two lateral columns or pillars that constitutes a bay” (Knapp, 2000, p. 21). In southern China where a courtyard house can have multiple levels, one-jian of that courtyard house also extends vertically to include the spaces or rooms at the higher levels.

jiaxiang: the place that one’s family has been living for generations (similar to an ancestral home).

jiguan: the place that one’s family used to live.
jintuan: a special food made of glutinous rice and sweet filing. It is prepared and eaten by the residents of Yanxia during Qingming Festival (or the Tomb Sweeping Day) and Winter Solstice.

ju: the residential place.

kejifuli: subdue the self and follow the rites.

majiang: A game of Chinese origin usually played by four persona with tiles resembling dominoes and bearing various designs, which are drawn and discarded until one player wins with a hand of four combinations of three tiles each and a pair of matching tiles. (http://www.thefreedictionary.com/)

li: ritual.

minhu: a civilian household whose income mainly come from farming.

qingmingguo: a special food made of glutinous rice and sweet filing. It is prepared and eaten by the residents of Yanxia during the Qingming Festival (or the Tomb Sweeping Day).

shangmen nvxu: the man who moved to the home of his wife’s family after marriage.

shijian: the way local residents refer to the main hall of a courtyard house. Shi means generation or era; jian see explains above.

shizi: lion. Shizi Mountain is one of the small hills that defines Yanxia valley.

ruzhu: it refers to the condition of a man moving to the home of his wife’s family after marriage.

tongtangchang: a feature of the traditional stove in Yanxia, which consists of a water pipe that is made of bronze and circulates inside the stove.

tu: land, soil.

tudi: land. It is also used as the abbreviation for the god of earth.

tuqi: “soiled” (Fei, 1992, p.3 7). Rustic; of, relating to, or typical of country life or country people; lacking refinement of elegance.

wei: position.

xiang: adj. rural, native. n. native land, village.

xiangtu: n. rural land. adj. rural, local, native, vernacular.
Yanxia: literally means “under the rock.” It is the name of a village in Zhejiang Province, in southeast China.

Yongkang (city): the county seat of Yongkang prefecture.

Zhongguo: China.

ziliu-di: private plot. The literally meaning of the Chinese phrase is “the land kept for oneself.”
Mr. Zhang is a farmer living in the rural area of Sichuan Province in China (Figure 0.1). He used to live in a traditional house with a hogpen, a sheepfold, and henhouse ("Sichuan Shuangliu," 2010). In 2006, the local government demolished Mr. Zhang’s house and provided him with a 750 sf. new apartment located two kilometers away as compensation (Figure 0.2). However, until the end of 2010 when his story was published, Mr. Zhang had not spent a single night in his new home; instead, he had been sleeping with his sheep for 4 years. Mr. Zhang told the reporter: “My new home is inside a six-story building surrounded by dozens of other apartment buildings. If I had moved there, I would not be able to keep my sheep or hogs, nor have a place to dry the crops upon harvest. So I rather sleep with my sheep every night.” Mr. Zhang’s case is not unique in China; it is the result of a political movement implemented in 2006. It is stories like this and the reasons behind such realities in rural China that inspired this dissertation.
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is a case study that focuses on Yanxia village in Zhejiang Province, China. This village is facing a government planned relocation that requires all the residents to move to a new settlement away from Yanxia. This relocation plan is under the influence of the policy of Building a New Socialist Countryside, which was released by the Chinese central authority in 2006. The vernacular built environment of Yanxia and the life stories of members of the Cheng family living in Yanxia are explored in the following pages to enable a comprehensive understanding of the meaning of home for people living in the changing context of rural China.

1.1 Problem Statement

On February 21st, 2006, China’s central authority released its 11th Five-Year Plan (the Plan hereafter), which called for “Building a New Socialist Countryside.” The document embraces a set of ideas that aim to boost modern agriculture, increase rural affluence, advance infrastructure construction, and improve public services and democracy. Even though the text of the Plan does not place any emphasis on the necessity of reconstructing the built environment, newly planned settlements with rows of nearly identical houses have rapidly emerged in rural China since 2006. In the meantime, historic and vernacular homes were demolished; social relations among residents were broken down due to the relocation; cultural traditions were forgotten as the result of their detachment from associated cultural landscapes (R. Wang, 2014). The reason behind this phenomenon is the common understanding embraced by scholars and local government officials that improving the living condition of the farmers is the foundation for creating the new socialist countryside, and the only way to achieve this goal is to replace the “old and backward houses” with newly constructed modern settlements (Figure 1.1).

This policy has broad implications for Chinese society. According to the latest census in 2010, there are 674 million people living in rural China. That is over 50 percent of the Chinese population. Many of these residents live in traditional and vernacular built settlements that retain rich and diverse cultural traditions. The reconstruction of the built environments and the relocation of the residents to new settlements, which are usually far from their original

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1 The word “modern,” in the phrases of modern settlements or modern houses, has several implications, including a top-down planning and design process that involves professionals, a building constructed with new materials such as concrete, steel, and aluminum framed doors and windows, and indoor plumbing such as flush toilets.
settlements, have detached residents from the built environments where, for generations, their way of life has been supported and their cultural traditions have been rooted and nurtured. As a result of forced government relations, the consequences of simply providing modern\(^2\) houses to the residents of rural areas will cause not only the destruction of the vernacular built environments, but also lifestyle changes and the annihilation of the embedded cultural traditions. More importantly, the residents may lose their sense of place identity and place attachment due to these abrupt changes in their home environments.

Figure 1.1: The newly constructed Xinggang Zhongxin village in Jiangsu Province is one of the national models for “New Socialist Countryside” (Lianyungang Building a New Socialist Countryside Network, n.d.).

Under such a social and political context, this dissertation proposes to examine the ways in which traditions have affected the physical, psychological, and social constructions of home for residents living in Yanxia village, Zhejiang Province, China. The concept of tradition includes objects, practices, and ideas of heritage that have been inherited and preserved by the community and that have produced the collective memory and identity shared by the residents of Yanxia. Yanxia is a lineage-based settlement with over 600 years of recorded history. Its tradition is supported by and embedded within the vernacular built environment constructed in the past several centuries. It is also bounded by the kinship structure established in the fourteenth century, the religious rituals of the last 900 years, the economic practices that have provided hospitality services to the pilgrims since the 1850s, and the land on which their homes have been situated for generations.

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\(^2\) See endnote one on page 1.
1.2 Significance of the Study

Situated amidst the scholarship on home, place, and tradition, this study offers a unique understanding of the linkage between tradition and the physical, psychological, and social construction of home within the context of the historic and vernacular built environment in rural China. This dissertation expands and advances the literature on home, place, and tradition in non-western cultures.

In particular, this study focuses on the residents in rural China, a social group that is underrepresented in scholarship and underserved in modern China. The use of photovoice as a method empowers the participants during the research process and the subsequent interviews. During the research, the participants were given single-use cameras and asked to take photographs of aspects of their homesteads that are meaningful to them. This process was followed by semi-structured in-depth interviews on the contents of the photographs. The use of cameras in this study enables the participants to play a more active role in the process and reveal their perspectives on personal and private experiences. As a result, this study empowers place by giving voice to the rightful producers (Hayden, 1995; Rodman, 2003).

This study also has broader social impacts. It provides a deeper understanding of the traditions, the vernacular built environment, and the lifestyles of the subaltern social groups who live in rural China. This study seeks to provide a new perspective to local government officials and design professionals in their vision and planning of the present dominant social and political movement in China, that of, “Building a New Socialist Countryside.” The analysis of data from this dissertation suggest that the meanings of home for the participants often go beyond the physical boundary of the house or the legal boundary of the homestead, but are tied to the cultural landscape and collective heritage shared by the social group to which the participant belongs. Based on the research findings, this study might prompt local government officials and design professionals to reevaluate their decisions and practices in the newly constructed socialist countryside, where modern houses lack residential history, do not support traditional social roles and family structures, and are detached from the historic and vernacular settlements and rooted heritage. Thus, this study provides planning and design suggestions for an alternative new socialist countryside, where collective memory and identity are maintained and meanings of home are sustained in either preserved or remodeled historic settlements or reconstructed new settlements.
1.3 Contextualizing the Study

This section provides a general discussion of some conditions that help contextualize this dissertation. These conditions include land ownership in rural China, family structure in rural China, the disruption and revival of cultural traditions, urban migration, and the political movement titled, “Building a New Socialist Countryside.”

1.3.1 Land Ownership in Rural China

Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, land ownership in rural China has undergone a series of changes. These changes in land ownership not only alter the legal relationship between the farmers and the land, but also affect the social relations among family members, relatives, and fellow villagers. Since land ownership in rural China also includes the ownership of non-agricultural land, such as mountains, bodies of water, building sites, and open spaces, the changes in land ownership also influence the way in which rural residents relate to and understand the built environment in which they reside.

Before the revolution led by the Chinese Communist Party, most farmers in China were poor tenants that worked for landlords. Even before 1949, the Chinese Communist Party had implemented land reform in places where they had achieved a strong presence; in these areas the land owned by landlords was confiscated and redistributed to the peasants. The Land Reform Law of the People's Republic of China was enacted in June 1950.\(^3\) The law not only safeguarded farmers’ private ownership of the land, which was distributed impartially among all the residents, but also ensured that the landowner had the right to dispose, sell, and rent the land. By 1953, 300 million peasants became new landowners who owned a total of 700 million \textit{mu} (1 \textit{mu} is 0.0667 hectares) of agricultural land (D. Chen & Tang, 2009).

The second phase of the land reform started in 1953 and lasted until the end of the 1970s. During the first six years of the reform, private land ownership was gradually, yet completely, replaced by collective land ownership by People’s Communes, which also controlled the egalitarian distribution system of products and foods (G. Liu & Cheng, 2007). In 1962, the \textit{Sixty Articles on Rural People’s Communes} (the \textit{Sixty Articles} hereafter) was released to revise and

further regulate this mode of collective ownership by dividing it into two or three levels.\(^4\)

According to the *Sixty Articles*, a production team, which usually equated to a village, became the basic unit that not only controlled collective farming and distribution, but also retained the ownership of *all* the land within the boundary of the settlement, including agricultural lands, building sites, mountains, and bodies of water. However, production teams were not allowed to rent or sell the land they owned. Meanwhile, individual households could control a small private plot for personal agricultural production, which was exempt from collective farming and distribution, as well as from state agricultural tax. The ownership of these private plots, however, also belonged to the production team to which the household belonged. These private plots could not be rented or sold. Since it was originally implemented in 1962, the *Sixty Articles* has become the key reference and the foundation for identifying land ownership in rural China (D. Chen & Tang, 2009).

The third phase of the land reform started in the late 1970s; it was part of the economic reform implemented in 1978. After much debate and a series of experiments, the Household Responsibility System was officially established in 1983. This system returned land use rights to individual farmers and ended the practice of the People’s Communes (G. Liu & Cheng, 2007). Meanwhile, the Constitution was revised in 1982 and 1988 to support this new phase of land reform that separates land ownership and land use rights (G. Liu & Cheng, 2007). These revisions were reflected in the *Land Administration Law of the People’s Republic of China* (the *Land Law* hereafter), which was adopted at the 16th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Sixth National People's Congress on June 25, 1986.\(^5\) The selected articles that define and regulate land ownership, land use rights, and the land contract system in rural China are quoted below.

*Chapter One: General Provision*\(^6\)

*Article 2*: The People’s Republic of China practices socialist public ownership of land, namely, ownership by the whole people and collective ownership by the working people.

\(^4\) For the details of the *Sixty Articles on Rural People’s Communes* (in Chinese), see http://baike.baidu.com/view/4023077.htm#2_4.


\(^6\) English translation of the Law is according to http://www.china.org.cn/china/LegislationsForm2001-2010/2011-02/14/content_21917380.htm.
Ownership by the whole people means that the right of ownership in State-owned land is exercised by the State Council on behalf of the State. No units or individuals may encroach on land or illegally transfer it through buying, selling or other means. However, the right to the use of land may be transferred in accordance with law.

The State may, in the interest of the public, lawfully expropriate or requisition land and give compensation accordingly.

The State applies, in accordance with the law, a system of compensated use of State-owned land, with the exception of land, the right to the use of which is allocated by the State within the provisions of laws.

Chapter Two: Ownership of Land and Right to the Use of Land

Article 8: Land in rural and suburban areas is owned by peasant collectives, except for those portions of land which belong to the State as provided for by law; house sites and private plots of cropland and hilly land are owned by peasant collectives.

Article 9: State-owned land and land owned by peasant collectives may be lawfully determined to be used by units or individuals. Units and individuals that use land shall have the obligation to protect and manage the land and make rational use of it.

Article 14: Land owned by peasant collectives shall be operated under a contract by members of the economic organizations of the peasant collectives for crop cultivation, forestry, animal husbandry or fishery. The duration of such contract is 30 years. The party that gives out a contract and the party that undertakes it shall sign a contract in which to stipulate the rights and obligations of both parties. A peasant who undertakes to operate a piece of land under a contract shall have the obligation to protect the land and rationally use it in conformity with the purposes of use provided for in the contract. The right of a peasant to operate land under a contract shall be protected by law.

In summary, all the lands in rural China are collectively owned by the farmers, including building sites and private plots. Neither organizations nor individuals can encroach on, purchase, sell, or transfer land, while the land use rights can be transferred in accordance with the law. Farmers are entitled to use land and to contract land for 30 years for the purpose of various forms of agricultural production.

This kind of land ownership defined and regulated by the Land Law has a fundamental problem; the complete ownership, in the sense of a complete possession of something, is dissected into three segments. These are legally defined ownership, use rights, and the rights of ultimate disposition, which belong to farmers of the same village collectively (in most cases), the individual farmers and their families, and the government respectively (Yan, 2014). This
separation causes many issues in practice (F. Li, 2010; Xie, 2008); it also creates complications in studies that touch upon concepts like place attachment, sense of belonging, identity, and meaning of home, since these concepts are related to or built at least in part upon the sense of ownership of a place. Based on the fieldwork of this dissertation, the present land use rights alone, or the overlapping between the present land use rights and either the historic land ownership before 1949 or the assigned ownership after 1949, can instill a sense of ownership in a farmer that he or she does not actually have according to Chinese law. In addition, in the case of a lineage-based settlement, where almost everyone in the village is related and can claim a common ancestor, collective ownership is equal to extended family ownership. This overlapping between collective and family ownership blurs the distinctions between personal, family, and collective possession of land, as well as between “what is mine, what is yours, and what is ours.” The result of this second overlapping also endows the farmers, of this collective group, with a sense of ownership to which they are entitled according to Chinese law.

1.3.2 Family Structure in Rural China

Understanding family form, lineage structure, and other kinship affairs in rural China is essential for this study for two reasons. First, as Cohen (2005, p. 9) argues, “lineage and other kinship affairs need consideration in any work seeking to look at Chinese culture and society in the round, for far too much of Chinese social life clusters around kinship issues for these to be ignored or treated lightly.” Second, the Chinese character for home is 家, pronounced as jia, which also means family. This duality makes the discussion of home in the Chinese context inseparable from the understanding of the Chinese family structure and other kinship affairs.

Family form, lineage structure, and other kinship affairs in rural China are complicated and have different characteristics, when examining these issues in different regions and among different minorities in China (Cohen, 1976, 2005; Fei, 1939, 1981, 1992, 2007; Freedman, 1965, 1966; R. S. Watson, 1985). For the purpose of this dissertation, the following discussions only touch upon a few fundamental characteristics in this section, which are dominant among Han Chinese and present in rural southern China, where the research site is located. These selected characteristics of Chinese family structure provide an important sociocultural context for this study.
Chinese families, especially families in rural China, are unique in the way they are organized (Fei, 1939, 1981, 1992). In the early twentieth century, Fei (1939, 1981, 1992) made the following arguments about the uniqueness of Chinese families by comparing Chinese families to their Western counterparts, which had been widely studied by scholars. It is important to note that the “West” Fei describes is the West that existed in the early twentieth century.

Fei (1939, 1992) argues that the families in rural China are essentially different from families in the “West;” although they are the same in nature, they are different in form. For example, a four-person Chinese family, including a husband, wife, their son, and their daughter-in-law, is a more structurally complicated family than a ten-person “Western” family, consisting of a husband, wife, and eight children. Therefore, the former should not be considered as a smaller family than the latter. In order to differentiate this kind of Chinese family from its “Western” counterpart, Fei (1981, 1992) uses “extended family” or “small lineage,” which he argues is the most basic unit in rural China.

In addition, a family in rural China does not have a fixed organizational boundary as does a typical “Western” family, which is usually limited to the triangular relationship between parents and children (Fei, 1981, 1992). A Chinese family can extend through the male side, and generally only through the male side, to become a patrilineal lineage, which ideally consists of five generations according to Confusion ideology. Extension through the female side can happen under rare situations. The size of this “extended family” depends on the activities that the family conducts (Fei, 1992). In other words, a Chinese family can be as small as the nuclear family when procreation is the only function, while it can extend and become a patrilineal lineage to manage political, economic, and religious activities (Cohen, 2005; Fei, 1992; Freedman, 1965). Since most of these political, economic, and religious activities require a shared budget and long-term management, a Chinese family must have stable longevity regardless of the deaths of family members. As a result, a Chinese family extends through the male side and becomes a

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7 Although some of his generalizations about the West and Western families do not apply in the present world, the following discussions continue the way he uses the words “West” and “Western” and his generalization about the “West” for the purpose of presenting his arguments about the characteristics of Chinese families.

8 For example, according to the fieldwork, when a family does not have any male heirs and cannot adopt any male heirs, one of their daughters will stay home with her husband after marriage. In this case, the family extends through this daughter, her husband, and their children. The husband who moves to the wife’s family after marriage is called shangmen nvxu; this condition is called ruzhui. Sometimes, the children will inherit their mother’s last name instead of their fathers, so they can be considered part of the lineage where the family lives.
lineage (Fei, 1992). Similarly, Cohen (1976) and Knapp (2005) argue that a Chinese family should be understood as a stage of an ongoing process of evolving family structural changes.

In the same way that continuous activities and a shared budget can extend a Chinese family to a lineage, a financial conflict can lead to the division of an “extended family” (Faure, 2005; Fei, 1939; Shiga, 1978). Division of an extended family involves not only dividing family assets and budget, but also building an individual stove for each independent family (Faure, 2005; Fei, 1939). However, the family members from these divided families are not fully separated; they not only maintain their social relationship to each other, but also cooperate in kinship affairs, especially ancestral rituals (Faure, 2005; Fei, 1939; Shiga, 1978).

The patrilineal lineage-based settlement is dominant in rural southern China, where a village is a lineage (Z. Chen, 2006). This kind of lineage usually has corporate estates and assets that are managed by selected family members and used to organize social and cultural activities and to support education for children (Z. Chen, 2006; Cohen, 2005). The physical, spatial, and ideological representation of the lineage is the ancestral hall; it is also the place for social and cultural activities and serves as the classroom for children. A lineage-based settlement can, and often does, have more than one ancestral hall. These are built to honor the ancestors of different generations. Respected senior persons are selected as the head and committee members of each ancestral hall and manage its property and usage (Z. Chen, 2006). Before the modern legal system was widely accepted by rural residents, ancestral halls were also the place where conflicts between residents were resolved (Z. Chen, 2006). This kind of lineage is a type Z lineage, according to Freeman’s analyses (1965). Families of this kind of lineage are closely associated to each other, and their livelihoods are dependent on the prosperity of lineage property and the social status of the lineage (Cohen, 2005; Freedman, 1965).

In the patrilineal lineage-based settlements in rural China, women have different social status than men; women and men have different responsibilities in managing family assets and raising children (Fei, 1981; 1992). Even though Chinese women keep their maiden names after marriage, they belong to their husbands’ lineages and are considered outsiders by their own family (Fei, 1981, 1992). Therefore, as supported by my fieldwork, a woman’s name is only

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9 In a lineage-based settlement where ancestral halls exist, most residents of that settlement, or village, are essentially all relatives since they are all part of the lineage. A conflict between two residents is a conflict within a family or extended family.
listed in the family records of her husband’s lineage as someone’s wife, but not in the family record of her father’s lineage as someone’s daughter.

1.3.3 Disruption and Revival of Cultural Traditions

During the one hundred years between the late nineteenth century and the late twentieth century, the Chinese cultural traditions that had lasted for millennia experienced abandonment, denials, and disruptions as the result of a series of political movements and social events. Meanwhile, M. Liu (2004) argues that a “new cultural system” started to emerge in China. In recent decades, however, there has been a change in both the national policies and the general public’s attitudes towards the Chinese cultural traditions that had been abandoned or denied decades earlier. This new attitude towards Chinese cultural traditions is demonstrated through the ways in which China embraces UNESCO’s system of World Heritage Sites and Intangible Cultural Heritage (Gao, 2004; Zhao, 2014).

It is beyond the goal of this dissertation to provide a thorough evaluation of the influences on Chinese cultural traditions and the resulting changes in the past century. Instead, this section provides a general historic and social background that helps non-Chinese readers to contextualize this study and analyses. The starting point of this dissertation is that the changing attitude toward Chinese cultural traditions affected the development of residential buildings, the evolution and continuation of cultural and ritual practices, the local residents’ attitude towards their own heritage, and the ways in which local governments promote and manage local cultural heritage.

The changing attitude towards Chinese cultural traditions started in the late nineteenth century during the Self-Strengthening Movement. This movement was initiated by the Qing ruling class during the late Qing Dynasty between 1861 and 1895; it was a period of institutional reform that aimed to “Learn from the West.” As a result, science and Western culture were introduced to China through the access of foreign writings. It was also during this period that the first group of young Chinese studied abroad.

The Qing Dynasty was overturned and the Republic of China was founded in 1911, ending more than 2,000 years of imperial rule in China. In 1915, the group of young Chinese who received their educations in Europe and the United States started the New Cultural Movement. This movement not only challenged traditional Chinese cultural norms that were
exemplified by Confucian ideology, but also advocated for democracy and a scientific and Euro-centric worldview. The influence of ideas from Europe and the United States was also apparent in the field of architecture. The development of Western style architecture, mainly exemplified by neoclassical architecture, in China reached its peak between 1919 and 1937, during which not only foreign architects but also the first generation of Chinese architects that received their training abroad participated in the construction of buildings with European and American influences (Deng, Chang, & Liu, 2012).

The 40 years between 1937 and 1976 brought devastating disruptions to Chinese cultural traditions that were dominant in imperial China. First, a continuous 12 years of war, including an eight-year war with Japan between 1937 and 1945 and a four-year civil war that followed, caused most of the cultural practices across the country to cease. The communist party won the civil war and founded the new China, the People’s Republic of China, in 1949. In the following years, the communist party tried to establish a set of “new” cultural norms, guided by Marxism, to replace the “old” cultural norms that represented feudalist, capitalist, and imperialist ideologies. Meanwhile, any cultural artifacts and cultural practices that could not be explained by Marxism, such as ancestral veneration and the kind of anthropological work conducted by Fei, were opposed and rejected (Hamilton & Zheng, 1992; F. Yang, 2008). Then, an economic and social campaign, “the Great Leap Forward,” was started in 1958, which aimed to rapidly transform China into a communist society. However, it led to the Great Chinese Famine between 1958 and 1962 and caused an estimated 45 million deaths from starvation (Dikötter, 2010).

Finally, it was the Cultural Revolution lasting between 1966 and 1976, which set out to destroy “old customs, old culture, old habits, and old ideas.” As a result, many tangible cultural artifacts were destroyed and much intangible heritage was significantly impacted. For example, temples were destroyed, religious activities were banned, and monks were sent home.

The end of the Cultural Revolution was followed by the Economic Reform starting in 1978, which aimed to build "Socialism with Chinese characteristics." As many scholars argue, the success of the Economic Reform enabled, as well as required, the central government to place an emphasis on the building of cultural traditions since the early 1990s as part of the Chinese characteristic socialism ("Gaohao," 1992; Hu, 1993; Zhang, 1994). This revival of cultural traditions in the recent decades underpins and is illustrated by China’s engagement in applications for World Heritage designated sites. China ratified the World Heritage Convention
on December 12, 1985. Six sites were listed in 1987 and one in 1990. Since 1994, there has been a steady increase in the overall numbers. Specifically, the 2008 Summer Olympics held in Beijing became a great impetus and opportunity for China to strengthen its identity through display of its cultural traditions, not only to Chinese people, but also to the world. As part of the process of rebuilding cultural traditions and constructing national identity, ten sites were listed on the World Heritage Tentative List in 2001 and 32 in 2008, the year Beijing was granted the 2008 Olympics and the year the Games were held, respectively. As of 2014, China has 47 of the 1,007 World Heritage Sites and is second only to Italy, which has 50 sites. In addition, as of 2012, there were over 200 projects in China that were prepared to be listed on the World Heritage Tentative List (Zhao, 2014). These projects have broader social impact beyond the realm of culture preservation and heritage management; one of these projects became the secondary cause for this study, as well as the selection of the dissertation site, which is discussed in the section on Site Selection later in this chapter.

### 1.3.4 Urban Migration

The dissolving of the People’s Communes policy and the implementation of the Household Responsibility System in the early 1980s largely freed the labor force in rural China; the Chinese Economic Reform and development in urban areas further stimulated the migration of rural residents to urban areas and the urbanization process (P. Li, 2009). According to Long (2011), who quoted numbers from the National Bureau of Statistics of China and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of the People’s Republic of China, there were 52 million rural residents working outside their home towns in 1999. In 2009, there were 166 million rural residents living in the city, among which two third were young people between the ages of 20 and 44.

When examining the impetus for the migration of rural residents, Cai, Wang, and Yang (2007) argue for the following causes. First, the surplus of the labor force in rural China has been the fundamental reason for this migration. Second, higher income in urban areas and in the economically developed areas has been a continuous stimulation for this migration. The average

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10 All the information regarding World Heritage Sites in China is available at UNESCO’s website: http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/.
11 These 47 World Heritage Sites include significantly more than 47 buildings and sites, since China has used the strategy of bundling multiple sites together under one nomination. See Zhao (2014) for details.
income in urban areas was 3.23 times higher than average income in rural areas in 2005, almost double the difference in 1985. When considering the additional benefits that urban residents have, such as housing subsidies and healthcare, the income difference between urban and rural residents is even larger. Third, the economic growth in cities, especially the development of the service industry, provides abundant jobs for rural migrants. Lastly, personal motivations are the driving force for educated young people between 20 and 35 years old to migrate to urban areas. These personal motivations include making more money, seeking better career opportunities, fulfilling personal goals, pursuing a better living environment, aiming for a better education for their children, and peer pressure.

Most of these urban migrants still hold strong ties to their homes because of both political and emotional reasons. According to the current hukou system in China (a form of household registration), it is very difficult for urban migrants to obtain city-hukou, even after working and living in cities for decades. Most of the urban migrants are still legally counted as rural residents. More important, most of the urban migrants have indispensable emotional ties to where they are from, which are also the places that their parents and even their children live. They also retain unyielding bonds to their home towns, where memories and identities are embedded. These strong ties are demonstrated and made manifest during the Chinese New Year, when the world’s largest human migration repeats every year ("The world's," 2014). In 2013, a total of 3.42 billion people traveled across China during the 40-day Lunar New Year period, most of whom were urban migrants traveling back home ("The world's," 2014; Jackson, 2013).

1.3.5 Building a New Socialist Countryside

Although the policy of “Building a New Socialist Countryside” was announced by China’s central authority on February 21, 2006, the historic and social background for this political movement can be traced to 1949, the founding of the People’s Republic of China. In the following decades after 1949, natural resources from rural China were extracted and redistributed to large urban centers to support industrialization and urbanization. As a result, a binary society was formed, where rural and urban areas received different sets of policies from the state government (G. Wang, 2005; T. Wen, 2000). Meanwhile, three interconnected issues arose at the “lower” end of this binary society, the countryside. These issues have become more
prominent in the recent decades as the “upper” end of the society, the urban centers, have been making substantial progress in modernization (G. Wang, 2005).

These three interconnected issues, summarized as the Three Rural Issues, are the farmers, agricultural industry, and the rural built environment. Together, these three issues touch upon the subject matter of rural China, the rural residents, and address their ways of living and places of living. Specifically, the farmers in China do not have rights equal to those of urban residents; they do not receive the same quality of education, health care, or retirement benefits ("Zhonggong," 2003; T. Wen, 1999). The agricultural industry is far from becoming industrialized or being operated by market-driven demands; most of the farmers run small-scale self-sufficient and self-contained practices that cannot produce additional income to cover, for example, the cost of healthcare and education. The rural areas lack sufficient infrastructure to support sustainable development ("Zhonggong," 2003; T. Wen, 1999).

The year 2003 marked a milestone in China’s economic reform; the average personal income exceeded $1,000 in that year (G. Wang, 2005). Based on that, the Third Plenary Session of the Sixteenth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, held in the same year, announced a policy that attempted to resolve the Three Rural Issues resulting from China’s binary society. This new policy called for balanced development between urban and rural areas employing a holistic vision. It further states that it is the time for industry to support agricultural development and for the cities to support rural areas ("Zhonggong," 2003; G. Wang, 2005).

Two years later, the Fifth Plenary Session of the Sixteenth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China passed the Eleventh Five-Year Plan and announced it on February 21, 2006. This Plan includes detailed guidelines on how to solve the deeply rooted Three Rural Issues, which were considered as the obstacles in achieving nation-wide industrialization and urbanization, in another word, modernization ("Zhonggong," 2005b). The guidelines of Building a New Socialist Countryside focuses on aspects of agriculture, economy, infrastructure, welfare, and democracy in rural China, which are summarized into a 20-word slogan that represents the five essential ideas ("Zhonggong," 2005a). This 20-word slogan or five essential ideas, translated into English, are agricultural development, affluent life, civil society, clean and ordered settlements, and regulated democracy.

12 The 20-word slogan is “生产发展、生活宽裕、乡风文明、村容整洁、管理民主.”
The ideas and guidelines of Building a New Socialist Countryside were widely disseminated to all the residents in rural China through the administrative system controlled by the Communist Party in the media and formats that can be easily accessible by the rural residents (L. Wen, 2006). These media involved in this propaganda campaign included national and local television systems, national and local newspapers, internet, printed booklets, and billboards inside rural settlements (Figure 1.2, 1.3).

Figure 1.2: Large images that illustrate how to build a new socialist countryside are displaying on the wall in Minfeng village, Zhejiang Province (Minfeng Village Network, 2008).

Figure 1.3: The cartoon images that propagate the five ideas of Building a New Socialist Countryside (Xinhua News Network, 2005)
The five ideas of Building a New Socialist Countryside are carefully placed in an order that delineates a clear hierarchical relationship between them. The hierarchical order of these five ideas also demonstrates the state government’s intention. To solve the Three Rural Issues, the first and foremost task is to boost modern agricultural development; then, it is to focus on the farmers, including improving their living standard and welfare; finally, it is to embellish the built environment. However, this latter intention has been misinterpreted by many Chinese scholars, who advocate creating “clean and ordered settlements,” as the key to constructing the new socialist countryside (B. Li, 2006; H. Liu & Zhuang, 2009; X. Liu, Cheng, & Zhang, 2009; Qiu, 2006; J. Yang, Shen, Huang, & Wang, 2009). Specifically, Qiu (2006) argues that creating clean and ordered settlements is the foundation for the other four goals. According to Qiu (2006), a clean and ordered settlement is the prerequisite for agricultural development, the essence of affluent life, the medium for realizing a civil society, and the physical conduit of democratic practices.

The reality is, however, that changing the appearance of an existing settlement is at least a decade-long task, which not only involves renovating buildings, embellishing the landscape, and improving infrastructure, but also requires educating the general public on how to adapt to a new way of living that involves changing daily rituals. One example is the practice of collecting trash. In modern and urban context, the idea of “trash” and the practice of collecting “trash” are distinctly different than those in rural China before it became modernized. For example, human wastes were highly prized and used as fertilizers; leftover food was for domestic animals; foods are “packaged” by using plants or products of plants, such as leaves and baskets; broken furniture and housewares made of bamboo and wood were burned for heating and cooking. There was no plastic; there were no chemical detergents that would pollute the water; there was nothing that could be thrown into the land and stay as trash for a long time. So in recent decades, when residents in rural China throw plastic food wraps into the field as their ancestors always did, they will cause the consequences that their ancestors never had to encounter. Therefore, the residents in rural China need to be educated on what are considered as trash, as well as the practice of how to collect trash and how to separate between biodegradable, recyclable, and non-recyclable trash, before any top-down design projects that aim to improve rural environments can be effective; and this process might take many years to see any noticeable result.
However, many local officials, who hold office for two to three years, show no interest in taking on a project like this, since it will not show any results during their short appointment and, therefore, cannot help them get promoted. On the other hand, building a new settlement takes no more than a couple of years and is much more affective in demonstrating the achievement of Building a New Socialist Countryside (Qiu, 2006). As a result, the fairly broad concept of Building a New Socialist Countryside, including establishing a modern economy, a better environment, and a new set of ideology, is replaced by literally constructing a new countryside. Meanwhile, many Chinese scholars call for the importance of top-down professional planning with very little discussion of the necessity for understanding the local history and culture, as well as the residents’ essential needs (H. Liu & Zhuang, 2009; X. Liu et al., 2009; Qiu, 2006; Shao, Shan, Fang, & Zhao, 2006; G. Wang, 2005; J. Yang et al., 2009). Consequently, historic homes and villages have been abandoned and demolished, while newly planned settlements with rows of nearly identical houses have rapidly emerged in rural China.

1.4 Research Site

Yanxia village in Zhejiang Province, China was selected as the case-study site for this dissertation because it satisfied two goals for purposeful or criterion-based selection (LeCompte, Preissle, & Tesch, 1993; Maxwell, 1996). Yanxia is both unique and representative in its history, settlement type, and cultural heritage. In addition, the set of heritages in Yanxia, both in the past and at present, are critical for theories framed by this dissertation.

1.4.1 Situating Yanxia

Yanxia village is located in the middle of Zhejiang Province and is about 220 miles to the south of Shanghai (Figure 1.4). It is part of the Fangyan area of Yongkang County, and it is about 15 miles from the county seat, the city of Yongkang (Figure 1.5). As a small settlement of about 2,000 registered residents,\(^\text{13}\) Yanxia lies inside the north-south oriented Fangyan valley, which is defined by, from north to south, Xiangbi-Gang, Fangyan Mountain, and Nanyan Mountain on the west and a group of small hills on the east. The small hills are Shizi Mountain, Wugong Hill, and

\(^{13}\) Yanxia village was the name for a vernacular settlement until 1961. Yanxia was divided into two administrative villages, Yanshang and Yanxia, as the result of a political conflict in 1961. For the purpose of this study, the historic name Yanxia is used to represent both administrative villages. The population of Yanxia (the combined population of both administrative villages) is calculated based on http://www.fangyan.zj.com/village.
Xiyi Hill from north to south. A few secondary valleys exist between the smaller hills; they are Xiahu-Keng between Shizi Mountain and Wugong Hill, Shang-Keng between Wugong Hill and Xiyi Hill, and Xie-Keng between Xiyi Hill and Nanyan Mountain. Within the basin, Fangyan Stream runs north, joined by smaller creeks from the secondary valleys; they provide the source of water for the limited agricultural land within the valley (Figure 1.6). The surrounding landscape of Yanxia is an example of Danxia physiognomy, which consists of red-colored sandstones with steep cliffs that were created through erosion (Figure 1.7). As the most distinct mountain, the rocky characteristics Fangyan Mountain also endowed the name for the settlement underneath it; Yanxia literally means “under the rock.”

![Figure 1.4: The location of Yanxia. Remodeled by the author based on a map of China.](image-url)
Figure 1.5: The location of Yanxia. Remodeled by the author based on a map downloaded from Google Earth.

Figure 1.6: The surrounding landscape of Yanxia with the indications of the original locations of Chenglu and Yanxia villages. Drafted by the author based on a map provided by the local government.
The settlement of Yanxia started in Shang-Keng at least 700 hundred years ago. This is an ideal location for a settlement since it is closer to the upper steam where residents have access to clean water; it is on higher land which can prevent the houses from being flooded in the rainy season; and it provides equally easy access to the agricultural land in the valley and the terraces within Shang-Keng. There is another settlement located at the entrance of the Fangyan valley; it is called Chenglu village. A narrow path coming from the north connects Chenglu and Yanxia to the outside world; it runs along the east side of the valley and eventually winds up to the top of Fangyan Mountain (Figure 1.8). This path used to be the only “official” access to Yanxia and Fangyan Mountain as showed in the map collected in the Record of Yongkang edited in 1891 (R. Li, 1891) (Figure 1.9). This situation changed when a new road was built along the east side of the Fangyan valley in 1985 (Yongkang Xianzhi Committee, 1991, p. 607) (Figure 1.8).
Figure 1.8: The plan diagram of Yanxia, including the places of residency of the participants, as well as the places they claim ownership. Drafted by the author based on a map provided by the local government.
1.4.2 **Contextualizing Yanxia**

The following sections provide a brief description of the development of Yanxia as a vernacular settlement. During the course of this development, a few key factors played important roles, which included the relocation and the growth of the Cheng family, the thriving of the local deity, the development of the hospitality service, and the involvement of local government in the recent decades. These brief descriptions in the current chapter only aim to provide a general context of the research site. For detailed descriptions and analyses of the heritage of Yanxia, see Chapter 6 for the attachment to the land, Chapter 7 for the development of the Cheng family and the kinship affairs, and Chapter 8 for the traditions of religious activities and hospitality service.

1.4.2.1 **The Cheng Family**

The Cheng family came to Yanxia, as well as Chenglu, in 1353, when Yanxia was a small settlement inside Shang-Keng and populated by families of different last names.\(^\text{14}\) The Cheng

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\(^\text{14}\) According to the records of marriages, which were part of the family record, men from other villages married women from Yanxia that had different family names than Cheng. See *Zhoushi Zongpu* (*Family Record of the Zhou*).
family in Yanxia built their first house in the middle of the sixteenth century and named it Degeng-Ju, after one of their ancestors (Figure 1.10, 1.11). By the middle of the eighteenth century, the Cheng family had already transformed Yanxia into a lineage-based settlement, signified by the construction of Shiyuan Ancestral Hall and Zuoxun Ancestral Hall on the west edge of the settlement at that time, as noted on Figure 1.10 (Figure 1.12). Meanwhile, Yanxia was a settlement that was largely clustered at the northwest end of Shang-Keng and bounded by Fangyan Stream on the west, Shizi Mountain on the north, and Wugong Hill on the south. At the northern end of this settlement, where the path was sandwiched between the Fangyan Stream and Shizi Mountain, there used to be a gate that guarded the entrance to Yanxia (Figure 1.10). This older section of Yanxia is more compact, yet it has more open and shared public spaces, including the open space and the pond in front of Degeng-Ju and the open space and pond in front of Shiyuan Ancestral Hall.

Figure 1.10: The reconstructed plan diagram of Yanxia in the middle of the eighteenth century. Drafted by the author based on a map provided by the government.

Family], Wenlou Chengshi Zongpu [Family Record of the Cheng Family in Wenloucun], Houshantou Chengshi Zongpu [Family Record of the Cheng Family in Houshantou], Dusong Chengshi Zongpu [Family Record of the Dusong Cheng Family].

All the historic data regarding the history of the Cheng family in this section are based on Shiyuan Gong Zongpu [Family record of the Shiyuan Cheng family] unless otherwise noted.

According to Zhihua Chen, the construction of ancestor halls within a village marks the establishment of a lineage-based settlement. See (Z. Chen, 2006, p. 2)
The Development of the Hospitality Industry

As a local resident and regional official, Hu Ze (963-1039) became a local deity, known as *Hogong Dadi*, 83 years after he passed away and has been enshrined inside Guangci Temple on
the top of Fangyan Mountain for more than 900 years (**Figure 1.13**).17 During the annual Temple Fair that is between August and September of the Lunar Calendar, thousands of pilgrims travel each day down the path winding through Yanxia to visit the temple. The pilgrims used to stay in the monastery until 1849, when a devastating fire almost destroyed the entire temple. The Cheng family immediately started to host pilgrims after this incident (Yongkang Shi Zhengxie Wenshi Committee, 1995, p. 90). By the middle of the twentieth century, the Cheng family had transformed Yanxia into a linear-shaped settlement and populated the mile-long pilgrim path with hotels and stores on both sides (**Figure 1.14, 1.15, 1.16, 1.17**).18 However, the hospitality industry in Yanxia experienced significant changes in the first thirty years after the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949 because of a series of political movements. By the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, all the religious and cultural activities associated with Hugong Dadi had been halted for more than a decade; all the hotels and stores had ceased operating.

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17 The history of Guangci Temple is based on interviews with the previous Abbot in September and December 2007 and July 2008 unless otherwise noted.

18 The history of the hotel business is based on interviews with the residents in September and December 2007 and July 2008 unless otherwise noted.
Figure 1.14: A view of the pilgrim path that is part of Yanxia village. Photo by the author.

Figure 1.15: A view of the pilgrim path that is part of Yanxia village. Photo by the author.

Figure 1.16: A view of the pilgrim path that is part of Chenglu village. Photo by the author.
China’s economic reforms, starting in 1978, facilitated the return of monks, pilgrims, and tourists, as well as the hospitality service provided by the Cheng family. In 1985, a concrete road was built to replace an existing gravel road along the western side of Fangyan Valley to accommodate the increasing number of tourists who arrived in automobiles (Yongkang Xianzhi Committee, 1991, p. 607) (Figure 1.8). Within a decade after the construction of this new road, all the hotels and stores were relocated from the historic pilgrim path to the new road (Figure 1.18, 1.19). In addition, more residents became involved in this hospitality industry that serviced the increasing number of tourists.
The Involvement of the Local Government

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, the local governments have been placing great emphasis on promoting the cultural heritage of Fangyan. Fangyan Mountain became a National Park of China in 2005. In the following year, it was selected as one of nine sites that were prepared for a nomination to the list of World Heritage Natural Sites, China Danxia (Y. Li & Wu, 2010). Although not having been selected as one of the final six sites that eventually received the title of World Heritage Natural Site in 2010, the local government of Fangyan has been working toward the goal of adding Fangyan Mountain as an extension of this World Heritage Natural Site since 2009. Their plan is to demolish the “chaotic” built environment so as to recreate the beauty of the natural environment (Y. Li & Wu, 2010). Supported by the political movement of “Building a New Socialist Countryside,” the local government plans to relocate all the residents in Yanxia, either residing on the historic pilgrim path or on the new road, to a newly planned area a few miles outside the Fangyan valley (Figure 1.20, 1.21, 1.22). They then plan to demolish all the buildings on the new road and the new style houses on the historic path, while preserving some of the historic courtyard houses on the historic path. In addition, they plan to build a large tourist center as part of the new residential area outside the Fangyan valley to

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19 For details of the local government’s involvement of heritage management of Fangyan, see Zhao (2013a).
20 The details regarding the relocation plan are based on interviews with residents of Yanxia in July 2011, July 2012, September to November 2013, and February to May 2014 unless otherwise noted.
provide services to pilgrims and tourists (Figure 1.23). Although some of the structures, including an elementary school, have already been demolished, the relocation plan experienced great resistance from the local residents. The relocation schedule and deadlines have been revised many times. Meanwhile, the local government has placed a freeze on new construction of residential structures by the residents for more than a decade. Without knowing their fate, many residents have been hesitant to spend money on fixing and renovating old houses. This neglect has caused the collapse of a few old houses in the last few years (Figure 1.24).

Figure 1.20: Large billboards with architectural renderings mark the location of the new settlement, which is next to a major road outside the Fangyan valley. Photo by the author.

Figure 1.21: The planning of the new settlement area shown on one of the billboards. Photo by the author.
Figure 1.22: The new settlement area remained as a waste land in May, 2014. Photo by the author.

Figure 1.23: A new shopping area is proposed as part of the new settlement to host pilgrims, which will be run by a developer. Photo by the author.
Yongkang has limited agricultural land. The local people describe the landscape of Yongkang as characterized by “70 percent mountains, 20 percent lakes and waterways, and 10 percent agricultural land.” Therefore, when the population exceeds the carrying capacity of the agricultural land, people have to look for alternative ways to make a living. Yongkang has been famous for its production of small metal accessories and traveling craftsmen that carry their products all over China. The *Record of Yongkang*, edited in 1521, listed that there were a total of 16,706 household, among which 16,351 were *minhu* (a civilian household whose income mainly comes from farming) and 192 households that were craftsmen (S. Chen, 1521). In the Introduction of the *Record of Yongkang*, edited in 1667 and collected in a later edition (Shen, 1698), it stated that there were few businessmen in Yongkang, but many traveling craftsmen that worked on all kinds of metals. The *Record of Yongkang* edited in 1891 (R. Li, 1891) also

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21 The details regarding the alternative economy are based on interviews with residents of Yanxia in September and December 2007, July 2008, September to November 2013, and February to May 2014 unless otherwise noted.
mentioned this form of alternative economy in Yongkang and named ten kinds of craftsmen, including blacksmith, tinsmith, coppersmith, silversmith, and goldsmith.

Most of the male descendants of the Cheng family who were born before the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) worked as traveling craftsmen at some point in their lives (Figure 1.25). Some of them worked at factories in other cities that produced metal products. They usually started before they reached 18 and retired around 50. The traveling craftsmen, as well as the factory workers, only came back to Yanxia around the Chinese New Year; they usually came back in the latter half of December of the Lunar Calendar and left after the Dragon Dance Festival on January 14 of the Lunar Calendar. Sometimes, they also came back in June of the Lunar Calendar to help with the harvest. Therefore, many women raised the children themselves, in addition to working on the land. In many cases, they were also the ones who restarted the hospitality service after the Cultural Revolution and built new houses for the family.

![Figure 1.25: The last blacksmith in Yanxia is working in his workshop inside a room of an old courtyard house. Photo by the author.](image)

Since the early 1990s, the small metal industry has become industrialized and modernized. Meanwhile new products have emerged, such as electric kitchen appliances and small electric tools (S. Li, n.d.). In the twenty-first century, the manufacturing industry in Yongkang that produces metal products contributes 70 percent of the overall gross industrial output value, which is over 7 billion yuan (S. Li, n.d.). The residents in Yanxia are also part of this new development; many young people own their factories either inside their houses in
Yanxia or in nearby towns that produce small metal products such as thermal mugs (Figure 1.26).

Figure 1.26: A building that used to be part of Chengzhenxing Hotel, the largest hotel in Yanxia. The government confiscated the building in the 1950s and used it for factories and warehouse. As of 2014, some local residents rent it to set the machinery that produces small metal products as seen in this photo. Photo by the author.

1.4.3 Site Selection

The primary reason for selecting Yanxia as the research site for this dissertation is its unique cultural traditions, which include the attachment to the land, the kinship structure, the religious rituals, and the economic practices that serve the pilgrims and visitors. All these aspects of cultural tradition demand a strong lineage that can provide for long-term management of the cultural activities and family assets. Meanwhile, the social conflict growing from economic practice and the hotel business can tear a family apart. Yanxia, therefore, is ideal for this study, which seeks to examine the meaning of home in the context of a vernacular place. In addition, lineage-based settlements represent the majority of the historic and vernacular built environment in rural South China (Z. Chen, 2006; Cohen, 2005). Thus, Yanxia represents a typical case of the dominant settlement types in rural southern China, which is considered as an essential criterion when selecting samples (Maxwell, 1996).

The final reason for selecting Yanxia lies in the broader social context in which it exists. Yanxia is a small-size settlement with relatively well-preserved historic and vernacular architecture. However, the lives of residents living in Yanxia are about to be profoundly changed under the influence of the present dominant social and political movement launched by China’s
central authority in 2006, as well as the competition for a World Heritage Site. In the case of Yanxia, the residents there are facing a government-planned relocation to a new settlement away from the cultural landscape that has nurtured its unique set of cultural traditions. The local government, who is in charge of this relocation, claims that this relocation plan will provide a better living environment for the residents, as well as a way to “clean up” the natural landscape for its competition to be a World Heritage Natural Site (Zhao, 2013a). In addition to losing their homes and land, most of the residents will also lose their sources of income from hosting pilgrims and visitors after moving to the new settlement. As a result of the proposed changes, it was critical to conduct the research in Yanxia before the physical and social transformations of the vernacular settlement. In addition, this project provides a deeper understanding of the cultural traditions, the built environment, and the lifestyles of the underrepresented social group that lives in rural China. The outcome of this study offers a new perspective for local government officials and design professionals as they envision and plan the new socialist countryside.

1.5 Study Organization

Chapter 2 reviews the selected literatures of place, home, and tradition, which helps form a research context for this dissertation. Chapter 3 outlines the theoretical framework and the research questions for this study, which help to understand the ways in which home is defined in vernacular settlements in rural China. Chapter 4 addresses the methods and procedures used for data collection and data analyses.

Chapter 5 to Chapter 8 set out to answer the research question, namely how have cultural traditions affected the meaning of home as it is understood by people living in Yanxia. Specifically, Chapter 5 examines the way in which the attachment to the land has affected residents’ understanding of home. Chapter 6 analyzes how residents’ bond to their ancestors has affected the physical, psychological, and social constructions of home. Chapter 7 focuses on the aspect of pilgrimage activities and the hotel business. Chapter 8 extends the discussions to include young and middle-aged people, who grew up in Yanxia but later moved to live in other cities, and their interpretations of home and jiaxiang, in the context of this study.

Finally, Chapter 9 synthesizes the previous analyses and concludes the study. It also discusses this dissertation’s contributions to theory and policy, as well as this dissertation’s strengths and limitations, and areas of future research that the study suggests.
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Analysis of the meaning of home is inseparable from the discussion of its physical existence, the residential space, since the fundamental meaning of the English word home is: the place (such as a house or apartment) where a person lives (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). When conceptualizing housing, Rapoport (2005) makes the following comparison between dwelling type A and dwelling type B, in which the residents of dwelling type A can carry out all the essential daily activities within the physical boundary of the house, while the residents of dwelling type B have to go beyond the physical boundary of the house to complete their daily activities, such as getting water and using the toilet (Figure 2.1). Rapoport (2005, p. 20), then, argues that when studying dwellings, “the system of settings within which particular systems of activities take place” must be taken into consideration (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.1: Comparing dwelling types and activities: Dwelling Type A and Activities (left) and Dwelling Type B and Activities (right). Modified based on Rapoport (2005, p. 21).

Figure 2.2: Comparing dwellings as defined by their systems of settings: Dwelling Type A (left) and Dwelling Type B (right). Modified based on Rapoport (2005, p. 21).

The concept of the “system of setting” defined by Rapoport (2005) suggests that the discussion of the meaning of home needs to incorporate the concept of place, where the systems of activities occur. In addition, as Cresswell (2004, p. 24) argues, “home is an exemplary kind of place where
people feel a sense of attachment and rootedness.” Therefore, Rapoport’s diagram can be modified to illustrate the relationship between the residential space, home, and place (Figure 2.3).

![Diagram showing the relationship between residential space, home, and place.]

Figure 2.3: Relationship between the residential space, home, and place. Drawing by the author.

Based on this logic, this dissertation on the meaning of home builds on the understanding of the concept of place. In addition, the understanding of the meaning of home requires a comprehensive analysis of the ways in which home is defined, represented by the outline consisting of vertical strokes in the diagram (Figure 2.3). Meanwhile, it is important to note that this diagram should be understood as a two-dimensional projection of a three-dimensional diagram, in which the perforated outline that defines home might not all fall within the concept of place. Finally, the context in which this diagram is situated is in rural China, where buildings that were built using tradition materials and methods dominate the cultural landscape and cultural practices that are handed down from the past generations persist in daily practice. Both the tangible and intangible aspects of vernacular rural China touch upon the concept of tradition.

To that end, this chapter has three sections, which examine selected aspects of the concepts of place, home and tradition that are related to this study based on a brief survey of existing literatures; these discussions also aim to set a foundation for the next chapter which details the theoretical framework for this dissertation.

**2.1 Place**

*Place* is a core concept in the field of geography, sociology, anthropology, and environmental psychology. Place is not only a thing in the world, but also a way of seeing and understanding
the world (Cresswell, 2004). Different theoretical approaches lead to different ways of seeing particular aspects the world: some accentuate experience; some focus on physical things; some emphasize meaning, yet different kinds of meanings; while others examine the attachment and connection between people and place (Cresswell, 2004; Trentelman, 2009). This dissertation builds on the phenomenologists’ and social constructionists’ understandings of place, which are summarized and compared in the following sections.

2.1.1 Different Theoretical Approaches to Place

2.1.1.1 Phenomenological Approach to Place

A phenomenological approach to place is largely rooted in philosophical ideas, especially the concepts of being and dwelling developed by Heidegger (1997, first published in 1951 in German) in the first half of the twentieth century. Tracing the linguistic roots of the words, Heidegger argues that “the fundamental character of dwelling is […] sparing and preserving,” which represents man’s situatedness in the world, in other words, man’s being (1997, p. 102). Norberg-Schulz further elaborates on Heidegger’s understanding of dwelling as “to be at peace in a protected place,” where the concepts of dwelling and place are connected (Norberg-Schulz, 1996, p. 425). The phenomenological approach is a theoretical approach, with an associated method (Cresswell, 2004; Norberg-Schulz, 1996). It is a descriptive, qualitative, and holistic perspective that tries to answer the question of what makes a place a place (Cresswell, 2004; Norberg-Schulz, 1996; Trentelman, 2009).

Humanistic geographers developed the phenomenological approach to place in the 1970s in response to the scientific approach to space in spatial science (Cresswell, 2004). When defining place, Tuan (1974, 1977) and Relph (1976) emphasize subjective and experiential qualities, as well as the meaning, acquired through personal experience. Tuan (1977) defines place as space endowed with meanings; these meanings can be acquired through different kinds of experiences, including direct, indirect, intimate, and conceptual, or they might be mediated by symbols. In addition, place is a pause that allows evolvement and attachment to transform location into place (Tuan, 1977). Relph (1976) also compares place with space: place is based on experience while space is an abstraction. Place is realized through repeated and complex interactions which form our memories and affections (Relph, 1985). Meanwhile, Relph (1976) challenges the simple correlation between place and location: the camp of nomadic people is a
place for these people yet without a fixed location. Most importantly, rooted in philosophical thinking, scholars taking a phenomenological approach to place emphasize the significance of place as it defines the essence of human existence and identity (Casey, 1996, 2001; Malpas, 1999; Relph, 1976; Sack, 1997). Relph (1976, p. 1) argues “to be human is to have and to know your place;” in a similar way, Casey (2001, p. 684) states “there is no place without self; and no self without place.”

Contemporaneous to Tuan and Relph, architectural historian and theorist Norberg-Schulz (1996, first published in 1976), and Frampton (1996, first published in 1974), and later Pallasmaa (1996, first published in 1986) offer the phenomenological idea of place as a critique of modern architecture. Norberg-Schulz applies the Roman concept of genius loci, the spirit of the place, to express how humans connect to the physical world - a place, which, he argues, is denoted by two interdependent concepts: space and character. In addition, Norberg-Schulz (1996) places an emphasis on the “character” or the “essence” of a place and “how things are” (1996, p. 418). In comparison, space is a system of relations that is denoted through prepositions such as over and under. Norberg-Schulz (1996) views place as a total phenomenon and an integral part of existence that refers to real things as opposed to abstract conceptions. Frampton (1996) identifies the concepts of place and place-making mainly as a solution to the capitalist production of space (and profits) and consumption of land (and resources). He identifies place in contrast to production: place is qualitative, concrete and static, while production is quantitative, abstract, and dynamic. Different from Tuan and Relph who emphasize the very personal experience of understanding place, Pallasmaa (1996, p. 450), an architect with a phenomenological approach, argues that “the phenomenology of architecture is […] ‘looking at’ architecture from within the consciousness experiencing it.” Specifically, Norberg-Schulz’s (1983, 1996) understanding of place is established within the three-dimensional world defined by the earth and the sky and characterized by things, such as Greek temples and bridges, as discussed by Heidegger (1997).

2.1.1.2 Social Constructionist Approach to Place

A social constructionist approach to place is taken by scholars who are informed with theories of Marxism, feminism, and post-structuralism and, meanwhile, try to understand the issues arising within the global postmodern context (Cresswell, 2004; Feld & Basso, 1996). This new global social context, which is characterized by globalization, flexible accumulation, time-space
compression, increased mobility, displacement, and environmental issues, not only threatens the existence of place and, therefore, not only increases the significance of place, but also redefines our relationship with place (Cresswell, 2004; Feld & Basso, 1996; Harvey, 1989, 1996; Scannell & Gifford, 2010). More importantly, this new social context demands a new way to understand place that extends beyond such idealistic and imaginary places as the Black Forest Cabin described by Heidegger (1997) (Cresswell, 2004). The social constructionist approach also represents the worldview held by the researchers themselves. They recognize that their role is to interpret the meanings through participants’ perspectives, which are shaped through human relationships and by social and cultural norms (Creswell, 2007; Gergen & Gergen, 2007).

Scholars following a social constructionist approach argue that place is socially constructed. Place, as well as its materiality, is created through social interactions, which are charged with meaning and influenced by power relations (Cresswell, 2004). Places are “politicized, culturally relative, historically specific, local and multiple constructions” (Rodman, 2003, p. 205). Specifically, anthropologists following a social constructionist view see place not only as a concept, but also the setting or settings where they conduct their fieldwork (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997; Rodman, 2003). Thus, Rodman (2003) advocates the unification of the concepts of location, sense of place, and locale when examining place. Low (2000), on the other hand, differentiates the social production of the physical aspect of space from the social construction of the symbolic aspect of place.

Compared to phenomenologists who ask about the essence and feeling of place, scholars following the social constructionist approach mainly focus on uncovering the question of “by what social process(es) is place constructed” (Cresswell, 2004; Harvey, 1996, p. 261). Through a close examination of a particular place, employing the lens of a set of unique issues, scholars uncover not only the material fabric of the place, but its meanings, its identity, and its embedded power relationship (Anderson, 1991; Hayden, 1995). Moreover, scholars following the social constructionist approach examine issues such as representation, gender, race, class, power relation, territoriality, political action, and local identity (Ahrentzen, 1992; Appadurai, 1995, 2003; Duncan James & Ley, 1993; Gupta & Ferguson, 1992; Massey, 1994; Rodman, 2003) and examine them within the context of socially, politically, and ideologically constructed place founded on acts of exclusion (Cresswell, 2004). Recognizing that many entities, including states, have a crucial role in place making, scholars try to examine this issue by asking who has the
power to make places out of spaces, what is their interest, who has the right to contest the spatial meaning, and what is at stake (Appadurai, 1995; Gupta & Ferguson, 1992). Scholars argue that the way to empower a place is to give voice to the local producers of such a place, who are most directly implicated in it, and attend to their interpretations of the multiple layers of meanings of the place (Hayden, 1995; Rodman, 2003).

In addition, social constructionists scholars introduce other related concepts to enable examination of the identity of place as a social construct. Comparing the concept of place to the idea of culture, Gupta and Ferguson (1992) argue that the cultural boundaries and the delineation of places are not always coherent. On the one hand, cultural products and practices help to establish place identity and territorial roots; on the other hand, cultural differences exist within a place. Another concept that helps define place is locality. Appadurai (1995) defines locality as a property of social life, in contrast to neighborhoods as substantive social forms. In addition, locality is a relational and contextual concept; it is produced by local subjects who use local knowledge and perform their social lives within their material production of space. Related to locality, it is the feeling of belonging (Lovell, 1998). Lovell argues that belonging is embedded in place and in collective memory; in addition, belonging ties people to place and their social relationships. Together, locality and belonging form both the place identity and the collective identity of the people sharing the place.

2.1.2 Debates and Shared Ideas

Casey (1996), a phenomenologist, argues that the fundamental difference between the phenomenologists’ and the social constructionists’ approaches to place is that phenomenologists focus first on place, while social constructionists tend to focus first on space, since they believe that place is socially constructed (from space). Based on this difference, Casey (1996) asserts that to have culture is firstly to inhabit a place, because place is where culture is rooted. Maplas (1999) and Sack (1997) argue that place exists prior to the social and is the bedrock on which subjectivity and meaning are formed and society and culture arise. In other words, these scholars argue that “the social (and the cultural) is geographically constructed” (Cresswell, 2004, p. 31). On the contrary, social constructionists believe that everything is socially constructed, including the feelings and the senses referred to by phenomenologists; meanwhile, the phenomenological
approach to place is considered inadequate because it cannot explain the process of place-making (Cresswell, 2004).

2.1.2.1 Static vs. Dynamic

Another point of disagreement between these two approaches is whether to view place as a static or a dynamic construct. The phenomenological approach to place generally sees place as being relatively static with a rooted identity (Relph, 1976). Tuan (1977, p. 6) argues that, in contrast to space, which allows movement, “place is pause” that allows evolvement and attachment to transform location into place. Building upon the concepts of dwelling and being, Norberg-Schulz (1996) also views place as a construct that suggests stasis, since to dwell means to linger and to remain. While Norberg-Schulz (1996) also discusses the “change” in place, he mainly argues for the adaptability of place and recognizes that the meaning of a place can be interpreted in different ways. From an opposite perspective, Augé (1995) defines non-place as sites characterized as fleeting, temporary, and ephemeral, such as freeways, airports, and supermarkets, where people do not, or cannot, pause long enough to develop a meaningful relationship with space in order to understand it as place (Tuan, 1977).

In contrast, the social constructionists’ approach challenges the notion of “place as pause” (Tuan, 1977, p. 6) when forming their research based on the current global social context, which has been characterized as having massive exchange and mobility both at the local level and the global level. They emphasize openness and change as critical attributes of place. Massey (1994) argues that place is not a bounded area, but rather a process; it represents a particular moment of intersecting social relations, each of which has been constructed overtime. As a result, place identity is constructed through its interaction with other places within the open and porous networks of social relations. Gupta, Ferguson (1992) and Appadurai (1995) also emphasize the contextual and relational nature of place, or even the fragility of its locality when considering the political and ideological construction of place from authority. Lovell (1998), though, also recognizes the dynamic and dialectic relationship among belonging, locality, and place. She argues that an established sense of belonging, in the form of collective memory and identity, can crystallize in a new place after displacement. In other words, locality and place can be recreated when the sense of belonging is preserved.
2.1.2.2 Universal vs. Culturally Specific

Phenomenological and Social Constructionist approaches also provide different views on whether the sense of place is a universal perception or a culturally specific construct. Scholars applying a phenomenological approach to place generally view place, or sense of place, as a universal and transhistorical relationship essential to human existence, and they overlook the cultural differences between people-place relationships (Cresswell, 2004; Giuliani & Feldman, 1993; Scannell & Gifford, 2010). In other words, phenomenologists accentuate place as a concept and a way of being-in-the-world, instead of examining particular places in the world as the focus of cultural geography (Cresswell, 2004). As a result, scholars taking a phenomenological approach tend to talk about place in general or with imagined or idealized examples without extensive empirical details (Heidegger, 1997; Cresswell, 2004). This might cause difficulties in mutual learning between disciplines, as Devine-Wright (2013) has observed: environmental psychologists, who develop their studies on the concept of place, typically limit their interdisciplinary references to the work of Tuan and Relph produced in the 1970s.

This universally shared phenomenological experience of place and space was challenged by Hall’s (2003) study in the 1960s, in which he demonstrates that people’s spatial perception is an aspect of culture. Meanwhile, scholars with a social constructionist approach to place usually examine particular places through the lens of specific concerns such as representation, gender, race, class, power relations, territoriality, political action, and local identity (Ahrentzen, 1992; Anderson, 1991; Hayden, 1995; Rodman, 2003). Social constructionist scholars try to uncover the meanings and identity issues related to place within the current social context, which is subject to the processes of globalization, flexible accumulation, time-space compression, increased mobility, displacement, and environmental issues (Cresswell, 2004; Feld & Basso, 1996; Harvey, 1989; Scannell & Gifford, 2010).

2.1.2.3 Shared Ideas

Regardless of the debates, these two approaches to place seem to become more robust as they incorporate ideas from each other. Casey (1996) includes the anthropological understanding of “local knowledge” into the concept of place and stresses that local knowledge and cultural specificities are place-specific. In addition, Casey (1996, p. 24) interprets place as an event; place gathers not only things, but “experiences and histories, even languages and thoughts.” In the
meanwhile, researchers who hold a social constructionist worldview recognize that their role is to interpret meanings through participants’ perspectives, which are shaped through human relationships and by social and cultural norms (Cresswell, 2004; Gergen & Gergen, 2007). Therefore, the social constructionist approach to place is partially built upon phenomenological studies, in which individuals describe their own understanding and experience of the place (Cresswell, 2004). Specifically, “home is an exemplary kind of place where people feel a sense of attachment and rootedness” (Cresswell, 2004, p. 24).

2.2 Home

Home, as a physical existence, can act as a shelter and provide a place to eat, relax, sleep, and work. The concept of home, however, incorporates more than the physical context. It can also elicit one’s feelings of involvement, belonging, comfort, ease, and security (Feldman, 1990). In addition, home is a place for family life and self-expression, as well a representation of one’s social status. As Mallett (2004) summarizes, home can be spaces, places, feelings, practices, and a state of being.

This dissertation builds on existing scholarship of home as a particular kind of place from psychological, sociological, and Environment-Behavior studies. To that end, the following section briefly examines the scholarship on home from different disciplines and approaches. It then compares these different approaches with an emphasis on issues that are related to this dissertation, which include memory and identity, social influences, and the role of physical environment.

2.2.1 Different Theoretical Approaches to Home

2.2.1.1 Psychological Approach

The psychological perspective on home focuses on issues of territoriality and psychological needs (Després, 1991). The concept of territoriality can be understood as personalization or making the house owned by its residents with a self-set boundary (Altman, 1975). The emphasis in this approach is on psychic and physical control and security, which in turn contribute to territorial satisfaction (Sebba & Churchman, 1983). Territorial satisfaction is achieved through either physical markers or reoccurring activities within the home-territory at different socio-spatial levels, including person-room, household-dwelling, and family-neighborhood (Després,
The act of making territories at these levels communicates the identity of, or personalizes, the individual within a household and family in a neighborhood (Després, 1991). The psychological needs, including identity, control, privacy, security, intimacy, and social status, are manifested through desires and actions applied to modifying the dwelling to express the individual’s ideas and values (Després, 1991). These desires and actions are interpreted as a subconscious expression of the self (Cooper, 1974; Després, 1991). In addition, a home can also act as a symbol for one’s psychological need for social recognition; the image of home helps to define one’s self-identity in relation to a broader social context (Després, 1991; Duncan, 1985).

2.2.1.2 Sociological Approach

Sociological studies of home examine the social variability of the meaning of home and explore home’s social and cultural meaning in society (J. Moore, 2007; Somerville, 1997). Most of such studies are macro-sociological studies that involve a large amount of data or even a national survey; they focus on issues of class, gender, tenure, and age and treat them as variables in the study (Somerville, 1997). Sociological studies try to interpret and compare the meaning of home between sociological groups, such as for middle class or working class residents, between men and women, for different forms of home-ownership, and between people in different age groups (Chapman, 1999; Saunders, 1990; A. J. Sixsmith & Sixsmith, 1991). However, Somerville (1997) argues that a significant gap still exists between sociological studies of home and the formulation of coherent theories.

2.2.1.3 Environment-Behavior Perspective

The approach to home taken by those with an environment-behavior perspective is an interdisciplinary approach. Environment-behavior studies not only consider an individual’s psychological needs and experiential significance within home environment as do studies applying a psychological or a phenomenological framework, but also include the social and cultural context in which the home is situated in a way similar to sociological studies. In addition, an environment-behavior perspective places an emphasis on the meaning of home, similar to anthropological studies (Cieraad, 1999; Rapoport, 1990). More importantly, environment-behavior studies of home are rooted in the physical, spatial, and temporal aspects of the home environment and are grounded by the examination of human-environment interactions.
Therefore, “not only is [home] a place, but it has psychological resonance and social meaning. It is part of the experience of dwelling – something we do, a way of weaving up a life in particular geographical spaces” (Saegert, 1985, p. 287).

Environment-behavior studies of home are rooted in the understanding of the built environment; these studies recognize domestic space as a setting for the manifestation of meanings and cultural values (Stea, 1987). Home environment, defined by Lawrence (1985), is an artifact and a warehouse of sociocultural memory and personal experience. When trying to understand the meaning of home, Lawrence (1987) first sets out to examine the spatial characteristics of a house, not only as a whole, but also as individual rooms and spaces; he also examines the spatial organizations and usages of these rooms and space.

The environment-behavior perspective on home also focuses on the interactions between people and residential spaces. Lawrence (1985, 1987) argues that homes must be examined with an understanding of the ways in which they have been used; in addition, these understandings must be rooted in social, cultural, geographical, and historical contexts. The word “use” represents a process when dwellers actively act upon the domestic space. Within this approach, Wikstrom (1995) argues that home results from continuous human action within surrounding space. Through his research, Wikstrom identifies six aspects of home, two of which delineate dynamic human actions: going out and coming back, and domestic routines. Westman (1995) further analyzes these “domestic routines” of home by observing physical movements within space and the patterns of movements between cultures. He argues that repetitive movements in relation to different places become rituals, which, in relation to time, represent cultural variation. Besides emphasizing the spatial quality of home, Werner, Altman and Oxley (1985) examine home’s temporal qualities. They focus on the dynamic, flowing, and changing relationships between people and environments in different cultures through examining home’s temporal qualities, which include linear time, cyclical time, temporal salience, temporal scale, temporal pace, and temporal rhythm.

Another fundamental difference between research applying an environment-behavior perspective and research adopting other theoretical approaches is its connection to architectural practice. For environment-behavior studies, the goal is to provide knowledge and inspiration for architectural practitioners, as well as other researchers, in their manifestation and studying of future projects (Benjamin, 1995; Lawrence, 1985; Wikstrom, 1995). Lawrence’s study (1987) of
housing, dwellings and homes is an exemplar in weaving theory, research, and architectural practice together in examining domestic space. Specifically, based on the understanding of the constant and intimate interactions between dwellers and dwelling space, Lawrence advocates an alternative design and building process which involves users’ active participation. In addition, he also proposes a different design that allows inherent and potential adaptability.

2.2.2 **Comparison between Psychological, Sociological, and Environment-Behavior Approaches**

*Home* is a multi-dimensional concept with different layers of meaning. Specifically, J. A. Sixsmith (1986) identifies home as three modes of experience based on his empirical study: personal home, physical home, and social home. Similarly, Lawrence (1995) recognizes that the meaning of home has three dimensions: experiential, spatio-temporal, and societal. In addition, Somerville (1997) argues that the concept of home is a psychological, physical, and social construct (Table 2.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Layer 1</th>
<th>Layer 2</th>
<th>Layer 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sixsmith (1986)</td>
<td>personal</td>
<td>physical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence (1995)</td>
<td>experiential</td>
<td>Spatio-temporal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerville (1997)</td>
<td>psychological</td>
<td>physical</td>
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Table 2.1: Home as a multi-dimensional concept, as defined by Sixsmith, Lawrence, and Somerville

Although using different words, all three scholars try to understand the meaning of *home* by deconstructing it into three layers, identified in Table 2-1 (reading the chart by columns): the personal, experiential, and psychological layer; the physical, spatio-temporal layer; and the social or societal layer.

These three layers of meaning in the concept of home represent different emphases between theoretical approaches. In other words, different theoretical approaches hold different positions within individuals’ memories and identities, built environment, and sociocultural context in framing and constructing the concept of home. Among the four approaches discussed above, home as a psychological construct is the main theoretical approach of psychological studies, which emphasize personal memory and identity. Sociological studies situate home within its societal dimension. The phenomenological approach emphasizes the personal and experiential dimensions of the meaning of home. As an interdisciplinary study, environment-
behavior studies on home may touch upon all three dimensions of home, yet such studies are rooted in the physical, spatial, and temporal characteristics of home environments.

Psychological studies of home tend to emphasize individual dimensions of place identity and isolate it from the social and cultural context in which home is framed and constructed (J. Moore, 2007; Reinders & Van der Land, 2008). Psychological studies consider place identity a sub-structure of self-identity and a personal construction (Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983). When examining the concept of attachment, these studies measure people’s affections, cognitions (including thought, knowledge, belief, memory, schema, and meaning), and behaviors towards and within the home environment (Lewicka, 2008; Low & Altman, 1992; Scannell & Gifford, 2010). With a general association and link between the concept of home and the physical house, or dwelling space, these studies often limit their research to single family houses, which mainly represent a certain particular social classes (J. Moore, 2000).

Situated within a larger social and cultural context, sociological studies of home tend to take an objective approach in examining home environment and, thus, lack human perceptions and emotions and subjective interpretation of the meaning of home (Reinders & Van der Land, 2008; Somerville, 1997). As a result, such studies overlook the influence of the memories and identities of individuals in shaping the concept of home. In addition, most sociological studies view the societal dimension as a context rather than as a process that contributes to the construction of home as understood by social constructionists. With such an objective, or even a positivist, view of the built environment, sociological studies also have a tendency to associate the meaning of home with residential spaces, though some studies cover different kinds of residential spaces in search of their different social and cultural meanings within a society (Rapoport, 1995).

Therefore, scholars from different disciplines call for an interdisciplinary approach to examining the meaning of home (Després, 1991; J. Moore, 2000; Reinders & Van der Land, 2008; Somerville, 1997) and stress the difference between home and house (Dovey, 1985; Saegert, 1985; Lawrence, 1987; Moore, 2000). Saegert (1985) argues that, when compared to house, the experience of home might extend beyond the physical housing. In addition, home implies a more active and mobile relationship and a spiritual and symbolic connection between individuals and their residential spaces; home has both temporal and spatial dimensions; home represents personal and social identities (Saegert, 1985).
Taking an interdisciplinary approach, environment-behavior studies of home are rooted in the understanding of dwelling space; such studies examine the physical, cultural, and social context of home in relation to human activities, with an emphasis on meaning (Benjamin, 1995; G. T. Moore, 1984; J. Moore, 2007). With a focus on meaning, the environment-behavior approach not only considers the experience and psychological needs of individuals, but also situates home within its social and cultural context. In addition, environment-behavior studies view the built environment both as the carrier and as the repository of personal memories and experiences, which are the backbone of building self-identity (Lawrence, 1985; Proshansky et al., 1983).

Both premises in studying home, examining the social and cultural context in which home is situated and understanding the personal memories and experiences that help construct the meaning of home, connect the concept of home with the concept of tradition.

2.3 Tradition

2.3.1 Define Tradition

Tradition, in its most elementary sense, means “anything which is transmitted or handed down from the past to the present” (Shils, 1981). Yet tradition is a pluralistic and problematic concept that is widely used by scholars in many fields, as well as by the general public (AlSayyad, 2004; Rapoport, 1989). The substance of tradition can, therefore, be everything from human mind, beliefs, social relationships, technical practices, physical artifacts, to natural objects (Shils, 1981). In other words, “anything can become a tradition by being transmitted over time” (Rapoport, 1989). With this understanding, Shils (1981, p. 12) defines tradition in the following all-embracing terms: tradition – that which is handed down – includes … all that a society of a given time possesses and which is not solely the product of physical processes in the external world or exclusively the result of ecological and physiological necessity.”

To provide a more comprehensive understanding of “what tradition is and what it does” (Rapoport, 1989, p. 81), Rapoport (1989) compiles a set of attributes that characterize the concepts of tradition and traditional through an informal content-analysis of existing literature at that time. However, Rapoport (1989) also acknowledges the limitations of this system of classification, even though it provides a conceptual framework and methodological advantages. Specifically, he recognizes that some of the attributes are not fit in the same context since they
are mutually exclusive, and more subtle classification and distinctions need to be made to identify tradition. Through his inclusive analysis, Rapoport (1989) concludes that the fundamental attribute of any tradition is its involvement with people, since “only people transmit traditions” (Rapoport 1989, p. 84).

In addition to trying to conceptualize what tradition is, some scholars try to use other related concepts to define tradition. Glassie (1995) refines the concept of tradition in conjunction with the understandings of history and culture. Glassie argues that the similarity between history and tradition is that they are both identified with the resources created by people; in addition, both concepts are dynamic in the way that they “exclude more than they include, and so remain open to endless revision” (Glassie, 1995, p. 395). Culture, even though it is also created by people going through life, is ahistorical, and it is evaluated by its comprehensive and systemic quality. In contrast, tradition is a temporal and even fragmented concept, “inherently tangled with the past, the future, with history” (Glassie, 1995, p. 399).

From the other perspective, Tuan (1989) defines tradition by identifying what is not tradition, or what is modern, using the idea of constraint-vs-choice. Tuan argues that choice is a modern concept and only made possible by material abundance and represents an ideal of freedom rather than constraint. If the traditional means constraint to the local, the modern is realized through manifesting power that transcends the local with the exercise of choice. Therefore, the Roman forums around the Mediterranean Sea were as untraditional as the modern skyscrapers in large metropolitan cities around the world, since power, exemplified with the exercise of choice, enabled the constructions of both these kinds of structures bypassing the constraint of locality.

Tradition can also be invented (Hobsbawm, 1983). Hobsbawm (1983, p. 1) defines invented tradition as “a set of practice, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition.” In the context of the modern world which is characterized by rapid transformation and innovation, invented tradition, with the attempt to establish continuity with the past, tries to formalize and ritualize certain aspects of social life as unchanging and invariant (Hobsbawm, 1983). Having these characteristics, invented traditions are often used by newly emerged nation-states or during national movements to establish or legitimize coherent social groups, institutions and authority, and belief, values, and behaviors (Hobsbawm, 1983). To further his argument,
Hobsbawm also distinguishes genuine tradition, custom, convention, and routine from invented tradition. Genuine tradition involves specific and strong social practices that are adaptable. Customs, also adaptable, “give any desired change (or resistance to innovation) the sanction of precedent, social continuity and natural law as expressed in history” (Hobsbawm, 1983, p. 2). Convention and routine are functions and technical rather than ideological as tradition.

2.3.2 Tradition vs. Change

Although having different approaches to defining tradition, many scholars agree that the most important characteristic of tradition is that tradition continues to change (Alsayyad, 2004; Glassie, 1995; Rapoport, 1989; Shils, 1981; Upton, 1993). Shils (1981) argues that tradition changes in the process of transmission. Even though tradition might undergo great changes, the change between two successive generations is usually small. Therefore, the recipients of any tradition might only experience a sense of filiation with the prior possessors of the tradition (Shils, 1981); tradition presents its continuity (Glassie, 1995). Meanwhile, the motivation for such change should come from the desire of the possessors and custodians of the tradition, instead of from disruption or oppression as the result of an intrusion of power from outsiders (Glassie, 1995; Shils, 1981).

From the other perspective on the relationship between tradition and change, Oliver (1989, p. 58) argues that there can be “no change without tradition,” because “tradition provides the matrix within which any changes may be introduced.” Supported by the matrix of tradition, “small innovations and modifications are tried, repeated and proved to be effective and gradually incorporated into customary practice or are found wanting and dropped” (Oliver, 1989, p. 58). Meanwhile, tradition is transmitted both in time and in space. Therefore, tradition is an act of transmission rather than conservation (Bourdier, 1989).

The study of tradition, as Oliver (1989) suggests, should focus on the actual process and the methods of transmission. For that reason, Upton (1993) argues that the study of the traditional should focus on examining points of contact and transformation, as well as ambiguous, multiple, and contested settings, instead of emphasizing the authentic, the enduring, and the pure. To be specific, the points of contact and transformation include communication, either oral, written, or graphic, between different individuals, groups of people, generations; it
also includes the “bond that ties the subject to his or her making; and the bond that ties one making or one mode of transmission to another (Bourdier, 1989, p.42).

### 2.3.3 Tradition vs. Vernacular

Traditions and the traditional are exemplified in vernacular built environments (Alsayyad, 2004, 2014; Glassie, 1990; Oliver, 1989). Glassie (1990, p. 9) argues that “all architecture is the embodiment of cultural norms that preexist individual buildings;” in other words, “building[s], like poems and rituals, realize culture.” Although the exact definitions of vernacular built environment varies, scholars emphasize that *vernacular* architecture should be defined in terms of the *process* in which it is “designed” and built (Rapoport, 1969). In other words, vernacular tradition is based on “participation, engagement, and an egalitarian political ethic” (Glassie, 1990, P. 1). Therefore, vernacular built environments are material culture that provides physical evidence of society, as well as embodied traditions (Glassie 1990; Oliver, 1989). Rapoport (1992) further elaborates this argument by stating that the cultural landscape is always symbolic and provides rich raw data with which to study human behavior. On one hand, cultural landscape, exemplified by built forms, is the physical embodiment of behavior patterns, including desires, motivations, and feelings. On the other hand, cultural landscape, represented in both built forms and embedded schemata and rules, affects human behavior and the way of life (Rapoport, 1969, 1992, 2005).

### 2.3.4 Tradition vs. Practice

Practices, embodied with traditions, also permeate all aspects of life, since, according to Shils (1981, p. 34) we all “live in the present of things from the past.” Specifically, “knowledge of and sensitivity to the past bring the image of the past into the present” (Shils, 1981, p. 52). In vernacular environments where the set of schemata and rules regulating domestic routines and ritual activities are stronger and clearer, practices that are embodies with traditions become more spontaneous and unquestioned (Pader, 1998; Rapoport, 2005). In addition, Pader (1998) argues that since these kinds of practices often happen at the unconscious level, individuals are often not able to verbalize them. More importantly, as Shils (1981, p. 13) argues:
Those who accept a tradition need not call it a tradition; its acceptability might be self-evident to them. When a tradition is accepted, it is as vivid and vital to those who accept it as any other part of their action or belief. It is the past in the present but it is as much part of the present as any very recent innovation.

These kinds of practices underpin the concept of *habitus* defined by Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1977). Habitus is an old philosophical idea that can be traced back to Aristotle’s notion of *hexis*, translated into Latin as *habitus*, which means “an acquired yet entrenched state of moral character that orients our feelings and desires in a situation, and thence our actions” (Wacquant, 2006). Bourdieu (1977, p. 82-83), based on his empirical studies, defines habitus as “a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks.” In other words, habitus can be understood as an underlined system that embodies all past experiences, or the product of history as Bourdieu (1977) summarizes it. Bourdieu (1977) also argues that habitus is the result of social structures and, therefore, sets up social norms that represent the lifestyle of such social class. In addition, habitus is both enduring and adaptable, because one’s integrated experiences are always the result of the enduring past experiences and change through new experiences. Finally, to outline the theory of practice, Bourdieu argues that habitus, as spontaneous and unconscious, “produces individual and collective practices” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 82).

### 2.3.5 Tradition vs. Heritage

Heritage, originally meaning property that parents handed on to their children, essentially refers to things that can be inherited and passed on between generations (Harrison, 2010). Therefore, tradition and heritage are related concepts with shared characteristics. However, their essential difference lies in the intention and attitude of the possessors and custodians of the “things” being handed on between generations. The concept of heritage is closely associated with the production of collective memory and identity of the possessors and custodians of the heritage, who selectively construct their heritage from the perspective of their future generations (Harrison, 2010; Harvey, 2001; Gillis, 1994; Lowenthal, 1998). One example of such heritage is the emergence of “national heritage” in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that was
associated with nation-building; new nation-states around the globe tried to construct their national heritage to fight for legitimacy (Davison, 2008). Since the World Heritage Convention in 1972, heritage became a national and international resource, and the heritage discourse, including the assessment, preservation, and management of heritage, has been often embedded with a political undertone (Davison, 2008; Harrison, 2010). In contrast, as summarized earlier, tradition is situated at the spontaneous and unconscious level and is associate with the concept of habitus (Bourdieu, 1977; Pader, 1998; Rapoport, 2005; Shils, 1981). In other words, tradition is accepted and becomes vivid and vital aspects of people’s daily life without being questioned (Shils, 1981). Based on this understanding, the existing literature that focuses on the social and cultural aspects of heritage is summarized to further the understanding of the concept of tradition.

As a bond between past, present, and future, heritage is a form of social and cultural process that contributes to the production of collective memory and identity, both of which are transactional phenomena and politically and socially constructed (Byrne, 2008; Gillis, 1994; Harrison, 2010; Harvey, 2001; Lowenthal, 1994; Smith, 2006). In addition, as a form of social and cultural process, heritage also contributes to the construction of locality and social value (Appadurai, 1995; Byrne, 2008; Davison, 2008). Appadurai (1995) defines locality as a property of social life. Locality is relational and contextual; it is constructed based on using local knowledge by local subjects who perform their social lives within their neighborhood (Appadurai, 1995). Social value is people’s attachment to a place that they themselves recognize and is represented in the way people express and reinforce their traditions in the present (Davison, 2008). Thus, heritage also helps construct place attachment, which, in the simplest terms, means the bonding between people and place (Low & Altman, 1992). Low and Altman (1992) identify place attachment as an integrating concept and a complex phenomenon with five intersecting and integral layers, which are bonding and attachment features, place aspects, different social actors, different social relationships, and temporal aspects.

Based on the understanding that heritage is a process, the recent study of heritage has focused on the interpretation of the meanings and values endowed by the heirs, bearers, and interpreters of heritage. Harvey (2001, p. 320) argues that heritage study should stress “the meaning and nature of what people tell each other about their past; about what they forget, remember, memorialize and/or fake.” What people remember, however, is constantly being
revised to suit their changing identity; forgetting is as important as remembering in constructing identity, as well as heritage (Gillis, 1994). In addition, heritage is a result of interpretation; individuals with distinct intentions and personal backgrounds will create different sets of values and meanings out of the same heritage, which might be dissonant or might even contradict each other (Smith, 2006; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). Heritage, therefore, represents “a way of knowing and seeing” (Smith, 2006, p. 54); more importantly, heritage represents and reveals issues of identity, power, and agency (Smith, 2006).

2.3.6 Tradition, Heritage vs. Globalization

In recent decades, new global and social dynamics enable the construction of a new set of heritage, tradition, identity, and memory. On the one hand, globalization undermines national identity and challenges the power relations and boundaries set up by nation-states (Logan, 2002; Massey, 1994). On the other hand, globalization stimulates a growing interest in local traditions, memories, and cultural identity as a way to resist cultural homogenization. Meanwhile, national and local governments seek to protect, or often reinvent, local heritage and cultural identity as a strategy to achieve economic development through tourism (Logan, 2002). In other words, globalization and localization are happening side by side; the latter, materialized through reinforcing local identity and memory and protecting local heritage and tradition, is largely a response to the former (Logan, 2002). Robertson (1995) identifies this phenomenon as glocalization, which features simultaneous homogenization and heterogenization. The tasks then become to understand how local heritage and identity evolve under the dynamics of global and local interaction, how new memories and traditions are constructed and invented, and what the implications are for the relationships of people to the past (Hobsbawm, 1983).

2.4 Conclusion

The social constructionist approach to place and the environment-behavior perspective on home that emphasizes the meaning of home are carried over to Chapter 3 to form the foundation of the theoretical framework of this dissertation, while additional theories that are specific to Chinese culture and the concept of tradition are integrated to further define the theoretical framework.
CHAPTER 3  THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This chapter outlines a framework that provides theoretical grounding for this dissertation, as a continuation of the discussion in Chapter 2. This chapter examines the ways in which the perforated outline that defines the meaning of home, as illustrated in Figure 2.3, is affected and shaped in the context of vernacular settlements in rural China. In so doing, this chapter first examines three issues that are apparent in existing theories of home; it argues that these issues present limitations that prevent a comprehensive understanding of the meaning of home in vernacular settlements in rural China. This chapter, then, analyzes two attributes of vernacular settlements in rural China: the nature of vernacular place and the characteristics of Chinese historic vernacular culture. These two attributes of vernacular settlements in rural China underpin the concept of tradition, which is, then, integrated to further define the theoretical framework for this dissertation. Finally, the redefined theoretical framework outlines the issues that are the focus of this dissertation and from which the study’s research questions are derived.

3.1 The Issues in Existing Scholarship

The majority of studies on the meaning of home are based on the understandings of ideological and sociological issues, such as personal identity, privacy, gender relations, and family structures, which were first studied in Europe and the United States. Therefore, these studies present three points of concern when examining the meaning of home in vernacular settlements in rural China. First, the concept of house as a symbol of self (Cooper, 1974) is an ideology that is only present in what Duncan (1985) refers to as individualistic societies. It is not productive, therefore, to examine self-identity and self-esteem when studying the meaning of home in cultures that are characterized as collectivistic societies, i.e., mainly groups within non-European and non-North American cultures, where individual identity is tied up with group identity and the private house is not used for display of status (Duncan, 1985; Rapoport, 1981). Another example is the concept of privacy, which can be characterized by “avoidance of unwanted interaction” (Rapoport, 2005, p. 81). Although the desire for a certain degree of privacy is a cross-cultural concern, the definitions of “interaction” and “unwanted” can be very different between different cultures (Rapoport, 2005).
Second, studies on class, gender, and family issues that are related to the meaning of home are largely based in European, as well as American, conceptions of domestic space, as a conceptual counterpart to “public space” that evolved in Europe in the seventeenth century (Cieraad, 1999; Coontz, 1988). Different cultures have different understandings of space, spatial boundaries, and spatial quality based on their cultural traditions, social structures, and the nature of their residential space (Duncan, 1985; Hall, 2003; Rapoport, 1969). Thus, the understanding of “domestic space,” if that concept exists across cultures, and people’s perception and use of “domestic space,” may be different between cultures.

Finally, since the studies on the meaning of home have a deep connection with the built environment, scholars often have the tendency to consider the term “home” as a synonym for “house” and use it to refer both to an object or an artifact and people’s relationship with that object/artifact (Rapoport, 1995). This strong link between house and home has become an obstacle in advancing the research on home (J. Moore, 2000), since most scholars limit their fieldwork to the physical or legal boundary of the individual homestead (J. Moore, 2000; Saegert, 1985). For the few studies of sense of home and place attachment that were based on fieldwork extending beyond the property of homesteads, the researchers isolated individual homes from the larger places in which they were situated by marking a clear spatial hierarchy between dwelling (or house), community (or neighborhood), and region (or city) (Cuba & Hummon, 1993; Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001).

3.2 Attributes of Vernacular Settlements in Rural China

Existing scholarship on home is largely based on understandings of personal needs, social relations, domestic space, and spatially isolated homesteads, as discussed above. Although these studies provide critical theoretical background, they present limitations that prevent a comprehensive understanding the meaning of home in vernacular settlements in rural China because of the two attributes of the vernacular settlements in rural China. These two attributes are 1) the nature of vernacular place, and 2) certain aspects of Chinese culture.

3.2.1 First Attribute: The Vernacular Place

The first attribute lies in the nature of vernacular settlements. When examining the meaning of home in vernacular settlements, the spatial boundary of the homestead yields to the contextual
and relational concept of place where the house belongs. This extended place covers what Rapoport (2005, p. 20) defines as the “system of settings,” within which daily activities take place. In vernacular settlements, many of these activities happen outside the physical boundary of a house and at locations collectively shared by all the residents, such as the places to get water, to use the toilet, to wash clothes, and to socialize. In addition, place represents intersecting social relations that have been constructed over time (Massey, 1994). In other words, the vernacular place is also characterized by its locality, the property of social life, and is built upon the material production of space by local subjects using local knowledge acquired over time (Appadurai, 1995).

In particular, vernacular settlements in rural southern China, which are mostly patrilineal lineage-based settlements, are highly socialized spaces (Fei, 1992). Fei (1992) argues that rural Chinese societies are consanguineous. A consanguineous society, as Fei (1992, p. 120) defines, is a society within which individuals’ rights, obligations, social position, and social relations are “fixed by the fact of procreation.” Consanguinity, then, means that “people’s rights and obligations are determined by kinship” (Fei, 1992, p. 120). Thus, in rural Chinese societies, an individual’s tie to a specific place is “an extension of consanguinity and cannot be separated from it” (Fei, 1992, p. 121). As a result, formless space is characterized with directions and positions by applying relevant consanguineous relationships (Fei, 1992). Fei (1992) further demonstrates the connection between an individual’s residing place and his or her social position as a result of consanguinity by using an argument derived from language. The Chinese word that is used to describe a person’s social status, diwei, literally means the physical location in space, in which di means place or earth and wei means position. In other words, vernacular settlements in rural southern China are the kind of place that rests on social relations established upon consanguineous coordinates.

In addition to the superimposition of social positions and relations in vernacular settlements in rural southern China, consanguinity is also a social force that not only isolates, but also stabilizes and sustains rural societies (Fei, 1992). Therefore, consanguinity, as well as the nature of agriculture that ties farmers to the land, enables and results in an attachment to place. Fei (1992) abstracts the concept of place to the word soil and argues that it is the attachment to the soil that shapes rural societies in China. In his book From the soil: The foundation of Chinese society, which is based on field research he conducted in the early half of the twentieth century,
Fei (1992) argues that this attachment to the soil influences many aspects of Chinese rural societies, as well as Chinese society more generally, from spatial relations to social relations, from morality to custom, from ritual to rules, from desire to necessity, and from family to lineage.22

3.2.2 Second Attribute: The Characteristics of Chinese Culture

The second attribute lies in Chinese culture itself, which includes the conception of self, the definition of “home” in Chinese, family structure, and ritual practices. These characteristics of Chinese culture are closely interconnected. On one hand, the way an individual is identified is subject to family structure and ritual practices; on the other hand, the construction of self affects the formation of home and family, as well as the practice and sustainability of rituals.

Fei (1992) argues that the conception of self in Chinese culture is established on the Confucian ideology of kejifuli, which means to subdue the self and follow the rites. Based on this principle, the self not only loses its autonomy, in contrast to the autonomous self in most European societies, but also becomes subject to one’s social relationships and prescribed ritual behaviors. For example, in the case of being a man, the self is defined by social relationships and prescribed ritual behaviors of how to be a father, husband, brother, son, employee, and friend. Extended from this understanding, Fei (1981, 1992) argues that different social roles between males and females not only define men and women, but also greatly determine gender differences. These differences are particularly evident between a husband and wife who manage different aspects of family activities following prescribed rules and rituals. Thus, this comparatively weak bond between a husband and a wife requires, as well as strengthens, the lineage development, which is dominated by male-male associations (Fei, 1992).

The Chinese character for home is 家, jia, which also means family. This duality makes the discussions of home inseparable from the understanding of Chinese family structure. As the basic unit of society, the structure of a family rests on the organizational principles of the society as a whole, which, Fei (1992) argues in the case of Chinese society, is chaxugeju (differential mode of association). Fei (1992) explains chaxugeju with a metaphor of ripples flowing out as

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22 The content of From the soil: The foundation of Chinese society was first published, in Chinese, by chapters in the form of 14 essays in the journal of Shiji Pinglun in the late 1940s. It was then published as a book, titled Xiangtu Zhongguo, in 1947 (Fei, 2008). Most recently, it has been translated and republished in English in 1992.
the result of a rock being thrown into the water. Fei (1992) argues that Chinese society consists of overlapping networks of people who are linked together through different kinds of social relationships; each network is like a series of ripples which do not have explicit boundaries and are centered on an individual. In comparison, the “Western” societies examined by Fei in the early twentieth century can be represented by “distinct bundles of straws” (Fei, 1992, p. 62) that not only have clear boundaries but also autonomous individuals.

Based on *chaxugeju*, a Chinese family, established on overlapping networks, does not have a fixed organizational boundary as a nuclear family does, which is limited to the triangular relationship between parents and children (Fei, 1981, 1992). As a result, instead of classifying Chinese families into three types (conjugal, stem, or joint), scholars emphasize that each type should rather be understood as a stage of an ongoing process of evolving family structure due to life cycle changes (Cohen, 1976; Knapp, 2005). For Han Chinese, a family generally only extends through the male side, except for rare situations, 23 and an ideal family should include five generations according to Confucian ideology. Fei (1939, 1992) argues that a Chinese family is fundamentally different from a nuclear family in *form*; the former is an essentially larger family than the later regardless of the number of people that belong to each family. For example, a Chinese family consisting of a husband, a wife, their son, and their daughter-in-law is essentially a larger family than a family consisting of a husband, a wife, and eight children. Fei (1981, 1992) refers to the former kind of Chinese family as “extended family” or “small lineage,” and he argues that this is the most basic unit in rural China.

The size of this “extended family,” in practice, depends on the activities in which the family engages (Fei, 1992). A Chinese family can be as small as a nuclear family when procreation is the only function (though that size is very rare in rural China), while it can also extend and, eventually, become a patrilineal lineage to manage political, economic, and religious activities (Cohen, 2005; Fei, 1992; Freedman, 1965). Therefore, such an extended Chinese family’s *home* could exceed the boundary of a physical house and include multiple residential spaces (Figure 3.1). In other words, the concept of *jia* has dual spatial limits; the ideological *jia* can exceed the physical *jia*. In addition, the Chinese character of *jia*, 家, pictographically depicts a pig underneath a roof (Figure 3.2). This suggests that the original concept of *jia* represents an

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23 For the exceptions in the extended family structure, see Chapter 1, Footnote 5.
economic entity for both production (pig-making) and consumption (pig-eating) (Jervis, 2005). Thus, shared household budgets and collaborative social activities can help to define a house or a cluster of houses occupied by people claiming a common ancestor as a *jia* (Shiga, 1978; Faure, 2005). In the same way, a financial conflict can lead to the division of a *jia* living in the same house; in other words, multiple ideological *jia* can co-exist inside the physical *jia* (Figure 3.1). However, the family members from these divided families are not fully separated; they not only maintain their social relationship to each other, but also cooperate in kinship matters, especially ancestral rituals (Faure, 2005; Fei, 1939; Shiga, 1978).

![Figure 3.1: The diagram of the meaning of *jia*. Drawing by the author.](image)

![Figure 3.2: The oracle bone script for *jia* (The Pictogram Dictionary, n.d.).](image)

The English word “ritual” is one translation for the Chinese word *li*, yet *li* has a broader range of meanings including not only sacrifices to ancestors and deities, but also institutionalized behaviors, ceremonies and life-cycle rites, and social manners (Chow, 1994). *Li*, in Chinese
culture, is “a sociopolitical order in the full sense of the term, involving hierarchies, authority and power” (Schwartz, 1985, p. 68). Thus, it is through li that Chinese society, especially Chinese rural society, is governed and maintained (Fei, 1992; J. L. Watson, 1988).

Governed by Confucian rituals of ancestral veneration, the overlapping kinship networks that are formed through marriage and reproduction can extend to include all the members in the past, present, and future (Chow, 1994; Fei, 1992). In practice, however, the unit for such kinship networks in rural southern China is the patrilineal lineage-based settlement. Each of such settlement is an independent lineage (Z. Chen, 2006). J. L. Watson (1982, p. 594) defines lineage as “a corporate group which celebrates ritual unity and is based on demonstrated descent from a common ancestor.” In rural southern China, a lineage usually has corporate estates and assets that are managed by respected senior family members and used to organize social and cultural activities and support education for children (Z. Chen, 2006; Cohen, 2005; Freedman, 1965). As a result, families of a lineage are closely associated with each other due to the ways that their livelihoods are dependent on the prosperity of lineage property and the social status of the lineage (Cohen, 2005; Freedman, 1965).

The physical and spatial representation of a lineage is the ancestral hall, or ancestral halls when the lineage has more than one ancestral hall, which is usually accompanied by an open space and sometimes a pond in front of the building (Z. Chen, 2006). In Chinese rural society, which is ruled and maintained by li, ancestral halls are the place where li is practiced, manifested, and executed. Ancestral halls, as well as the estates and assets of the lineage, are managed by respected senior members of the lineage, who represent authority and power in Chinese rural societies endowed by li (Z. Chen, 2006; Fei, 1992). Ancestral halls are the places for ritual practices, including worshiping ancestors, hosting “red” (wedding) and “white” (funeral) events, Chinese New Year celebrations, and other social and cultural activities. Before the modern educational system was established in rural China decades ago, ancestral halls were the classrooms where young descendants of the lineage learned prescribed social behaviors and obligations by studying the classical writings, such as the Confucian Four Books. Ancestral halls were also the place where social conflicts were solved and right or wrong was judged, before a modern legal system was widely accepted by rural residents (Z. Chen, 2006). In addition, the open spaces, as well as the ponds, in front of ancestral halls are the kind of places that support not only ritual practices, but also mundane daily activities, during which li is also infused in the
activities and prescribes proper interactions between individuals (Z. Chen, 2006; Fei, 1992). In
the meantime, the practice, manifestation, and execution of *li* at ancestral halls reinforces the tie
between members of the lineage. The process of worshiping a common ancestor constantly
reminds generations of residents that they are part of the same family. The social, cultural, and
educational activities held within or around ancestral halls constantly transforms this shared
space into an extension of an individual’s *home* environment.

### 3.3 Understanding Tradition in the Context of Vernacular Rural China

The characteristics of vernacular *place*, including collective ownership, accumulated knowledge,
consanguineous relationship, and attachment to *place*, and the characteristics of Chinese culture,
including the conception of self, the definition of *jia*, family structure, and ritual practices, in the
Chinese vernacular context, underpin the concept of tradition as discussed in Chapter 2. These
characteristics of vernacular *place* and Chinese culture are the traditions of the vernacular
settlements in rural China, and they include physical artifacts, beliefs, social relationships, and
practices that have been handed down from the previous generations. Thus, the concept of
tradition needs to be incorporated into any examination of the meaning of *home* in vernacular
settlements in rural China.

The traditions of vernacular settlements in rural China permeate all aspect of rural life. The
possessors and custodians of these physical artifacts, beliefs, social relationships, and
practices inherited and accepted these traditions without questioning their validity nor
recognizing them as “tradition” (Pader, 1998; Rapoport, 2005; Shils, 1981). These physical
artifacts, beliefs, and social relationships are vital parts of rural residents’ daily lives and
constitute their present reality (Shils, 1981). In particular, individual and collective practices are
the production of habitus, which not only sets up social norms and represents lifestyle, but also
embodies tradition (Bourdieu, 1977). In addition, these traditions, being spontaneous and
unconscious, changed and adapted during the process of transmission as a response to changing
social contexts, as well as the processors’ integrated personal experiences (AlSayyad, 2004;
In addition, one aspect of Chinese building tradition needs to be introduced to facilitate the understanding the meaning of home in rural China. Liang (1998), a renowned Chinese architect, architectural historian, and educator, argues that one of the characteristics of the Chinese building tradition, which is different from that in many other cultures, is that the owner of a building does not expect the building to last forever, with the exception of tombs. He notes, therefore, that constructing a new building on site to replace an old one is a much more common practice in China than repairing an old building (Liang, 1998). Liang (1998) further explains that, as a result of this tradition, a building could be demolished, rebuilt, and enlarged many times throughout history; in this process and the only aspects of such a building that were considered worth remembering and preserving were the original year of construction and the original building site.

Influenced by this philosophy, many fairly recently reconstructed buildings in China are considered as historic landmarks or a National Cultural Relics with a long tradition. One example is Tengwang Tower, which was originally built in 653 CE. It was rebuilt 29 times throughout history in different styles and sizes. The most recent reconstruction, using reinforced steel and concrete, was completed in 1989. Despite that, Tengwang Tower is still considered one of the Three Renowned Historic Towers in Southern China and is recognized as a Cultural Relic at the provincial level. Even when China’s new historic preservation policy was established following the guidelines set up by the Venice Charter, replacing original parts with new parts has been considered the most popular and practical method in historic preservation practice rather than preserving the original parts (Fu, 1990; Luo, 2006). For example, during the most recent renovation of Yueyang Tower between 1983 and 1984, another one of the Three Renowned Historic Towers in Southern China built around 220 CE, 45 percent of the building parts were replaced by new elements, while the other 55 percent of the building parts can only be traced back to the “preservation” work completed in 1934. However, claiming to have about 2,000

24 According to the Epilogue in Liang (1998), which was written by Liang’s wife Lin, the manuscript was completed in 1944. A largely revised version of the manuscript, with the collaboration of other scholars, was published in 1964, titled as History of Ancient Chinese Architecture.
25 A brief history of Tengwang Tower, including the number of times of reconstruction, is inscribed on a stela in front of Tengwang Tower. An image of this stela was acquired by the research during a personal trip on Mach 23, 2014.
26 For the history of Yueyang Tower, see http://www.chla.com.cn/htm/2012/1114/149290.html.
years of continuous history and important cultural value, Yueyang Tower became a National Cultural Relic in 1988.

The Chinese attitude towards “tradition,” as exemplified in the histories of these two towers, echoes the story of the “ancestral family shovel” narrated by Alsayyad (2014, p. 10), in which the processor of the shovel considers it a family tradition even though both the head and the handle of the shovel have been changed many times. Building upon the essence of this story, Alsayyad (2014, p. 10) summarizes the concept of tradition:

[T]radition rests only partially on the process of transmission, the continuing life of material or physical objects, and on inheritance of techniques and rituals from one generation to the other. But … tradition more often relies on the continuous “representation” and re-articulation of ideas more than it does with practice. In other words, tradition should not be invoked as an instrument to prevent change since in fact it incorporates change in order to sustain itself through space and time.

In the same way, the vernacular settlements in rural China rely heavily on the continuous representation and re-articulation of the idea of tradition, which is composed of the conception of continuity, actual personal experiences, and oral and written family history. If a vernacular house in rural China embodies tradition in the way that it was built using traditional materials and methods has been handed down from previous generations, home also embodies tradition in that it relies on representation and re-articulation of the ideas of the conception of self, the definition of jia, family structure, ritual practices, consanguineous relationships, social relations, and attachment to vernacular place.

3.4 Redefining the Theoretical Framework

With the integration of the understanding of tradition, the redefined theoretical framework of this dissertation is diagramed as shown in Figure 3.3. Reading vertically along the central axis, the understanding of the meaning of home in vernacular settlements in rural China is based on existing scholarship on home with an understanding of tradition. In particular, the traditions of a vernacular settlement in rural southern China that are inherited, accepted, and shared by the residents of a lineage-based settlement, have two attributes, as shown along the horizontal axis. One attribute can be summarized as the nature of vernacular place, which is characterized by a
“system of settings,” consanguineous coordinates, socialized space, and attachment to place. The second attribute is the result of certain characteristics of Chinese culture, which include the conception of self, the definition of jia, family structure, and the power of rituals. Tradition, while spontaneous and unconscious, is embedded in the physical world. Thus, through the process of transmission and ritual practice, it is a continuously representing and re-articulating ideas that represent social norms, lifestyle, and present reality.

![Diagram of theoretical framework]

Figure 3.3: The theoretical framework of this dissertation with the integration of the concept of tradition. Drawing by the author.

3.5 Research Questions

Based on the theoretical framework outlined above, this study examines the ways in which tradition affects the meanings of home for residents living in Yanxia village, Zhejiang Province, China. Specifically, this study aims to address the following key research questions.

- What are the traditions that people in Yanxia inherited, accepted, and shared?
  - What is the personal background and life experience of each participant?
• What is the family structure and family history of each participant?
• What are the daily activities and routines of each participant?
• In what kinds of ritual and cultural activities is each participant involved?
• Does the participant believe in and worship the local deity, Hugong Dadi?
• What is the major source of household income?
• Was or is the participant involved in the hospitality business that serves the pilgrims?

- What are considered the meaningful aspects of home for people living in Yanxia?
- What are the meanings of home as it is understood by people living Yanxia?
- How has tradition affected the physical, psychological, and social constructions of home for residents living in Yanxia?

### 3.6 Conclusion

The concept of self, the duality of jia, the kinship relationship, and the practice of li in Chinese rural society all challenge the spatial boundary of home and the social structure of family as set up by the existing scholarship on the meaning of home. Meanwhile, vernacular place, within the context of rural China, is contextual and relational, extended and dynamic, collectively owned, and projected by consanguineous coordinates. Thus it challenges the physical perimeter of homestead. The characteristics of Chinese culture and the nature of vernacular place in rural China call for an understanding of the concept of tradition, which is a continuous representation and re-articulation of ideas that represent social norms, lifestyle, and present reality.

The integration of the concept of tradition into this dissertation not only defines the theoretical framework for this study, but also affects the choices of research methods adopted by this study. Based on the discussions above, this study emphasizes the understandings of home and the traditions related to home from the perspective of residents in Yanxia. Therefore, ethnographic fieldwork is the main research method of this study; in particular, the method of photovoice was adopted to uncover the understandings of the meaning of home held by the participants. See Chapter 4 for the discussion of the validity of using the method of photovoice in this study.

More importantly, the theoretical framework also sets up the structure in which this dissertation is presented (Figure 3.4). Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 become the major body of
analytical findings in this dissertation, each of which derives from one of the two attributes of vernacular settlement in rural China, as outlined in the theoretical framework. Chapter 5 examines the ways in which the attachment to vernacular place has affected residents’ understandings of home, which is mainly based on the analyses of the first attribute of vernacular settlements in rural China. Chapter 6 analyzes the ways in which kinship structure and kinship relations have influenced the physical, psychological, and social constructions of home, which is mainly based on the analyses of the second attribute of vernacular settlements in rural China.

Bring another perspective, Chapter 7 focuses on economic practice and its influences on residents’ understandings of home, which, based on the existing literature, could lead to a division of a family, as well as a home. Chapter 8 extends the discussion to include young people who grew up in Yanxia, a vernacular settlement in rural China, but who moved to live in other cities. It analyzes their interpretations of home and jiaxiang, which are affected by their relationship with the vernacular place and kinship relations. Throughout, the analysis within each chapter also includes references to different aspects of ritual practices and cultural traditions.

Figure 3.4: The structure of the dissertation in relation to the theoretical framework of the study. Drawing by the author.
CHAPTER 4 METHODS AND PROCEDURES

4.1 Research Design

This dissertation project is an ethnographic study situated in Yanxia, Zhejiang Province, China; it is an interdisciplinary project that incorporates archival research and ethnographic research. In particular, this project adopted the method of photovoice, in which the participants were asked to take photographs of aspects of their jia that are meaningful to them. This research project had two phases, which were built upon two preliminary studies. The first phase included archival research and ethnographic fieldwork that focused on understanding the cultural traditions in Yanxia. The second phase focused on understanding the meanings of home for the participating residents of Yanxia through the photographs they took and the subsequent interviews focusing the content of the photographs.

4.1.1 Preliminary Study

This dissertation research was preceded by two preliminary studies. The first one was a research fellowship that was awarded to the author by the School of Architecture at Tsinghua University, Beijing, China between 2007 and 2008. The goal of this fellowship was to examine the vernacular built environment and related cultural traditions along the historic pilgrim path of Yanxia before 1949. During the fieldwork, architectural surveys that included selected buildings in the village were conducted with the help of two undergraduate students and two recent graduates. Through archival research and ethnographic fieldwork, additional data were collected, including the general history of this lineage-based village, the development of the vernacular buildings within the village before 1949, and the local cultural traditions before 1949 that were characterized by a popular folk religious practice and its supporting hospitality services.

The second preliminary study was a pilot study that was conducted in the summers of 2011 and 2012, which focused on testing the applicability and effectiveness of the method of photovoice in examining the meaning of home for residents living in Yanxia. During the summer of 2011, 14 single-use cameras were distributed to six residents living in Yanxia and three residents living in the adjacent settlement at the northern end of the mile-long pilgrim path, Chenglu. The participants, who were facing a government-planned relocation to a new settlement and the destruction of their village, were asked to take photographs of aspects of their jia that
were meaningful to them. In the summer of 2012, all the cameras were retrieved. Seven participants completed the project and took a total of 258 photographs (5 photographs are not identifiable). Short interviews were conducted at the homes of the participants or places of their choice to identify the contents of the photographs. The initial analysis showed that 47 percent of all the developed photographs focused on things outside the physical boundary of the homestead and on cultural traditions that were either valued by individual family or collectively shared by all the residents of Yanxia. This result prompted the dissertation project, which aimed to examine the relationship between collective tradition shared by the residents of Yanxia and individuals’ understandings of the meanings of home. This preliminary study also proved the effectiveness of the method of using cameras in the research. The participants captured the memorable parts of their home using the single-use cameras at their own pace; each process was completed without the interference of the researcher and possible presumptions embedded in the interview questions. During the subsequent interviews, the photographs activated the conversations and empowered the participants, helping to mitigate the asymmetrical power relationship between the interviewer and the interviewees.

4.1.2 Dissertation Research

4.1.2.1 The First Phase

The first phase of the dissertation research was carried out between September and November 2013, during which archival research in national, provincial, and local archives and ethnographic research in Yanxia were completed. The goal of the first phase of the dissertation research was to understand the cultural traditions in Yanxia as they are recognized by residents. This phase of the research also included finishing the preparation work for the second phase of the research.

The first component of the first phase of the research was to enhance the existing relationships that were established with local residents during the preliminary research and, in addition, to develop new relationships with additional residents. According to Maxwell (1996), the kind of relationship that researchers want to establish with participants is a design decision. During previous fieldwork in Yanxia, it became clear that earning the trust of the local residents was the most critical factor for the success of the fieldwork. To achieve this trusting relationship, it was essential to make the residents see that the research was motivated by a sincere desire to understand their lives, respect their culture, and maybe even help them. In addition, based on
previous experience of the researcher, repetitive visits and long-term stays also helped establish this trusting relationship. Only with the established trust, can local residents share their true stories and beliefs and take the cameras. More importantly, these initial efforts also set up the foundation for subsequent fieldwork. As Stake (2010) argues, it is important for an ethnographer to gain a personal understanding of the culture first before taking his or her camera and notebook and starting to act as a researcher.

In the meantime, participant observations were conducted, including observations of the interactions between residents, residents’ activities within and beyond their residential spaces, and residents’ daily routines and lifestyles. In particular, the annual Temple Fair, as well as the cultural and economic activities that were associated with the Temple Fair, was observed and documented. In 2013, the Temple Fair happened between September 5 and October 18, which corresponds to August 1 and September 14 of the Lunar Calendar.27 These sets of firsthand information enhanced the understanding of the cultural tradition of Yanxia, particularly in understanding the religious rituals and economic practices.

The second component of the first phase of the research was to conduct archival research and semi-structured interviews, with the goals to further understand kinship matters, religious rituals, and economic practices of Yanxia. In particular, archival research was completed in different cities, including the city of Yongkang, the county seat of the Yongkang County where Yanxia is situated, Hangzhou, the capital city of Zhejiang Province, and Beijing, where the national archive is located. The archival research mainly focused on local chronicles, the historic county records, and local family records.

Archival research for this project was challenging, because many historic records were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution between 1966 and 1976. As a result, oral tradition became an important supplement in examining historic events and cultural traditions in a vernacular settlement like Yanxia, where oral tradition has always played a critical role in transmitting cultures. As Oliver (1989) and Rapoport (1989) argue, oral tradition is essential in understanding vernacular built environments because there are no written records for the buildings; houses were built with collective effort by members of the social group to which the owner of the house belonged. More importantly, oral tradition is also an expression of the

27 The annual Temple Fair happens between August 1 and September 14 of the Lunar Calendar, which falls on different dates on Gregorian calendar.
collective culture; individuals’ narratives often represent the shared traditions of the social group to which they belong (Bauman, 1992; Goody, 1992). To that end, semi-structured interviews were conducted with residents of Yanxia to gain additional understanding of the cultural traditions and, more importantly, to understand the cultural traditions as they are recognized by residents.

All the interviews were semi-structured and in-depth (See Appendix C for interview scripts). The interviews with residents focused on family history, residential experience, the usage and meaning of residential spaces, the usage and history of public spaces in the village, cultural rituals, and the history and practice of hospitality service. The interviews were conducted at places chosen by the participants, such as at their homes or in public places.

At the end of the first phase of the dissertation research, 18 additional single-use cameras were distributed to 15 participants (14 new participants). Simple instructions on how to use the camera were also given to the participants at the time. The participants were asked to take photographs of aspects of their jia that meaningful to them, and they were asked to complete the project before February 2014 when the research would return to Yanxia.

4.1.2.2 The Intermission

The intermission period, or break from fieldwork, between the first phase and the second phase of the dissertation research was between December 2013 and January 2014, during which all the data obtained from archival research, participant observations, and interviews were processed and organized. In addition, each participant was contacted over the phone for possible questions and concerns (Plunkett, Leipert, & Ray, 2013).

4.1.2.3 The Second Phase

The second phase of the dissertation research was carried out between February and May 2014 in Yanxia. It focused on understanding the meanings of home as it is understood by the participants in Yanxia by means of the photographs they took and the subsequent interviews focusing on the content of the photographs.

During the first week of the second phase of the project, 16 cameras were retrieved, with 13 participants completing the project. In addition, another camera was retrieved the day before the departure of the researcher. After developing and documenting all the photographs from the
first 16 cameras, initial thoughts and interpretations were collected by looking through the photographs and taking notes (Plunkett et al., 2013). Semi-structured and in-depth interviews were conducted with all the participants from the pilot study and the dissertation research at the places chosen by the participants. The interviews started by having participants identify the content of each photograph and the reasons for taking such a photograph. Additional questions were embedded into the conversation, including the participant’s life story, family history, lifestyle, social role, residential experience, religious belief, and what are considered to be the cultural traditions in Yanxia. After the interviews, each participant’s homestead was documented through simple architectural survey combined with photographs.

Moreover, additional participants were interviewed during this phase of the project to expand the samples to include younger residents and people that moved out of Yanxia. The interview questions included the participants’ life story, family history, lifestyle, social role, residential experience, religious belief, and what are considered to be the cultural traditions in Yanxia.

During the second phase of the dissertation research, additional participant observations were conducted to understand residents’ daily activities within and beyond their homesteads, as well as the cultural traditions of Yanxia and the ways that these activities and traditions related to and interacted with various dimensions of the environment. This dataset was triangulated with the data obtained from the interviews and archival research. In addition, two important cultural events were observed and documented: the Dragon Dance on January 15 of the Lunar Calendar, which marks the end of the Chinese New Year celebration, and the ancestral veneration rituals during the Qingming Festival in early April.

4.2 Data Collection

4.2.1 Sampling Process

The sampling process was integrated into the fieldwork. It was an interactive version of what LeCompte et al. (1993, p. 69) call criterion-based selection. This process involved not only a selection of participants, but also settings, events, and processes. The samples not only included the typical cases, but also represented the diversity of the population (Maxwell, 1996).

The sampling process tried to balance a few key variables between the participants. These variables include gender, age, dwelling types, locations of the residence, and historic or present
involvement of the hospitality service. All these variables are critical in this dissertation research for the following reasons. In a lineage-based settlement, almost all of the males are descendants of the same family, the Cheng family in the case of Yanxia, while most females moved here after marriage. Therefore, it is important to understand whether and how residential history and family history affect the understandings of home between males and females. Second, as discussed in Chapter 1, most of the young residents have moved to cities for different reasons. Thus, it is critical to examine whether and how the present dominant trend of moving out of historic and vernacular settlements affects the understanding of home by young people. Third, dwelling types are classified into two major types: the old-style houses built with traditional materials (mainly wood), and the new-style houses built with modern materials (mainly concrete). The essential difference between the old-style and the new-style houses lies in the kind of architectural spaces that are defined; the old-style houses are all courtyard houses, while most of the new-style houses are not. In addition, locations of the residence are classified into two types: residences located on the historic path and residences located on the new road. This difference affects the adjacency of residential spaces and shared public places, such as ancestral halls, open spaces, and ponds. Therefore, it is important to include participants living in both housing styles and at different locations to understand whether and how the styles and locations of the residential space affects residents’ understandings of home. Finally, for a given family, their involvement in the hospitality service (such as providing services for pilgrims) in the past is part of the family history and the involvement in the hospitality service in the present represents a particular lifestyle. This variable helps to explain whether and how economic practice affects the understanding of home.

In addition, the selection of the samples was affected by the relationships between the researcher and residents during earlier fieldwork; only the residents who had developed personal and trusting relationships with the researcher received the cameras. This kind of personal and trusting relationship could be passed on from an existing participant to his or her close family members, who later became new participants. Therefore, certain participants are family members who live in the same house (see Appendix A). This attribute of the samples is valuable because a controlled comparative study on the ways in which tradition has affected the understandings of home can be made between family members living in the same house.
4.2.2 Understanding the Samples

Participants C1 to C23 participated, or intended to participate, in the photo-taking phase of the project. In particular, three participants, participant C6, C8, and C9 were recruited from Chenglu village in order to set up comparative analysis. However, only 20 participants completed the project. Participant C6 withdrew because of personal health issues; participant C8 did not complete the study due to his sudden death; participant C10 did not take the photographs, but she participated in the interviews. In addition, among these 20 participants that participated in the photo-talking phase of the project, two participants did not participated in the subsequent interviews about the content of the photographs. Participant C11 took the photographs but did not have the chance to discuss the content of the photographs with the researcher, because he finished the roll of film the day before the final departure of the researcher, and it takes more than a week to process and print the film in Beijing. Participant C22 took the photographs but did not want to discuss the content of the photographs with the researcher for unknown reasons; however, his wife, participant C31, briefly discussed the content of the photographs with the researcher. Moreover, two additional participants, participant C24 and C26, also assisted in the photo-taking process by giving ideas on what to include. Participant C24 offered suggestions to her husband, participant C13. Participant C26 received a camera, but he gave it to his granddaughter, participant C7, to take photographs, during which he offered some suggestions on where to photograph certain shots. Since participant C26’s contribution was limited and the interview about the content of the photographs was conducted with his granddaughter, participant C26 is not listed as one of the participants for the photo-taking phase of the project, but is included as a participant of the interviews. Finally, 16 residents, participants C24 to C38, participated in the additional semi-structured and in-depth interviews. Therefore, a total of 36 people participated in this project; 20 participants took photographs, and 34 participants participated in the in-depth interviews.

Among the first 20 participants (Table 4.1), 12 are male and eight are female. Thirteen participants live on the historic path, while six live on the new road. In particular, participant C9 lives along the section of the historic path inside Chenglu village (Figure 1.8). Seven participants live in old-style houses, while 12 live in the new-style houses. One participant, although not currently living in Yanxia, has close family members living in an old-style house on the historic path. Four participants’ families have been involved in the hospitality business in the
past (before 1949); nine participants’ families are currently in the hospitality business; nine participants’ families were never involved in the business. Among the 16 participants that were interviewed (Table 4.2), nine are male, and seven are female. Six participants live on the historic path, while three used to live on the historic path. Six participant live on the new road, while one has close family members living on the new road. Three participants live in old-style houses, while three used to live in old-style houses. Nine live in the new-style houses, while one has close family members living in new-style houses. Two participants’ families have been involved in the hospitality business in the past (before 1949); eight participants’ families are currently in the hospitality business; six participants’ family were never involved in the business. Overall, there are 21 male participants and 15 female participants; 17 participants are younger than 50 as of 2013 (Table 4.2).

During the prolonged fieldwork, the researcher developed different kinds of relationships with these participants, despite the effort of trying to know them equally well. As a result, the researcher acquired different levels of knowledge regarding their personal stories, family backgrounds, and their understandings of home; some participants were particularly well known compared to others. In addition, the data that were acquired through fieldwork, as scholars argue, were always personal, since they were the outcome of the interactions between the participants and the researcher (Maxwell, 1996; Portelli, 2003). A brief biographical description is given for each participant in Appendix A; photographs of their dwellings, either taken by the researcher or by the participants, are also included.
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-18</td>
<td>C23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: The attributes of the participants that participated in the photo-taking phase of the project. * is placed next to the participants who are not living in Yanxia as of 2014. His or her attributes are marked according to his or her family members’ attributes.
Table 4.2: The attributes of the participants that received interviews. * is placed next to the participants who are not living in Yanxia as of 2014. His or her attributes are marked according to his or her family members’ attributes.

4.2.3 Data Collection

All the archival materials were purchased, whenever it was possible, scanned, or photocopied during the archival research. Field notes, photographs, and videos were taken during participant observations. The field notes not only included observations while being in the field, but also initial reactions and analysis, as well as methodological, theoretical, and personal notes.

Photographs were used to document the built environments and to capture visual aspects of the data that could not be well-represented solely through field notes, such as the social interactions between residents in public places and the ancestral veneration rituals during the Qingming Festival. Videos were taken during the Temple Fair when rich ritual and cultural activities were happening at the same time. In addition, simple architectural surveys were completed for the residential spaces of all the participants.
All photographs taken by the participants were scanned and saved in the computer in the order in which they were taken. In addition, all participants received copies of the photographs they took. Verbal consent was obtained from all the participants either before giving them the cameras or before the interviews. However, none of the interviews were recorded, since voice recording was culturally unacceptable for most participants. Notes were taken during the interviews instead; they were, then, transcribed in to Microsoft Word files.

4.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis began in the field (Gibbs, 2007). This early and preliminary analysis helped to redirect subsequent fieldwork to further illuminate key topics and theme evolving in the initial analysis. For example, the preliminary analysis of the data obtained through archival research and oral channels complemented each other and led to additional sources of data. This ongoing process helped to guide the fieldwork moving forward. The preliminary analysis of the early interviews also helped to improve the subsequent interviews by uncovering missing components.

The photographs taken by the participants and the interviews are the most important dataset for this project; they are essential in understanding the meanings of home for the participating residents living in Yanxia. This dataset is the focal point of all other data obtained from archival research and ethnographic fieldwork. In the meantime, the data obtained through archival research and ethnographic fieldwork triangulated the analyses of the photographs and the subsequent interviews.

Three methods were used to analyze the photographs and the associated interviews. The first one was the method of content analysis, during which all the photographs were categorized according to the coding assigned to each photograph. The content analysis of the photographs cannot reveal the meaning of each image; however, the analysis provides a general understanding of responses to the research question (Rose, 2007). A total of 626 photographs were taken by the participants. A system of coding was developed after initial review and analysis of all the photographs. Six main categories were used, including: inside the homestead, outside the homestead, cultural and social activities, family members and domestic animals, personal vehicles, and un-identifiable photographs. The first four categories were further divided into sub-categories (Table 4.3). The content analysis shows that 49 percent of all the identifiable photographs (or 47 percent of all photographs), or 297 photographs, focus on things outside the
physical boundary of the homestead and on traditions that are either treasured by an individual family or collectively shared by all the residents of Yanxia. This result provide a general understanding of the role of tradition in shaping participants’ understandings of home. These 297 photographs include places or views adjacent to the property, homesteads of the extended family, properties that used to belong to the family, other buildings and spaces in the village, ancestral halls and historic buildings, Fangyan Mountain, landscape in distance, historic books and records, personal sociocultural activities, and public sociocultural activities.

The second method of analysis was to analyze the data from the interviews through data-driven inductive coding, or open coding, with the assistance of the software NVivo 8. The coding process focused on not only the descriptions, but also concepts, meanings, and symbols (Gibbs, 2007). The initial codes were then organized into 33 categories to create hierarchies (Gibbs, 2007; Maxwell, 1996). Finally, the data from the interviews were coded one more layer with analytic codes (Gibbs, 2007). These codes included family ties, attachment to the land, sense of ownership, personal possessions, personal accomplishment, roots and home towns, attitude toward historic buildings, attitude toward new-style housing, attitude toward moving, memories of the past, challenges in building a house, expectations for the future, romantic nostalgia, desire for the better, cultural traditions, social relations between neighbors, and meanings of home. These analytic codes both contribute to a further refining of the theoretical framework and help to develop the written structure of the dissertation.

Integrated with the second method was the third method, which Maxwell calls contextualizing strategies (1996, p.79). Each photograph taken by the participant was analyzed within the context of the personal, family, and social background, obtained through the subsequent interviews on the photographs. When combined, all the analyses from both the photographs taken by the same participant and that person’s narratives formed a comprehensive analysis of that individual’s understanding of home. Meanwhile, there are similarities between certain participants in their understandings of home, which have been influenced by collective traditions shared by the social group to which they belong. Therefore, when connecting the ways in which the concept of home is understood by certain participants with the tradition they share, this project forms a better understanding of the ways in which different aspects of tradition affect the meanings of home among residents in Yanxia.
Table 4.3: The content analyses of all the photographs taken by the participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtotal of each category</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building/rooms exterior</td>
<td>10.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intense space</td>
<td>85.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architectural elements (non-movable)</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artwork/movable decor</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other interior/homestead shots</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtyard Space</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape/garden inside the courtyard</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places/views adjacent to the property</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homesteads of the extended family</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Properties used to belong to the family</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other buildings/spaces in the village</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancestral halls/historic buildings</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangyus Mountain</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape in distance</td>
<td>9.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic books/records</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural/social activity (private)</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural/social activities (public)</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members/relatives/neighbours</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pets and domestic animals</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private vehicles</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un-identifiable photographs</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 Validity

During the ethnographic fieldwork, the data collection process followed established research procedures in social science to prevent validity threats. The methods used to ensure validity include taking field notes, photographs, video recordings, and member checks. In the meantime, triangulation was used at different levels. Data obtained through archival research, participant observations, photographs, video recording, and interviews were triangulated with each other to form a vigorous understanding of the cultural tradition of Yanxia, as well as the understanding of the meaning of home for each participant. More importantly, the use of photographs taken by the participants helped minimize possible researcher bias and reactivity imposed the researcher.

There are several advantages to adopting the method of photovoice in this study, which was demonstrated in the research process.

First of all, the cameras enabled the participants to play a more active role in the process and allowed them to (unconsciously) reveal their own perspectives on personal and private experiences within the social and physical contexts (Clark, 1999; Kolb, 2008). As C. Wang and Burris (1997) argue, photographs taken by the participants document the reality of their lives. In some cases of this project, the reality of a participant’s life might not have been available if the researcher was present. For example, participant C14 (F, 73)28 took a photograph of her family dinner on Chinese New Year’s Eve, which was a private family event (Figure 4.1); therefore, a researcher would not be able to see this without imposing a change on it. In addition, the participants in this project had the cameras for a long period of time and were able to take photographs of what they recognize as the valuable parts of their homes at their own pace without the interference of the researcher.

In another case, participant C22 (M, 37) was not willing to share his feelings and thoughts with the researcher for unknown reasons; however, he was willing to use the camera to speak for him. When examining his photographs, it is clear that he had put considerable thought into this project. He took a total of 22 photographs that cover a wide range of subjects, including people, buildings, things, and views. These photographs, together, form an insightful narrative of his understanding of the meaningful aspects of home, which he carefully laid out for himself, as well as for the researcher. His understanding of home includes close family members, the place

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28 The information inside the bracket indicate the gender and the age (as of 2013) of each participant.
he used to live, his present residential space, close neighbors, places that he used to hang out when he was young, views of the historic path that he walks pass every day, a meaningful object made by his wife, and family cultural events (Figure 4.2, 4.3). Therefore, these two example demonstrate that without the use of cameras, the researcher would only be able to reach a limited understanding of the research question, because the participants would not be able to reveal their own perspectives due to their inactive role in the research process.

Figure 4.1: The family dinner at Chinese New Year’s Eve. Photo by participant C14.

Figure 4.2: The place participant C22 used to hang out when he was young. Photo by participant C22.
From the researcher’s perspective, photographs taken by the participants captured, revealed, and amplified critical information that could be easily omitted and forgotten during observations and typical interviews. The use of photographs also allowed the researcher to examine intrinsic information and get into the private world of the participants (Luna Hernández, 2009). During the interviews, the photographs activated and led the conversations, which helped minimize any presumptions embedded in the pre-structured interviews. For example, participants C1 and C4 both included a view of the staircase in their houses. From the perspective of the researcher, a professionally trained architect, these are two typical wooden staircases with few differences; without the photographs taken by these participants, these staircases would not become the topic of the interviews because they do not seem to hold special meanings in constructing the meaning of home. However, these two staircases sustain particular, yet different, meanings for participants C1 (F, 63) and C4 (F, 77) in their understandings of the meaningful aspects of home. Participant C1 believes that a well-built staircase was precious in the old days, since poor families could only afford ladders (Figure 4.4). Therefore, this staircase, just like those beautiful wood carvings in her house that she included in her understanding of the meaningful aspects of home, is a statement of appreciation of the past. For her, the staircase not only represents the history of the house, a once luxurious hotel, but also the tradition of the family, the descendants of the richest family in the village. Participant C4, on the other hand, has different stories for the staircase in her house (Figure 4.5). As a daughter of the family, she used to live in a room upstairs. The staircase, therefore, is part of her childhood memory, which was
the reason she took the photograph from the second level looking down the staircase. In addition, she also included the view of the courtyard from her window upstairs. However, the scenery has changed. The courtyard house was shared by all family members and was much populated years earlier; yet it remains largely empty in the present day because most people moved to their new-style houses. What she has left are only memories preserved in these views.

![Figure 4.4: The staircase inside participant C1’s house. Photo by participant C1.](image)

![Figure 4.5: The staircase inside participant C4’s house. Photo by participant C4.](image)

Most importantly, the cameras empowered the participants during the process and the subsequent interviews and helped to balance the asymmetrical power relationship between the interviewer and the interviewees (Clark, 1999; Maxwell, 1996). In addition, using photographs taken by participants usually has a clear activist and political focus, with the goal of reaching policy makers (C. Wang & Burris, 1997). In particular, this method has been proven to be an effective approach when the research focuses on individuals or groups living on the margins, such as homeless individuals (C. Wang, Cash, & Powers, 2000), people living with mental illness (Thompson et al., 2008), and rural women (Leipert & Smith, 2009; C. Wang, Burris, & Xiang, 1996).

In this study, the participants belong to a marginalized and underserved social group: the residents living in rural China. Their voices, revealed through the photographs they took, have the potential to influence the policy of “Building a Socialist Countryside,” which affects 674
million people living in rural China. To that end, the use of photovoice as the key research method for this study empowered the participants by making them feel that their opinions were respected and valued. Therefore, the use of photovoice helped to mitigate the asymmetrical power relationship between the researcher and the participants. More importantly, adopting this method also helped to achieve this project’s broader social and political goal: to provide a new perspective for the construction of the new socialist countryside, where collective traditions could be preserved and meanings of home could be sustained.
CHAPTER 5  THE HOME: THE ATTACHMENT TO THE LAND

At our place here, we have the mountains, have the water, have the land, and I have my private plot. If I move down there, won’t I then become a city dweller, who can only eat? The water from the mountains is very good, and it is free. There are not even any ponds down there. How could I wash my clothes? How could I live my life? And they say that it will be better than my present life?

- Participant C25 (M, 75)

5.1 Introduction

The closest Chinese counterpart for “vernacular architecture” is xiangtu jianzhu; the phrase xiangtu is the adjective to define the noun jianzhu, which means architecture. Sharing the same characteristics of vernacular architecture defined by Oliver (2003); Rapoport (1969), xiangtu architecture is also “designed” and built as the result of the collaboration between craftsmen and the owner, or the collective owners, of the building; it utilizes local materials and technologies, suits local cultures and lifestyle, and is adaptive and additive in nature. However, xiangtu architecture usually only refers to vernacular buildings that are located in rural China. This narrower field of study, as well as some additional attributes of xiangtu architecture, can be understood and revealed by examining the adjective, xiangtu (乡土). Xiang, in this phrase, means rural or native; tu means soil or land. The character 乡 is a simplified version of 郷, which evolves from another character, 卿 (pronounced qing). Qing (卿) originally meant people having an intimate dinner together, as it is pictorially represented in the oracle bone scripts created in the Shang Dynasty (1600-1046 BC) (Figure 5.1).29 The character 土, as explained in the second-century Chinese dictionary, Shuowen Jiezi (说文解字), depicts the medium that supports the growth of everything, which is pictorially represented by the vertical stroke (Figure 5.2).30 Thus, the very meaning of xiangtu, as an adjective, defines the kind of architecture or built environment in the Chinese context not only by its location, but also through its attachment to and dependence on the land and the social relations that are supported by the land. Thus, Chinese

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29 For the origin and the development of the character 乡, see http://www.vividict.com/WordInfo.aspx?id=1896
30 Shuowen Jiezi means Explaining and Analyzing Characters. The original text that explains the character 土 in Shuowen Jiezi is: 土，地之吐生物者也。二象地之下、地之中，丨，物出形也。凡土之属皆从土。
definition of xiangtu architecture is bounded by the location, which is rural China, and emphasizes the residents’ attachment to their native land and the social relations supported by the vernacular settlement. It is the xiangtu architecture and built environment that constitute the residential environment for the participants of this study and the cultural traditions shared by residents of Yanxia.

As a pioneering sociologist and anthropologist who focused his earlier career on rural China, Fei (1992) argues that the people living in rural China make their living and build their livelihood from the soil, which is the root of everything else in rural China and the foundation of Chinese society. As a result, people often figuratively, as well as literally, used the word tuqi (土气) (Fei, 2008), which was translated as “soiled” in the English translation of Fei’s book (1992) (a better translation of tuqi is lacking refinement or elegance), to describe someone from the rural area. For the same reason, the god of the earth, tudi (土地), is the most popular, as well as most humanized, god, in rural China (Fei, 1992, 2008). For example, the temple of tudi in Yanxia is called Benbao Temple (本保庙), which means the temple that protects the root and the source (Figure 5.3). Inside the temple, tudi and his wife, along with the God of Wealth, another local deity, and his wife, receive offerings twice a month on the 1st and the 15th day of each lunar month (Figure 5.4). Usually depicted as an affable old couple, tudi and his wife answer all kinds of mundane requests from the local residents. Fei (1992, 2008) first established this deep attachment between the rural society and the soil in his book Xiangtu Zhongguo (乡土中国), first published in Chinese in 1947, or From the Soil: The Foundation of Chinese Society, as Fei renamed it for the English version published in 1992. Based on his earlier field studies in rural China, Fei argued that it is the attachment to the soil that shapes rural society in China, from spatial relations to social relations, from morality to custom, from rituals to rules, from desire and necessity, and from family to lineage.
Figure 5.3: Locations of the ponds and public open spaces. Drafted by the author based on a map provided by the local government.
When examining Fei’s argument in detail, it is clear that Fei does not literally mean that residents in rural China are only attached to the dirt composing the soil. Fei uses the word “soil” not only to represent the physical land in rural China, but also the meaning and relationship embedded in the word xiangtu, which suggests a location-bound attribute embedded with social relations as explained earlier. Thus, the underlined meaning of xiangtu can be described as a place-bound relationship, in which social relations and attachment to land create meanings.

As an extension of Fei’s argument, this chapter examines the ways in which this place-bound relationship frames the meaning of home as the residents of Yanxia understand it. This chapter starts by specifying the way in which land is defined for the purpose of this study and, then, examines the residents’ past and present place-bound relationships based on the ethnographic fieldwork. These relationships are a form of tradition that has been constructed over time and passed down for generations (Shils, 1981). They are also the kind of intangible cultural heritage that represents a form of social and cultural process that helps build the collective memory and identity, locality, social values, and community of the residents living in Yanxia, as discussed in Chapter 3 (Appadurai, 1995; Byrne, 2008; Davison, 2008; Gillis, 1994; Harrison, 2010).

Lastly, this chapter outlines four reasons for the ways in which this place-bound relationship contributes to framing the meaning of home as it is understood by the residents. These reasons are: 1) the place-bound relationship sustains the xiangtu lifestyle, which requires many fundamental resources for living from the land, 2) the meanings of place-bound
relationship are supported by daily activities, social relations, and cultural performances that take place on various kinds of public open places, 3) the place-bound relationship endows a sense of ownership that is essential to the construction of the meaning of home, 4) and the place-bound relationship facilitates the construction of individual and collective identities. It is important to note that these four reasons are interrelated and interlocking; they are the four aspects of the same question, namely how does this place-bound relationship frame the meaning of home, examined from different perspectives. The purpose of dissecting the answers to this question is to better understand the ways in which each aspect of the place-bound relationship, as one dimension of the tradition collectively shared by the residents of Yanxia, plays a role in affecting the meaning of home for people living in Yanxia.

5.2 Defining the Land

There are four forms of landscape that are highlighted in residents’ relationship to the land for the purpose of this study, which is based on the photographs taken by the participants and through the interviews. They are the cultivated land, the water sources (the ponds, the creeks, and the wells), the public open spaces (the pilgrim path and the small open spaces in the village), and the featured mountains and hills that define the valley in which Yanxia is located. Except for the two young women who moved to Yanxia after marriage, 34 (out of 36) participants included at least one of these forms of landscape in their understanding of the meaningful aspects of their homes either through the photographs they took or the interviews. Specifically, there were 9 (out of 20) participants who photographed their vegetable gardens or private plots, and 27 (out of 34) discussed their relationships with the cultivated land in the interviews; 11 participants photographed the water sources, and 21 talked about the water usage; 7 participants photographed the open spaces, and 13 talked about the usage and the activities that took place in these shared public places; 10 participants photographed the featured mountains, and 23 discussed their attachment to the surrounding mountains (Table 5.1). Currently, all of the agricultural land, parts of the mountains and hills, and all of the land within the village, including all of the building sites, ponds, and open spaces, are collectively owned by all the residents of Yanxia. However, this is a limited ownership in the sense that the land cannot be sold or transferred. Meanwhile, this collective land ownership is subject to government requisition for public interest as described in Chapter 1.
Table 5.1: The number of participants who photographed and discussed different forms of the land.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Form</th>
<th>Included in the Photographs (20)</th>
<th>Discussed During the Interviews (34)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultivated Land</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Sources</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Open Space</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Featured Mountains</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3 Understanding the Place-Bound Relationship

5.3.1 Cultivated Land

There are two kinds of cultivated land: agricultural land and private plots. Due to mild winters, the land is arable all year long. Each resident of Yanxia has an equal share of the agricultural land that is mainly used for cultivating grains. There are about 60 acres of agricultural land. Some of them are located within the Fangyan valley, while others are located within the secondary valleys, including Xiahu-Keng, Shang-Keng, and Xie-Keng, and can be away from residents’ residential spaces (Figure 1.6, 1.8). Due to limited arable land, the residents cannot make a living from selling the grains harvested from their own lands, but farm only to feed the family. Currently, there are no residents cultivating grains anymore. Therefore, the agricultural land that is away from the settlement is abandoned, while the land nearby is mainly to use to cultivate vegetables (Figure 5.5). Participant C23 (M, 70) clearly recalled: “the last time I cultivated grains was when I was 60 (the year of 2003). I then went to Sichuan Province to visit my daughter and to have some fun after I harvested the late rice that year.”

According to the residents, there are multiple reasons that contribute to abandoning the agricultural land in distance. First of all, the wild boars damage and eat the grains. Therefore, as fewer farmers grow grains, the loss for each farmer is greater, since the wild boars will damage and eat more of the grains owned by each of the remaining farmers. Before the use of the gas stove and electric heating devices, every family collected large quantities of firewood from the mountains for heating and cooking. Poor families also sold firewood to people living in other villages for additional income. As participant C9 (M, 77) recalled, he had to hike 10 kilometers to get firewood, because the mountains nearby were left with bare rocks. In recent decades, as the demand for firewood decreased, vegetation returned and flourished in the once rocky hills, and so did wild boars, as the vegetation provides places for wild boars to hide and sleep. A second reason for abandoning the agricultural land is that the hilly terrain hinders the use of...
modern agricultural machinery. Meanwhile, the migration of the younger generations to cities seeking high paid jobs has left limited manpower in the village to continue the labor-intensive work. This was the main reason for participant C23 (M, 70) to stop farming at the age of 60; he could not bear the hard labor anymore. Lastly, the development of modern agriculture elsewhere in China lowered the relative cost of rice and flour available from the market. Residents stopped farming when they realized that it is cheaper to purchase rice and flour than to cultivate these foods themselves, considering the cost of seeds, fertilizer, and the potential loss due to wild boars and bad weather.

In addition to have the right to cultivate agricultural land, every family has its own private plot, where they mainly cultivate vegetables. As explained in Chapter 1, the word “private” does not entitle ownership, but only endows usage rights. The private plots are also collectively owned by all of the residents in Yanxia. Therefore, residents are not allowed to rent, transfer, or sell their private plots; however, they are free to grow any agricultural products on the land, and the income from the sale of products is exempt from tax. Due to a relatively mild winter, the residents can cultivate different kinds of vegetables all year around, including cabbage, turnip, luffa, bok choy, pumpkin, soy bean, cucumber, eggplant, and pepper. In the fall, most families also dry and marinate some vegetable for the winter ((Figure 5.6, 5.7).
5.3.2 Water Sources

The water sources supported by the land include the creeks that collect water from the adjacent mountains and pass through the entire village, the ponds that are usually situated in front of historic buildings or inside or adjacent to once large hotels, and the wells. Even the tap water comes from a local reservoir that collects water from the adjacent mountains to the southeast of the Fangyan valley.

In order to better preserve the water, the residents have been following certain unwritten rules on how to use the water, yet there have been some changes in recent decades. According to participants C1 (F, 63) and C25 (M, 75), the wells used to provide water for drinking and cooking; however, with the convenience of indoor plumbing since the late 1980s, fewer people drink water from wells. Most of the wells were dug by individual families either within or adjacent to their property and are for private use only. There is only one working public well in the village (Figure 5.3, 5.8), Yinquan, which was dug by the owner of Chengrenchang Hotel, once the largest hotel in Yanxia. Currently, residents living adjacent to Yinquan still use the water for various purposes. The pond water has been used for doing laundry and the secondary
resources for irrigation; it can also be used to extinguish fires when needed. The creeks have been the main source for irrigation. In addition, residents used to wash vegetables and fruits in the creeks. However, in recent years most residents started to pre-wash them in the ponds and then rinse them using the tap water. Some residents, such as participants C1 (F, 63) and C15 (F, 72), believe that the use of modern toilets polluted the water in the creeks by flushing wastewater directly into the creeks.

Thus, the ponds have become the major water source outside individual homesteads, where people perform daily activities, such as washing vegetables and doing laundry. There are four major ponds in the village that are presently used by the residents on a daily basis. They are Qian-Tang, in front of Degeng-Ju, Yuanliu-Tang, in front of Shiyuan Ancestral Hall, Cheyue-Tang, which is used to be part of Chenglichong’s Mansion, and the pond in front of Hotel Lao-Renchang (Figure 5.3, 5.9).

Figure 5.8: Yinquan, the only public well in Yanxia. It was dug by the owner of Chengrenchang Hotel. As the descendant of the hotel owner, participant C17 included this well as his understanding of the meaningful aspects of home. Photo by participant C17.
5.3.3 Public Open Spaces

There are three major open spaces in Yanxia that have been the important public places in supporting residents’ daily activities, social interactions, and ritual performances. Additionally, the pilgrim path is not only a circulation corridor, but also a place that supports social relations and certain cultural events. The open spaces are the small plazas in front of Degeng-Ju, Shiyuan Ancestral Hall, and Shaochang Ancestral Hall, which are all located in the section of the village that was built before the boom of the hospitality business in the middle of the nineteenth century (Figure 5.3). The main reason for the concentration of the open spaces in the older section of the village is that all of the collectively owned buildings that survived in history are located in the older section of the village, to which the open spaces are attached. In addition, the development of the village since the late nineteenth century was mainly driven by the hotel business and the competition between the hotel owners. As a result, the newly built hotels and houses were tightly situated next to each other along both sides of the pilgrim path. This settlement pattern, which is linear-shaped and facing-the-pilgrim-path, hindered the development of new open spaces.

5.3.4 Featured Landscape

The Danxia landform, which is characterized by red-colored sandstone, not only defines the valley in which Yanxia is situated, but also becomes a featured landscape that is endowed with meaning (Figure 1.9). As the most dominant landform, Fangyan Mountain, as well as Nanyan
Mountain to its south and Xiangbi-Gang (Elephant’s Nose Mountain) to its north, defines the western edge of the valley (Figure 1.8). The east side of Fangyan Mountain is a steep cliff, which glows under the morning sun and bathes the entire valley in a warm red tone (Figure 5.10). This might be the reason the first settlers named their village Yanxia, which means “underneath the rock.” This may also be the reason that a traveling monk was attracted to this area and built a Buddhist temple on the top of Fangyan Mountain in 850 C.E., which has been the shrine for a local deity for over 900 years. At the eastern side of the valley, three lower hills run roughly east-west and sandwich two secondary valleys in between. Having unique landforms, these three lower hills are named Shizi (Lion) Mountain, Wugong (Centipede) Hill, and Xiyi (Lizard) Hill, from north to south. The secondary valley between Wugong Hill and Xiyi Hill is where the settlement began at least 700 years ago. Benbao Temple (or the Temple of the Earth God), originally located on Xiyi Hill facing the settlement, is currently situated on Wugong Hill overlooking and protecting the village.

Figure 5.10: The east side of Fangyan Mountain glows under the morning sun. From this perspective, one can barely see the Buddhist temple on the top of Fangyan Mountain (top left). Photo by the author.

Local folklore links all the featured landscape together. In summary, thousands of years ago, an evil centipede wanted to occupy the Wufeng valley (a valley to the northwest of the Fangyan valley). A fairy tried to stop the centipede by throwing a large rock to block the entrance of the Wufeng valley and turned the rock into a rooster inside a cage. The centipede ran south; the fairy turned a rock into a lizard guarding the southern exit. The centipede ran north;
the fairy turned a large rock into a lion guarding the northern exit. Meanwhile, an elephant with a large nose blocked the northwest exit. The centipede realized that he had nowhere to run; he then, turned himself into a rocky hill. The cage with the rooster inside was then turned into Fangyan Mountain, the lion into Shizi Mountain, the lizard into Xiyi Hill, and the elephant into Xiangbi-Gang. Together, they have been guarding the evil centipede for millennia. As a result, all these mountains and hills form the Fangyan valley.

5.4 The Xiangtu Lifestyle

The fundamental reason that residents of Yanxia have developed this place-bound relationship is because they acquire most of their resources for living from the land they live on, yet with almost no financial cost to them. According to participant C21 (F, 61):

Our place is very nice! It is warm in the winter, cool in the summer. The water here is good too; it is from the mountain over there. Here we own the mountains, the paddy field, and the dry agricultural land. I can go to the mountains to get firewood; I can farm. There are moso bamboos in the mountains. Even without any income, I can still have a full stomach!

As summarized by participant C21, she, as well as other residents, can acquire firewood and bamboo from the mountains and drinking water from the local reservoir. With additional effort, she and other residents can harvest rice and vegetables from the fields. According to Rapoport (2005), the ways in which people allocate resources, such as time, money, effort, and involvement, are based on systematic choices that build their lifestyle. People’s lifestyle represents their values, worldview, and, above all, their culture. Therefore, the way in which residents of Yanxia live their lives as summarized by participant C21 quoted above, or the xiangtu lifestyle, nurtures the place-bound relationship; in turn, this place-bound relationship sustains the xiangtu lifestyle through the continuous practices of acquiring resources for living from the land that is outside individual homesteads. The following section analyze three aspects of this xiangtu lifestyle that have been nurturing the place-bound relationship; they are growing one’s own foods, the use of traditional stoves that depend on firewood, and the access to and usage of water. These aspects of the xiangtu lifestyle require residents to constantly step outside their homesteads to perform fundamental daily activates. As a result, the place-bound
relationship that is nurtured by the xiangtu lifestyle includes territories outside the individual homesteads and places where residents acquire food, firewood, and water.

5.4.1 Growing Their Own Food

The most important aspect of this place-bound relationship is that the land provides the fundamental resources for living, food, with almost no financial cost to the residents. Different from city dwellers, most residents in Yanxia, especially the seniors, do not have jobs or pensions. The fact that they can acquire food from the land dramatically lowers their cost of living. In addition to saving money, which is not a main concern for residents who are working in the city or have income from the hospitality business or pensions, there are other reasons that residents prefer to grow vegetables for themselves. These reasons include “they are free of fertilizers” (C30, F, 41), “you know when you spray pesticide” (C1, F, 63), \(^{31}\) “I can put my mind at ease” (C32, F, 43), and “they taste better” (C34, M, 40). In summary, all 30 participants living in Yanxia, or their family members, cultivate their own private plots for various kinds of vegetables all year long. Meanwhile, they only need to purchase meat, fish, tofu, and a small amount of vegetables that are difficult to grow themselves.

In addition to practical reasons, cultivating vegetables is a lifestyle the residents enjoy and in which they have a sense of pride. As one of the 9 participants that photographed the arable land as a valuable aspect of their homes, participant C1 (F, 63) also took a photograph of her vegetable garden, which is roughly the size of two parking spots and filled with various kinds of vegetables (Figure 5.11). She proudly said that with some “casual” work, she always has too many vegetables for her family to eat, so she gives the extra to her daughter’s family living in the city. She continued, “no one purchases vegetables, only the young people do.” Even though some young people do cultivate land themselves, as participant C30 (F, 41) and C35 (F, 49) do, most of them do not because they have full-time jobs. In the latter case, these young people, such as participants C22 (M, 37), C31 (F, 37), and C32 (F, 43), receive vegetables from their parents or parents-in-law. This simple action of giving vegetables not only reinforces the pride held by

\(^{31}\) According to the participants C1, C20, and C30, after being sprayed for pesticides, vegetables need to stay in the fields for another seven days for pesticides to become harmless to human beings, but commercial farmers might sell these vegetables earlier for higher profits.
the seniors and practically helps the youth, but also strengthens the family relations, which is discussed in Chapter 6.

Figure 5.11: Participant C1’s vegetable garden. Photo by participant C1.

5.4.2 Use of Traditional Firewood Stoves

Another important attribute of the xiangtu lifestyle is the use of traditional stoves that depend on firewood. This practice inevitably fosters and sustains the place-bound relationship. All 12 participants living in the traditional style houses have traditional stoves that they use either on a daily basis or periodically. Of the remaining 18 participants that live in the new style houses in Yanxia, 12 participants have traditional stoves built inside their homes. According to the participants, using traditional stoves has additional benefits in addition to saving money on energy bills. There is a water pipe that is made of bronze and circulates inside the stove; it is called tongtangchang (铜汤肠). Residents love this feature, because “when the cooking is done, the water is boiled too (C1, F, 63),” and they can obtain water from a little bronze faucet on the side of the stove. Meanwhile, the bricks and mud that are used to build the stove act as insulation, which guarantees that “the hot water is available all day long (C5, F, 26).” With their large size, as well as their convenience and performance for slow cooking, traditional stoves are frequently used for certain foods, such as congee, and for specific occasions, such as during holidays when cooking dinner is done for a large family. It is also beneficial to use the traditional stove during the winter when the heat from cooking also heats up the kitchen at the same time. Participant C5, a young woman living in the city, said that she is still emotionally attached to the
stove, since it is part of her childhood memories. She recalled that her grandparents only used the traditional stove once a year during the Qingming Festival (or the Tomb Sweeping Day) to cook her favorite food: *qingmingguo* (Figure 5.12). In contrast, participant C23, a 70-year old man (as of 2013), has been using the same stove his entire life, which is inside the same kitchen built by his grandmother. He took a photograph of his beloved stove as an important and meaningful element that constructs his understanding of *home* (Figure 5.13). Meanwhile, he worries that he would not have a traditional stove if he were relocated to the new housing. In addition, participant C5 (F, 26) and C23 (M, 70) share an important belief that makes them love traditional stoves: “foods cooked on traditional stoves taste better!”

Figure 5.12: Participant C5’s grandparents are making *qingmingguo*. Photo by participant C5.

Figure 5.13: Participant C23’s stove. Photo by participant C23.
5.4.3 Access to and the Usage of Water

The access to and the usage of water is another attribute of the *xiangtu* lifestyle that nurtures, as well as requires, the *place*-bound relationship. When discussing the possibility of relocation to the new housing, participant C25 (M, 75) commented, “the water from the mountains is very good, and it is free. There are not even any ponds down there, how could I wash my clothes? How could I live my life?” For participant C25, as well as most of the residents, they come to the pond on a daily basis to wash vegetables and clothes, and they do not simply come here because the water is free (Figure 5.14). Participants C10 (F, 62) and C30 (F, 41) both have washing machines at home, but they prefer washing their clothes in the ponds because they do not believe the non-circulating water inside the washing machine can do the job properly. In contrast, they see the water in the pond as moving water; the clean water comes from one end of the pond and the dirty water goes out the other end. For the same reason, participant C26 (M, 73), a senior man, refuses a washing machine offered by his son, even if that means he has to do the laundry for himself and his wife, as his wife has problems with her legs that prevent her from squatting.

Figure 5.14: Residents are doing laundry at Cheyue-Tang. Photo by the author.

Another reason that residents continue to go to the pond is the tradition and the practice of water preservation that they inherited from their ancestors. As participant C3 (M, 79) feels, “it is wasteful to use the tap water to wash vegetables.” Cost is not the issue here, since water is
almost free to most of the residents who are not in the hospitality business. To conserve water, as he learned from his ancestors, participant C3 prewashes vegetables in Yuanliu-Tang and then rinses them using the tap water. This is also the common practice carried out by most other residents in Yanxia.

The third reason, may be the most important one for the residents’ attachment to the ponds, is the social interaction they enjoy with their neighbors at the ponds. This kind of social interaction only become available when more than one resident performs his or her daily activities near the pond as the next section illustrates.

5.5 Supporting Daily Activities and Constructing Social Relations

While the foundation of the place-bound relationship is the xiangtu lifestyle, the place-bound relationship becomes more meaningful when it is enriched by daily activities and social relations supported and constructed by the open public places within the vernacular settlement. The most important open public place in Yanxia is the small plaza and the pond, referred to as Qian-Tang (the pond at the front), in front of Degeng-Ju (Figure 5.3). This place has been the center for daily activities, social interactions, and cultural performances for generations, as summarized by participant C18 (M, 67):

When we were little, we came here to play all the time. The grooves on the brick façade of Degeng-Ju are the result of us sliding coins (Figure 5.15). Some of them are really deep. We always came here to play when we were little. You slide a coin here, let it go, and then see which one rolls the furthest. It is like a gamble. Sometimes the coins roll into the pond. I started coming here since I was little! It is in front of my house. I come here to play when I have nothing else to do. When the weather is nice, we old people come here to play poker, majiang, and chess. I also come here to dry the clothes.

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32 Most families pay 1 yuan ($0.16) for water every month to cover water usage up to a certain amount. The families that run hospitality businesses use large quantities of water and pay additional fees according to meter readings.
Figure 5.15: The deep grooves on the brick façade of Degeng-Ju. They are the result of children of many generations sliding coins. Photo by the author.

Other places, such as the small plaza and Yuanliu-Tang associated with Shiyuan Ancestral Hall, the open space in front of Shaochang Ancestral Hall, and certain sections of the pilgrim path also support various kinds of daily activities and social relations, but on a smaller scale (Figure 5.16, 5.17). The following sections use the public place in front of Degeng-Ju as an example to illustrate how this place-bound relationship becomes meaningful through residents’ daily activities and social interactions.

Figure 5.16: Residents are playing majiang in front of Shiyuan Ancestral Hall. Photo by the author.
5.5.1 Supporting Daily Activities

The kinds of daily activities supported by the public space in front of Degeng-Ju, as well as other spaces in the village with similar features, mainly include fishing, washing vegetables, and doing laundry in the pond, as well as eating meals, drying grains and vegetables, drying clothes, and entertaining in the open space (Figure 5.18). Even though some of the activities that take place in these open spaces occur there because of convenience and necessity, such as drying vegetables and grains, or the lack of opportunities elsewhere, such as fishing, the social meanings embedded into these daily activities and the social relations built through these social interactions cannot be overlooked. The social meanings and the importance of social relations are particularly evident in the activities of women doing laundry together, especially after the installation of indoor plumbing and the affordability and the widespread use of washing machines. Participant C21 (F, 61) gave as her reason for taking one of her photographs (Figure 5.19): “I envy them doing laundry together… I know everyone there!” She, on the other hand, stopped going there after she moved to her new house on the other side of the village. Clearly, doing laundry in the public pond is not merely a functional activity; it is an important social interaction between women, almost all of whom moved to Yanxia following marriage to a village member.
These activities are also initiated, facilitated, and encouraged by either individual or collective efforts. Participant C21 (F, 61) proudly recalls that her husband helped lay every single stone slab inside Qian-Tang, so that she and the other women could do laundry there. Participant C23 (M, 70), a resident whose house is located right around the corner from Degeng-Ju, laughs about the fact that he always releases fish inside the pond and goes fishing later with other senior men in the neighborhood. In addition, there are unclaimed movable benches in the
plaza for people to sit on and unmarked bamboo poles leaning against the walls for people to construct racks for drying clothes.

5.5.2 Constructing Social Relations

The public place in front of Degeng-Ju also facilitates the construction of specific social relations that characterize the xiangtu society. Participant C34 (F, 40) summarized this notion by contrasting it to the urban society where he has been living for over ten years. He said, “In the city, you close the door immediately after you enter the door!” In other words, for the xiangtu society in Yanxia that he grew up in and still considers his home, the open spaces and the public places are the core of an extended nexus that connects all the adjacent homes with open doors (Figure 5.20). As a result, the residents living in those homes, as a result, form an intimate social relationship that crosses the boundaries of homestead, family, and even “a small lineage” as defined by Fei (1992, p. 81). Participant C32 (F, 43) and her family live across the plaza of Degeng-Ju from participant C23 (F, 70) and his family. As she concluded while putting her arm around the shoulder of the wife of participant C23, “I come here (the residential space of C23) every day. I cannot not come every day! I see her (the wife of C23) more than I see my mom. I need to make a special arrangement to see my mom. For her (the wife of C23), I come here and I can see her!”

Figure 5.20: The open space in front of Degeng-Ju acts like a living room and a public place for the neighbors, which helps construct social relations. Photo by the author.
On another occasion, participant C23 (F, 70) and his family were making stuffed steam buns. He claimed that he needed to make about 150 buns to feed his large family, which included him and his wife, as well as his two sons and their families. Even though he did not count the neighbors as family members, he certainly included them when he did the calculation. During the few hours of making and cooking the buns, neighbors came in and out of his little courtyard without knocking or saying farewell. They sat down and enjoyed a few buns without hesitation or saying thank you (Figure 5.21, 5.22). In addition, one of the three women making the buns was a neighbor. Participant C23’s wife explained, “she is like a daughter. She is the same age as my daughter. She will come if she knows we are making buns. There is no need to call her. No need to invite her to eat the buns; no need to ask her to make the buns.”

In contrast, the lack of open spaces and public places in the newer section of the village not only eliminates opportunities for the kind of social interactions between neighbors that take place in the older section of the village, but also affects residents’ understanding of home. Out of the seven participants that are currently living in the older section of Yanxia and the two participants that used to live there, eight of them photographed certain aspects of the open spaces and the public places as the valuable aspects of their homes. The one participant living in the
older section of Chenglu village also included the open space and the public place of Chenglu in his photographs. For the remaining 11 participants who have never lived in the older section of Yanxia, ten of them did not include any open spaces or public places within the village as part of their understanding of the meaningful aspects of home. Of these participants, seven limited their photo-taking activities to their homestead and built environment immediately adjacent to their homestead (they might include views to places farther in the distance). In contrast, when receiving the camera, Participant C23 (F, 70) immediately went outside and took three photographs of Degeng-Ju (See Appendix B), where he frequently goes every day. He further explained that the reason for taking these photographs was because this is the place that he inherited from his ancestors. The way in which the importance of inheritance from ancestors as residents’ understand the meaning of home is further discussed in Chapter 6. Participant C18 (M, 67), who has also been living close to Degeng-Ju, identified reasons similar to participant C23 for dedicating all nine of his photographs to the places and views between his house and Degeng-Ju. Three of his photographs were taken at Degeng-Ju (Figure 5.23).

![Figure 5.23: The public place in front of Degeng-Ju. Photo by participant C18. According to C18, the reason for taking this photograph was “I started coming here since I was little! It is in front of my house.”](image)

Participant C7 (F, 19), who spent a great amount of time at her grandparents’ residential space located next to Shiyuan Ancestral Hall when she was young, took a photograph of her grandparents posing in the open space adjacent to the ancestral hall (Figure 5.24). When she explained the reasons for taking this photograph, she said that this place has left a deep imprint on her memory, because she did her homework here, sunbathed here, and witnessed various
kinds of social interactions between the neighbors. She further stated that the most important reason for taking this photograph is that this place is different from the place where her residential space is located. She explained: “the place where my home is only becomes lively during the Chinese New Year.” Her “home” with her parents is located on the new street, where thousands of cars pass by every day. Her parents run one of the largest hotels in Yanxia; it is always populated by tourists and pilgrims, especially during the peak seasons. Therefore, when she used the word “lively (热闹),” she did not mean the number of people or the noise level as the result of tourists, pilgrims, and cars. In contrast, she described the “lively” place including the following scenes: “the grandpa next door is fishing; the kid next door is brushing his teeth. In the evening after the dinner, neighbors come out and talk; that neighbor sometimes takes out a small table and eats out.” Therefore, the kinds of activities contributing to building a “lively” place, in her understanding, include intimate and everyday social interactions between family members and neighbors. For the same reason, participant C3 (M, 79), who lives next door to participant C7’s grandparents, refused to move in with his sons, who live in the new style housing on the new street. He believes where he lives is more “convenient,” because “the neighbors are close to each other. If I were to live with my son, he is too busy and he is not going to say a word to me during the day!” In other words, the “convenience” defined by participant C3 also refers to the kind of intimate and everyday social interactions between neighbors in the older section of the village, such as eating the food cooked by his neighbor living next door and walking to another neighbor’s house to play majiang.
5.6 Endowed and Claimed Ownership

This place-bound relationship also endows a sense of ownership to the residents of Yanxia, who have a strong sense of ownership to the land they have been living on. However, this ownership is different from the ownership defined by Chinese law or the meaning of the English word itself. According to the Land Law (see Chapter 1), all lands, including building sites, in Yanxia are collectively “owned” by all the residents of Yanxia. However, as discussed earlier, this is a limited “ownership” because residents cannot sell or transfer these properties. Therefore, the sense of ownership can be obtained through the collective “ownership” and use rights defined by the Land Law; this aspect of the sense of ownership is endowed ownership as defined and analyzed in section 5.6.1. The sense of ownership can also be acquired in another way, through historic family ownership before 1949 or developed through the efforts that people devoted to caring for and maintaining the land they collectively own; this second aspect of the sense of ownership is claimed ownership as defined and analyzed in section 5.6.2. Therefore, the sense of ownership further attaches the residents to the land, which, in turn, strengthens the place-bound relationship. Meanwhile, residents’ understandings of home extend beyond the boundary of the homestead and include the land to which they have both endowed and claimed ownership. The land is the context from which they extract their resources for living, and in which they perform daily activities and build social relations.

5.6.1 Endowed Ownership

5.6.1.1 Personal Ownership

There are two kinds of endowed ownerships: personal ownership and collective ownership. Personal ownership is mainly developed through residents’ right to cultivate agricultural land, especially private plots. As explained earlier, each family has its own private plot. The original Chinese word for “private plot” is ziliu-di (自留地), which literally means “the land kept for oneself.” Thus, even though the land is collectively owned by all the residents of Yanxia, the implications of the Chinese term, in addition to unencumbered use rights, gives the residents a sense that they own their own private plots. Thus, nine out of the 20 participants took photos that included their private plots or vegetable gardens as a meaningful aspect of their homes (Figure 5.25). In addition, 27 out of 34 participants discussed their deep attachment to their cultivated
land during interviews. When participants talk about their private plots, they unanimously used the phrase “my” (我的) to emphasize this personal *ownership*. In contrast, they used the phrase “ours” (我们的) when they discussed the ancestral halls, the ponds, the mountains, and the village in general, even though all of these properties share the same kind of legal ownership defined by Chinese laws. Thus, it is the unencumbered use right of their private plots that endows the residents with a sense of personal *ownership*, which they differentiate from other collectively owned properties.

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5.6.1.2 Collective Ownership

Collective *ownership* also plays a definitive role in defining *home* for residents of Yanxia. As illustrated in Table 5.1, about half of the participants who participated in the photo-taking phase of this study included at least one kind of collectively owned and shared property in their understanding of the meaningful aspects of *home*; in addition, about two-thirds of the participants discussed it in the interviews (Figure 5.26). Although the dominant reasons for including the ponds and the open spaces are mainly due to their function in supporting daily activities and building social relations, some residents do consider these collectively owned and shared properties as part of their *homes*. For example, when participant C2 (M, 74) was asked to list what he had at home, he said “at home, there are moso bamboos, gardens, and ponds.” The main reason that participant C2 considers collectively owned properties as part of his *home* is due to the blurring of personal, family, and collective possession in a lineage-base settlement. In

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Figure 5.25: Participant C4’s private plot is covered with different kinds of vegetables. Photo by participant C4.
Yanxia, where almost everyone is part of an extended family, collective ownership of all the members of Yanxia is almost equal to family ownership when the boundary of the family extends to its maximum. For a male descendent who is the head of a family, in the case of participant C2, personal ownership represents family ownership. Thus, this overlapping of different levels of ownerships blurs the distinctions between what is mine, what is yours, and what are ours. The result of this overlapping enables certain residents to extend their understanding of home to include collectively owned properties.

The residents also value and firmly guard their ownership as revealed through the dialog between participants C18 (M, 67) and C23 (M, 70). Participant C18 first commented, “Even if we are not living here, this place still belongs to us.” Participant C23 immediately continued, “The mountains are also ours; the land is also ours. I know every single rock on the mountain, every single cave in the mountain!” In this conversation, participant C18 insisted that the ownership remains regardless of his and his fellow villagers’ presence at Yanxia. Meanwhile, participant C23 tied the ownership to personal and local knowledge; he argued that the fact that he knows everything in the mountains endows him, as well as his fellow villagers, with the ownership of the mountains.

Finally, this collective ownership enables residents to feel attached to the land in which their homes have been situated and to object to the idea of moving into the new settlement. This feeling is clearly articulated by participant C20 (F, 61). “Even if they build a new house for me,
my own place here is better. If I go there, everything belongs to others. Even if I walk a little bit, the road belongs to others! In my village, we own everything together. Even if they build the house for me, I won’t feel I own it.” Participant C20’s statement clearly demonstrates that, comparing to the physical shelter, the sense of ownership is more essential in supporting the understanding of home.

5.6.2 Claimed Ownership

Claimed ownership is acquired through the time and effort that people devote to the properties, either private lots or shared public spaces. During my conversation with participants C31 (F, 37) and C21 (F, 61), a middle-aged woman and a senior woman who both moved to Yanxia after marriage, the middle-aged woman (C31) expressed little emotional attachment to Yanxia. The senior woman (C21) then teased her and told me, “she does not know how to get the firewood. She does not know how to attend to the land. Of course she has no feelings!” In addition, the senior woman considered herself as someone from Yanxia and proudly concluded: “here we own the mountains, the paddy field, and the dry agricultural land.” In this statement, participant C21 clearly considered herself as one of the “we,” one of the members of the Cheng lineage, who collectively own the mountains and all the agricultural land. Meanwhile, participant C21 categorized participant C31 as someone who is not from Yanxia, though neither participant C31 nor participant C21 is originally from Yanxia. In contrast, even though participant C21 also has an equal share of the mountains and agricultural land as participant C31, she never discussed this ownership or expressed a sense of pride of this ownership. Thus, it is the 43 years that participant C21 spent attending the land, including cultivating land, picking firewood, and caring for public spaces, that makes her deeply attached to it; this devotion also helps build the claimed ownership (Figure 5.27).

Besides the sense of endowed collective ownership that residents feel towards the shared public spaces, the efforts certain residents have devoted in maintaining these places facilitated the construction of an additional sense of claimed ownership. Living next to Degeng-Ju, participant C23 (M, 70) clears the pond of any trash and sweeps the open space in front of Degeng-Ju whenever he sees that they are dirty. When being asked for the reasons for doing so, he said, “I live close by. When I see it dirty, I just sweep it. It doesn’t take much effort to do that.” He paused and continued, “I also left more trash here.” He then laughed and added, “other
people leave trash here too.” Thus, as someone who spends a lot of time in this shared public place, including sun bathing, socializing, fishing, and doing laundry, he feels entitled to use this space and responsible for taking care of this place as if it is part of his home. This place certainly became part of his home when participant C23 chose to have his yearly family photo taken in front of Degeng-Ju two years ago. The first family photo taken there that included four generations of his family is currently hanging inside his house. Therefore, the effort participant C23 spends caring for and maintaining the shared public space in front of his residential space contributes to his sense of claimed ownership of this public place, which eventually becomes part of his home and part of his understanding of home.

Figure 5.27: Participant C21 is posing in front of Degeng-Ju. Photo by a resident invited by participant C21. Participant C21 wanted to use this photograph to demonstrate that, “I was telling the stories happening inside.”

Another kind of claimed ownership is acquired through the historic family ownership (a complete ownership that includes legally defined ownership, use rights, and the rights of ultimate disposition, see Chapter 1) of the property before 1949. Participant C19’s (M, 72) ancestors, four and five generations ago, were both educated and financially established residents in Yanxia. They not only owned one of the most grandiose housing complexes in Yanxia (Figure 5.28), but also a large piece of agricultural land in front of their housing complex and the extended wooded area to the east of the house. In addition, a well and a large open space used for drying grains were located to the south of the housing complex. In the following generations, the properties outside the housing complex were first divided many times among the heirs of the family after each generation passed away. Then, after the Land Reform in the 1950s, these properties were
taken as collective property of the village and redistributed to the residents to cultivate. Currently, participant C19, his close relatives, and some residents of Yanxia have the use rights to different sections of these properties. However, due to the historic family ownership, Participant C19 has the claimed *ownership* of all the property his ancestors used to own.

![Figure 5.28: The housing complex of Feng-Ya-Song. It was owned by participant C19’s ancestor four and five generations ago. Drafted by Na Sun, a graduate of Tsinghua University, in 2007.](image)

Born in 1941, participant C19 still vividly remembers the luxurious life his great grandfather led. On one hand, he is very proud of his family’s glorious history; on the other hand, he is still wrapped in the past and feels somewhat entitled to the properties his family used to own. In his photographs, participant C19 took eight photographs (out of 27) of the wooded
area behind his house, which was owned by his family for over a century before the 1950s and is currently owned by all residents of Yanxia with the use right given to him and his relatives. When discussing the reasons for taking these photographs, he never consistently articulated the verb tense of the ownership; in addition, he changed his use of personal pronouns between “I” and “we” or between “mine” and “ours” when referring to the current “ownership” of the property. In one instance, participant C19 stated: “this place used to all belong to me.” In this case, participant C19 interchanged his personal ownership with his family ownership and revealed a strong claimed ownership over the property his family used to own. In another instance, participant C19 stated: “this is our family’s bamboo” (Figure 5.29). As discussed earlier, in a lineage-based settlement, collective ownership of all the members of a settlement is equal to family ownership when the boundary of the family extends to its maximum. The term “our family’s (我们家的),” therefore, can refer to different types of family with a flexible boundary as Fei (1981, 1992) argues. The “family” referred to by participant C19 could range from the small family only including participant C19, his wife, and their children, to the extended family that includes all the descendants of participant C19’s ancestor who originally purchased this housing complex, and to the entire Cheng lineage of Yanxia. Meanwhile, participant C19’s unwillingness or inability to identify which “family” he was referring to was due to the interweaving between the flexible family boundary and the complicated historic and present ownership. This property was owned, in a complete sense of ownership, by his ancestors and his family before the 1950s; it is currently legally owned by everyone in Yanxia, who are his

![Figure 5.29: “This is our family’s bamboo.” Photo by participant C19.](image)
extended family members, and managed by him and his close relatives. As a result, by including this property as a valuable aspect of his *home* and mixing the verb tense and personal pronoun of the ownership, participant C19 presents a clear claimed *ownership* to this entire area his ancestors used to own, regardless of its past divided ownerships between his extended family members or its present collective ownership shared by all the residents of Yanxia.

5.6.3 **Summary on Endowed and Claimed Ownership**

Regardless of whether it is personal or collective *ownership* or whether it is endowed or claimed *ownership*, participants expressed that a sense of *ownership* is essential in constructing the meaning of *home*. Participant C33 (F, 50), a middle-aged man, quoted an old Chinese saying to summarize his attachment to his home, “neither a golden nest nor a silver nest is as good as my own muddy nest.” Having a different life experience and a different understanding of *home*, as well as different attitudes towards historic buildings and family history, participant C16 (M, 23), a newly wedded young man, also concurs with this relationship between *ownership* and *home*. He said, “it is hard to say which style of housing is good, which style of housing is worse. The best is the one that belongs to you! It is like setting up fireworks. You always think other families’ fireworks are too noisy, but you never think your own fireworks are too noisy.” Therefore, participants do not recognize a place as *home* if they do not feel the sense of *ownership*. In other words, the meaning of *home* can go beyond the boundary of the homestead and extend to include the places to which they feel a sense of *ownership*.

5.7 **Building Individual and Collective Identities**

The *place*-bound relationship facilitates the building of individual and collective identities for the residents living in Yanxia. However, individual identity and collective identity are deeply intertwined, as Duncan (1985) argues, which is a feature of collectivistic societies, such as the lineage-based settlement of Yanxia. For a resident of Yanxia, individual identity is not used to identify oneself as a unique person different from the neighbor next door; rather it is a self-recognition of “who I am,” which is greatly influenced by certain aspects of this commonly shared *place*-bound relationship. Therefore, this self-recognition, when found in other residents that accept the same kind of *place*-bound relationship, contributes to building a collective identity.
5.7.1 Building Identities from the Featured Landscape

One form of identity is closely associated with the featured landscape, particularly the mountains and hills that spatially define the valley in which Yanxia is located. The most important featured landscape is Fangyan Mountain because of its size and appearance, as well as its associations with the name of the village and the folk deity, Hugong Dadi. More importantly, since almost every family in Yanxia participates or has participated in some types of economic activities that serve the pilgrims of Hugong Dadi, Fangyan Mountain is the signifier of the folk deity that has supported their daily lives. For the same reason, residents in Yanxia refer themselves as “People of Fangyan.”

In the case of participant C7 (F, 19), she concluded, “Fangyan Mountain represents Hugong Dadi.” When being asked what jia is, participants C19 (M, 72) and C10 (F, 62) answered, “Fangyan is my home!” In both cases, the word “Fangyan” became the synonym of the place in which they are living. When photographing the valuable aspects of their homes, nine of the 20 participants that participated in the photo-taking phase of the project included Fangyan Mountain. For most of the residents that have been living underneath Fangyan Mountain for their entire lives, they had difficulty articulating the reasons for including Fangyan Mountain in their photos other than that it is there when they look up (Figure 5.30). Participant C7, a young woman that has spent some time living outside Yanxia, revealed that her reason for photographing Fangyan Mountain was, “because this is the most important Fangyan Mountain, of course I have to photograph it!” She added, “if there are friends who are from elsewhere come to visit my home, I will first take them to Fangyan, then go to Wufeng Mountain, then come to stay at my house. In the evening, we will come to the roof top.” It is from this very roof top that she photographed the view of Fangyan Mountain (Figure 5.31). This rooftop is also the place where she comes to pray to Hugong Dadi when she does not have the time to visit the temple on the top of Fangyan Mountain. In another case, participant C37 (M, 50) revealed that his son, who is currently studying in the United States, claims that he is from Fangyan and often takes friends to visit Fangyan Mountain and the historic pilgrim path in Yanxia, even though he only spent some time here when he was young and visiting his grandparents in the summer. Thus, Fangyan Mountain is not only an indispensable part of the daily lives of the residents of Yanxia, but also a natural feature and cultural icon that facilitates the building of the identity of the local people.
In a similar, yet more modest way, Shizi Mountain also helps certain residents build an additional layer of meaning into their identities. As participant C15 (F, 72) stated, “I am someone who is living underneath Shizi Mountain! I live along the foot of Fangyan Mountain and underneath Shizi Mountain.” The other two participants that live underneath Shizi Mountain, participants C1 (F, 63) and C16 (M, 23), also included Shizi Mountain as a valuable aspect of their homes and they photographed it from the positions where they view Shizi Mountain on a daily basis. Participants C1 and C15, two senior women who spend lots of time working in their private plots, photographed Shizi Mountain from their vegetable gardens (Figure 5.32). Participant C16, a young man currently living in the new style housing along the foot of Shizi
Mountain, photographed Shizi Mountain from his balcony (Figure 5.33). He said, “This mountain…. my family has been revolving our lives around this mountain since I was little. When I was young, my father went to the mountain to collect firewood. We also went up and played, picked wild vegetables and wild fruits, and flew kites.” While he was talking about his attachment to the mountain, his grandmother, participant C15, interrupted and re-accentuated the same statement she told me months earlier, “we are the people who are living underneath Shizi Mountain!” Thus, not only has Shizi Mountain been providing natural resources for the residents living nearby, but the symbolic meaning of Shizi (Lion), a mascot in Chinese culture, also endows these residents with a sense of identity.

Figure 5.32: Shizi Mountain viewed from the private plot of participant C1. Photo by participant C1.

Figure 5.33: Shizi Mountain viewed from the balcony of participant C16’s house. Photo by participant C16.
5.7.2 Constructing the Place-Bound Identity

Besides the identity created by the featured landscape, the place-bound relationship itself also helps construct the individual and collective identities for the people living in Yanxia. They identify themselves as people who are deeply attached to the land in which they have been living on and different from the city dwellers who live a different lifestyle. This place-bound identity is well summarized by participant C25 (M, 75) as the following:

At our place here, we have the mountains, have the water, have the land, and I have my private plot. If I move down there, won’t I then become a city dweller, who can only eat? The water from the mountains is very good, and it is free. There are not even any ponds down there. How could I wash my clothes? How could I live my life? And they say that it will be better than my present life?

Participant C25’s comments reveal four key points. First of all, he feels a strong place-bound relationship to his place, Yanxia, which provides fundamental resources for living, such as water and firewood, land to grow grains and vegetables, and ponds to do laundry. Secondly, this place-bound relationship is how he identifies himself, as well as other residents living in Yanxia and even the entire population living in rural China, as being different from city dwellers, who, in his view, are detached from the land and the raw materials and can only enjoy the finished and final products. In addition, he does not want to lose his identity and live like a city dweller where the living environment requires what he considers a fundamentally different lifestyle. Lastly, the “better” lifestyle defined by the local government officials and professionally trained planners and architects is quite different from the desired lifestyle, the xiangtu lifestyle, described by participant C25. In other words, participant C25 does not yet accept the new identity associated with the lifestyle of city dwellers or acknowledge its compatibility with who he is.

This place-bound identity is not only prevalent among senior residents who have been living in Yanxia for their entire lives and who have rarely experienced city life, but is also embedded in the minds of the younger generations, who see this identity as their roots, their possible future, and even their destiny. Participant C32 (F, 43) is a middle-aged woman who works in the city every day. Therefore, she does not have the time to attend to the land, but receives vegetables from her mother-in-law who cultivates the private plot. Even though participant C32 has never grown vegetables herself, she is very confident that “it is very easy to
grow vegetables, no need to learn.” This is likely because she has been observing people doing that while growing up. In addition, she also dreams that “when I get older I will grow some vegetables and play poker, how nice that will be!” In another case, participant C33 (M, 50), a middle-aged man, also has a full-time job and does not have time to attend to the land. However, he still feels strongly about the collective ownership of the agricultural land, the mountains, and the water; his reason is: “even though I don’t cultivate the land right now, I don’t know what will happen in the future.” For participant C5 (F, 26), who is a young musician living in the city, even though she asserts that she will never work in the mud with her own hands, she still believes that the lifestyle that her grandmother has right now represents the most idealistic rural life, which consists of an old house, a vegetable garden, and a well (Figure 5.34) (see Chapter 8 for more discussions on participant C5 and other participants’ interpretations of ideal rural life).

Figure 5.34: The ideal country-life perceived by participant C5. Photo by participant C5.

5.8 Conclusion

People’s attachment to the land, or this place-bound relationship, plays a critical role in framing the meaning of home as it is understood by the residents of Yanxia. This place-bound relationship is revealed through the photographs taken by the participants when they were asked
to photograph their *jia* that is meaningful to them. All 20 participants who participated in the photo-taking phase of the project included certain aspects of agricultural land, water sources, public open spaces, and featured landscapes that were located outside their homesteads. In addition, 14 out of 16 participants who only participated in the interviews also discussed their personal experiences, relationships, and attachments to these various forms of the *land*, both in the past and in the present. These experiences, relationships, attachments, and memories form a set of tradition that represents residents’ identities and social values.

This *place*-bound relationship affects the meaning of *home* understood by the residents of Yanxia from four interconnected perspectives. First, the foundation of this *place*-bound relationship is that the *land* provides fundamental resources for living that sustains the *xiangtu* lifestyle. In addition, this *place*-bound relationship is enriched with social meanings when the *land* incorporates the places that support various kinds of daily activities, help construct social relations, and sustain cultural performances. These two reasons enable the *land* to become an essential part of residents’ daily lives; the *land* provides not only fundamental resources for living, but also additional places for essential daily activities, which are lacking in the residential spaces of the residents in Yanxia. As a result, residents’ understanding of *home* extends beyond the boundary of the homestead and includes the types of the *land* they feel attached to, which become an important supplement and a valuable part of their *homes*. Moreover, the endowed and claimed *ownership* of the *land* that is acquired through *place*-bound relationship further supports and secures residents’ understanding of *home*, especially for the parts of *home* that fall beyond the boundary of the homestead. A place is part of *home* only when the residents acquire the sense of *ownership*. Finally, the *place*-bound relationship facilitates the building of individual and collective identities, which distill the meaning of *home* to an abstract level that can be signified by cultural icons, lifestyles, roots, destiny, and ideas.

Although this *place*-bound relationship is prevalent among most participants (34 out of 36), different participants do reveal different kinds and various degrees of *place*-bound relationships, as well as different kinds of attachments to various forms of the *land*. These differences are affected not only by personal experiences, family history, and current lifestyle, but also by the location of the residential space in relation to the public open places. On one hand, certain factors greatly contribute to building the *place*-bound relationship. First, the participants who acquire more living resources from the *land* tend to have deeper attachments to
the land, such as participants C4 (F, 77), C15 (F, 72), C21 (F, 61), C23 (M, 70), and C26 (M, 73). Secondly, the participants who live closer to the shared public places, or in the older section of the village, are prone to develop a stronger place-bound relationship, such as participants C3 (M, 79), C18 (M, 67), C23 (M, 70), C26 (M, 73), C32 (F, 43), and C34 (M, 40). In addition, family history plays a critical role in forming a certain kind of claimed ownership, such as in the case of participant C19 (M, 72). Finally, the adjacency to certain features of the landscape contributes to building individual identity for some participants, such as in the case of participants C1 (F, 63), C15 (F, 72), and C16 (M, 23). Overall, for the participants who participated in the photo-taking phase of the study, more photographs taken outside the boundary of their homesteads and focused on the land are usually associated with deeper and broader attachments to the land. For example, as one of the participants who expressed strong attachment to the land, participant C23 (M, 70) took 16 photographs (out of 26) outside the boundary of his homestead and focused on historic buildings and landscape, as well as cultural and social activities (see Appendix B). On the other hand, certain factors do not affect this place-bound relationship. Gender differences do not appear to be significant. Even though senior people are prone to have stronger attachments to the land, age itself is not a factor, but rather personal experience and current lifestyle contribute substantially to this place-bound relationship. The types of dwellings, whether traditional houses or new style houses, do not influence the place-bound relationship independently; it is the relationship between the dwellings and the surrounding landscape, the proximity to the public open places, and whether the residents can have a sense of ownership that do matter.
CHAPTER 6  THE HOME: WHERE ANCESTORS LIVED

Home is where you feel attached to and where your ancestors have lived.

- Participant C37 (M, 50)

6.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the ways in which family form, lineage structure, and kinship affairs affect the concept of home as the residents of Yanxia understand it. There are two reasons to include family form, lineage structure, and kinship affairs in the discussion of home. First, as discussed in Chapter 1, Cohen (2005) argues that the examination of the meaning of home, or any matters of social life, in rural China needs to be based on the understanding of lineage structure and kinship affairs. Second, as discussed in Chapter 3, the duality in the meaning of the Chinese character jia makes the discussion of home in the Chinese context inseparable from the understanding of the Chinese family form.

The duality of the meaning of jia is also supported by the fieldwork of this dissertation, where study participants were asked the simple question of “what is jia?” Among the 29 participants that answered this question, 14 participants described jia in the nature of a space or a place, while 12 participants considered jia the family that includes other family members. In addition, in their first responses, three participants described jia in abstract terms, including that jia means responsibility (C16, M, 23), jia represents harmony (C28, F, 28), and jia is a mode (C36, M, 50). However, participants C16 and C28 also discussed jia as the family during later interviews.

In response to the duality of the concept of jia, this chapter has two main goals. The first goal is to understand the ways in which family history, lineage structure, and kinship affairs of the Cheng family in Yanxia, as aspects of tradition, help to construct, as well as maintain, the understanding of family as an extended family with changing organizational boundaries. The second goal of this chapter is to examine the way in which this understanding of family affects the concept of home as it is understood by the residents of Yanxia.

6.2 Family

As discussed in Chapter 3, the Chinese family does not have a fixed organizational boundary (Fei, 1981, 1992). This dissertation research demonstrates that the size of the Cheng family in
Yanxia varies depending on the nature of family activities and the context in which the concept of *family* is examined. During the Qingming Festival (or Tomb Sweeping Day), the Cheng family in Yanxia belongs to an even larger Cheng lineage that includes members living in Yongkang County, nearby counties within Zhejiang Province, and even overseas. The organizational boundary of this extended family is set to include all the Cheng descendants that claim Kai as their common ancestor, who moved to the city of Yongkang from Anhui Province in 1320. When arranging economic and ritual activities, the organizational boundary of the Cheng family can be readjusted depending on the nature of the activities; the size of the family can be as large as to include all of the Cheng descendants living in one lineage-based settlement or as small as an extended family that only includes a few generations. During everyday practice, each Cheng family is defined by and centered on a stove; a family includes only the ones eating from the same stove.

The following three dimensions of tradition enable examination of the understanding of the concept of *family* and its changing organizational boundaries for residents in Yanxia. The first is the way in which the Cheng family is depicted and remembered as preserved in written and oral materials. The second is the way the organizational boundary of the Cheng family, the lineage structure, is redefined and sustained through the practice of ancestral veneration. The last involves the development of kinship affairs over time and their relation to ancestral halls.

### 6.2.1 The Cheng Family as Depicted and Remembered

The following section includes brief historic accounts of the Cheng family. These historic accounts come both from written sources, mainly the *Family Record of the Shiyuan Cheng Family* (hereafter the *Family Record*), and from oral traditions inherited by residents of Yanxia that were collected as part of the research supporting this dissertation, unless otherwise noted. The preservation of both resources for the past 700 years required persistent dedication and devotion by successive generations of the Cheng family. This effort also illustrates the understanding of *jia* by the Cheng descendants in Yanxia. Their *family* can be as large as to include all their ancestors, thus their *home* includes the land in which their ancestors lived. The following descriptions are not history, nor to be read as merely historic accounts. These accounts

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33 Most of the historic accounts regarding the Cheng family were obtained during the fieldwork between 2007 and 2008. For more details regarding the history of the Cheng family, see Zhao (2013b).
depict the Cheng family that wanted to be remembered, as well as the Cheng family that has been remembered by its descendants. Both written and oral accounts are the tradition, as well as heritage, of the Cheng family. As Lowenthal (1994, p. 43) argues, “heritage distills the past into icons and identity.” These iconic figures highlighted in the historic accounts, as well as their identities, represent the way in which Cheng descendants understand their family and family ancestry. More importantly, these icons and their identities also shape the ways in which the descendants of the Cheng family in Yanxia understand the meaning of home, which is discussed in the later sections of this chapter.

The first generation of the Cheng family that is recognized by the descendants of the Cheng family in Yanxia is Kai (Figure 6.1).34 Kai and his son, Yining, moved to the city of Yongkang from Anhui Province in 1320. Yining later had three sons. In 1353, Yining’s family was divided into three. The oldest son stayed in Yongkang; the second son moved to Chenglu. The third son, Quan, moved to Yanxia, which was then a small settlement inside Shang-Keng valley and populated by families of different last names.35

![Figure 6.1: The images of the first generation of the Cheng family, Kai and his wife (Family Record of the Cheng Family of Yuanxiao).](image)

34 Only first names are used to refer to all the descendants of the Cheng family; all their last names are Cheng.
35 According to the records of marriages, which were part of the family record, men from other villages married women from Yanxia that had different family names than Cheng. See Zhoushi Zongpu [Family Record of the Zhou Family], Wenlou Chengshi Zongpu [Family Record of the Cheng Family in Wenloucun], Houshantou Chengshi Zongpu [Family Record of the Cheng Family in Houshantou], Dusong Chengshi Zongpu [Family Record of the Dusong Cheng Family].
Quan wanted to be a hermit and referred himself as Sir Degeng. Degeng means “to be able to plough or be satisfied with plowing;” the wisdom embedded in this word has become the family precept of the Cheng family in Yanxia since then. Quan had two sons, Peng and Yang. As in his father’s family, Quan’s older son, Peng, stayed in Yanxia and Yang moved away. This process, wherein the oldest son stayed at the original location while other sons moved away, repeated itself for two more generations. Peng’s oldest son, Zuo, stayed in Yanxia while the other two sons relocated; Zuo’s oldest son, Tan, stayed in Yanxia while Tan’s two younger brothers moved away.

Tan (1411-1477) was the sixth generation of the Cheng family since the family moved to Yongkang (Figure 6.2). Tan, also known as Shiyuan, has been worshiped as the ancestor of the Cheng family in Yanxia, because almost every single male descendant of Tan stayed in Yanxia, except for the younger generations that were born in the recent decades (see Chapter 1). Tan’s other name, Shiyuan, was used to name the family record of the Cheng family in Yanxia: *Family Record of the Shiyuan Cheng Family*; in addition, one of the oldest ancestral halls in Yanxia was also named after Tan: Shiyuan Ancestral Hall. However, despite Tan’s identity as patriarch of the Cheng family, he did not have a natural male descendant. Tan had two wives...
who gave birth to two boys, but none of them survived through adulthood. To continue the lineage, Tan adopted through guoji the 11th son of Jian, who was Tan’s youngest brother who had moved to Dusong, soon after the boy was born, and named him Kui (1474-1548).³⁶

Tan passed away when Kui was only three years old. Kui became a respected figure because he, according to the Family Record, “started to support the family from childhood.” More importantly, Kui built the first house owned by the Cheng family in Yanxia in the middle of the sixteenth century; he named it Degeng-Ju³⁷ to memorialize the third generation of Quan and the wisdom Quan left for his descendants. Degeng-Ju was a large two-story structure with 36 jian, which was built to house the entire Cheng family at the time and the many generations of the Cheng family in the future (Figure 6.3, 6.4). In the following decades, Degeng-Ju supported a communal life for the entire Cheng lineage, yet kept the Cheng family’s living space separate from the rest of the village. Degeng-Ju was rebuilt on the site in 1789 after a fire destroyed most of the building.³⁸

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³⁶ The story that survived through oral channels is that Tan forcefully took Jian’s 11th son; the story also includes rich details involving both Tan and Jian’s families.
³⁷ Ju means the dwelling place.
³⁸ The year of reconstruction is inscribed on the façade of Degeng-Ju.
In the two centuries following the first construction of Degeng-Ju, nothing extraordinary was recorded in the Family Record; it only identifies the individual male descendants’ birth dates, wedding dates, sons’ names, and death dates. Meanwhile, the lineage of the Cheng family gradually increased and eventually transformed Yanxia into a lineage-based settlement by the middle of the eighteenth century. The establishment of the Cheng lineage-based settlement was denoted by the constructions of Shiyuan Ancestral Hall and Zuoxun Ancestral Hall, at that time,
on the west edge of the settlement (Figure 6.3, 6.5).\textsuperscript{39, 40} According to participant C3 (M, 79), who has been living in Zuoxun Ancestral Hall for almost 70 years, this building was built by Zuoxun’s (1646-1725) two sons, Yichen and Jingchen. According to the Family Record, which Yichen once edited in his time, Zuoxun was a renowned figure of the thirteenth generation of the Cheng family who always helped people in need. Yichen and Jingchen were named You and Gong as their fanghao respectively,\textsuperscript{41} which gave this ancestral hall another name: You-Gong-

Figure 6.5: The plan of Shiyuan Ancestral Hall and Zuoxun Ancestral Hall. Drafted by the author, in 2007.

\textsuperscript{39} According to Zhihua Chen, the construction of ancestor halls within a village marks the establishment of a lineage-based settlement. See Z. Chen (2006, p. 2).
\textsuperscript{40} For historic and architectural details of Shiyuan Ancestral Hall and Zuoxun Ancestral Hall, see Zhao (2013b).
\textsuperscript{41} For most prestigious families, besides receiving a name, each son is also given a fanghao, which means the name of a branch of the family. Fanghao usually consists of one Chinese character, which can later be used when referring to this lineage and his offspring.
Chang Ancestral Hall. While the *Family Record* includes few details regarding Yichen’s four sons, who had the *fanghao* of Qin, Qi, Shu, and Hua, and Jingchen’s four sons, who had the *fanghao* of Fa, Qiang, Gang, and Yi, these legendary ancestors have been the topic of conversation of the Cheng descendants (*Figure 6.6*). Many residents, including participant C3, believe that Shiyuan Ancestral Hall was collectively built by these eight legendary grandsons of Zuoxun. Based on this narrative, Zuoxun Ancestral Hall was built in the middle of the eighteenth century and Shiyuan Ancestral Hall was built several decades later.

![Figure 6.6: Participant C3 and another senior resident are discussing the legends of Zuoxun’s family.](image)

Starting from the end of the eighteenth century, the expansion of the Cheng family accelerated. The most renowned figure at that time was Lichong (1736-1793), one of the Cheng descendants in the 15th generation and the grandson of Zuoxun. Lichong was the owner of a grand housing complex that was built following his wedding in the middle of the eighteenth century; the building complex included multi-courtyard living quarters, a pond, a well, a garden, and some agricultural land. In addition, Lichong built Shaochang Ancestral Hall in 1788 to the

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42 *Chang* means prescribed relationship between individuals.

43 Typically, the *fanghao* of all the sons can form a phrase, which can have meanings of prosperity, morality, or loyalty. Yichen’s four sons’ *fanghao* are 琴, 棋, 书, 画, which represent the four important traits literati should have, while Jingchen’s four sons’ *fanghao* are 发, 强, 刚, 毅, which describe the characteristics of military personnel.

44 According to another resident of Yanxia, Shiyuan Ancestral Hall was built in the Jiajing Period of the Ming Dynasty (1522-1566) by the grandsons of Shiyuan. According to the *Family Record*, the grandsons of Shiyuan lived between 1494 and 1568, so it is possible that Shiyuan Ancestral Hall was built in the Jiajing Period of the Ming Dynasty. However, judging from the fact that Shiyuan Ancestral Hall is located in front of Zuoxun Ancestral Hall and blocks its entrance, it is more likely that Shiyuan Ancestral Hall was built after Zuoxun Ancestral Hall. Therefore, participant C3’s oral account has been incorporated into the narrative for this dissertation.
west of the settlement of Yanxia and probably on land that, at that time, was agricultural (Figure 6.3). Due to continuous population increase, the Cheng family started to extend their settlement to the north. For the first step of this expansion, Lichong’s descendants built two houses outside the existing village gate in 1797, probably the first houses built outside the village gate (Figure 6.3).

The year 1849 marked another milestone for the Cheng family. On September 4 of the Lunar Calendar, which was a busy day in the middle of the months-long Hugong Temple Fair, a devastating fire almost destroyed the entire Guangci Temple, where pilgrims coming from afar used to stay overnight (Previous Abbot, personal communication, September, 2007). The Cheng family immediately started to host pilgrims and the first family hotel, Chenglongxing Hotel, opened for business either in the Fall of 1849 or the following year (Yongkang Shi Zhengxie Wenshi Committee, 1995, p. 90). In the following century, the growth of the Cheng lineage and individual Cheng families went hand in hand with the development of the hospitality business. For a period of time, two families owned almost all the family hotels in Yanxia, most of which were large or even grand luxurious hotels. These two owning families consisted of Yuebiao’s four sons and Yuelai’s three sons. In particular, Zhaoye (Yuebiao’s son) and Zhaofu (Yuelai’s son) used to own the two largest hotels and most grandiose homes in Yanxia (see Chapter 7 for the history and culture of the hospitality industry). The competition between families and even between brothers sparked the development of the hospitality business. By the middle of the twentieth century, the Cheng family had stretched their settlement along the mile-long pilgrim path, which was populated by more than 40 stores and hotels from end to end.

6.2.2 Lineage Structure and Ancestral Veneration

Many Han Chinese, including those who claim that they are not religious, believe that people will continue their lives in another world after death. This belief is even more common among residents in rural China. In order to insure that the dead family members can continue to “live” comfortably in the other world, the living ones periodically send food, money, and other necessities to their deceased family members. Paying these ritual visits to the deceased ancestors

45 According to Yongkang Mingdian Mingchang [Noted Shops and Factories in Yongkang] (1995, p. 90), the first hotel, Chenglongxing Hotel, was opened for business in the Daoguang Period, which was between 1821 and 1850. Therefore, if a hotel opened for business after the fire and in the Daoguang Period, the hotel was either opened for business in 1849 or 1850.
from the distant past is especially important, since people believe that these ancestors can protect them and ensure them a happy life.

The Cheng family in Yanxia practices ancestral veneration four times a year following different sets of rituals. Each set of rituals defines the organizational boundary of the Cheng family. The family size ranges from an extended lineage that includes all of the Cheng descendants that claim Kai as their ancestor to a core family of a few people. The ancestral veneration rituals, according to the size of the organizational boundary of the Cheng family from large to small, are the Qingming Festival, the Chinese New Year, Winter Solstice, and the Zhongyuan Festival.

6.2.2.1 An Extended Lineage – The Qingming Festival

The ancestral veneration rituals that define the most extensive organizational boundary of the Cheng family in Yanxia are practiced during Qingming Festival. The day of Qingming falls on either April 4 or 5 every year. Ancestral veneration rituals practiced by the Cheng family during the Qingming Festival last ten days and are particularly extensive and elaborate; these ritual practices start from the tenth day before Qingming to the day of Qingming itself. During these ten days, the organizational boundary of the Cheng family changes as well. It begins as a large extended family that includes the entire Cheng lineage in Yanxia and gradually decreases in size to only include an extended family of a few generations.

According to tradition, on the tenth day before Qingming, all the members of the Cheng family in Yanxia visit the tomb of Kai.\(^{46}\) The eighth day before Qingming is the day to worship the fourth generation Peng; the seventh day is for the fifth generation Zuo; the sixth day is for the six generation Tan, seventh generation Kui, and eighth generation Lian. The four days before the day of Qingming are for more recent ancestors, which can be organized by each extended family that claims the same ancestor. On the day of Qingming, residents perform ceremonies for their more recent ancestors, such as parents and grandparents, either at home or at the burial site (Figure 6.7).

The burial sites of these ancestors are generally not located inside Yanxia; some are located some distance away. As a result, the practice of visiting and attending these burial sites with extended family members not only has multiple meanings, but also strengthens the lineage

\(^{46}\) As indicated above, Kai represents the first generation of the Cheng family to move to Yongkang.
ties. Participant C25 (M, 75) recalled that when he was young, his father took him twice to worship Lichong, who was the ancestor of the 15th generation and buried 35 kilometers away. He continued, “everyone was sitting in a hired palanquin. There were 40 to 50 palanquins that followed each other. It was a very imposing scene for the people living in the villages that we passed!” This comment suggests that the ritual practice of ancestral veneration is not only a chance to reconnect with all the descendants of that ancestor, but also an opportunity to demonstrate the coherence and wealth of the lineage to outsiders. As a result, this practice might work as a great “advertisement” to attract young women of other villages to marry the Cheng descendants of Yanxia, who seem to belong to a rich and powerful lineage.

Figure 6.7: Participants C24 and C28 are leading the children to perform ancestral veneration at their residential space. Photo by the author.

The Super-Lineage – Ancestral Veneration Rituals Since 1995

Since 1995, the organizational boundary of the Cheng family during the Qingming Festival has been expanded to include all of the Cheng descendants living in Yongkang County and nearby regions, who claim Kai as their common ancestor. In 1995, the tombs of the first four generations of the Cheng family were relocated and rebuilt inside a small valley to the north of Chenglu village. This endeavor was organized by senior residents of Chenglu, including participant C9 (M, 77). Since then, the 17 Cheng lineage-based settlements in Yongkang County hold the annual ceremony in turns at this new burial site ten days before the day of Qingming. In
addition to being in charge of the ceremonial proceedings, the hosting village also prepares the ceremonial food, performances, such as dancing and traditional operas, fireworks, and lunch for people coming from afar. In addition, the hosting village raises funds from the successful businessmen of the Cheng descendants, so each attendant of the ceremony, regardless of gender, age, or whether he or she is a Cheng descendant, receives five yuan at the ceremonial site. The purpose of this is not only to attract attendants, but also to praise the greatness of the Cheng ancestor, since people receive the money in the name of these Cheng ancestors.

Chenglu Village was the host for the ceremony in 2014. Thousands of people attended the ceremony in the morning of March 26, 2014 despite bad weather (Figure 6.8, 6.9). After the ceremony, Chenglu Village hosted a huge banquet for over 200 people inside Run’er Ancestral Hall located inside the village, where the portraits of the members of the first four generations of the Cheng ancestors were hung (Figure 6.10, 6.11). Meanwhile, the open space outside the ancestral hall was transformed into an entertainment and performance center. There were food stands, art stalls, carnival games, and a children’s playground built with inflatable pieces. In addition, a temporary theater was set up in the open space to host traditional opera performances for three continuous days and nights (Figure 6.12, 6.13).
To host a ceremony on this scale is a great challenge for any of these 17 villages. During the one hosted by Chenglu, over a few hundred residents participated in the ceremony with different tasks. There were about 100 men carrying ritual objects and ceremonial offerings (Figure 6.14), over 100 performers (mainly women), two dozen children (each child was accompanied by at least one adult), and maybe another 50 to 80 people involved in registration, as well as organizing and safeguarding the event. Considering that the ceremony happened on a weekday, when most of the young people had to work, and that some participants of the ceremony were seniors probably over 70 years old, Chenglu village must have utilized all the
available manpower out of the 1,490 registered residents in the village. Therefore, successfully hosting an event like this is a testimony to the coherence of the village and the ability of all villagers to cooperate with each other. Meanwhile, this is also an opportunity to strengthen the bonds between residents, who belong to the same family, to educate the young descendants about their family history, and to make all the residents feel proud of being Cheng descendants (Figure 6.11, 6.15). Participant C13 (M, 64) described his feelings about attending this annual event, “every time I went, I was so proud and felt deep respect for my ancestor, because he was just by himself when he came here and he now has so many descendants!” More importantly, the competition between villages unifies the residents of each settlement-based lineage and reinforces the existence and importance of the extended family.

Figure 6.14: Residents of Chenglu are carrying a dead pig, as an offering to their ancestors, and walking towards the ceremonial site. Photo by the author.

47 The population of Chenglu village can be found at http://fangyan.zj.com/villages/index/index/330784109200. As discussed in Chapter 1, many of these 1,490 people, especially young people, are probably working and living in other cities, yet they are counted as rural residents during the census because their hukou are still in Chenglu. Therefore, the actual population of Chenglu is probably substantially smaller than 1,490.
Figure 6.15: Young girls that are holding ritual objects are lining on one side of the tombs during the ancestral veneration ceremony (Young boys holding different ritual objects are on the other side). Photo by the author.

*Dialog between Self and Ancestors*

In addition to strengthening lineage structure, the Qingming Festival is also an opportunity to build connections between individuals and ancestors. On the day of Qingming, all the ancestral halls in Yanxia used to hang portraits of the ancestors to whom the ancestral hall is dedicated before; the doors of these ancestral halls used to be opened to allow descendants to give offerings and worship. Before the Cultural Revolution, only males over 16 years of age\(^{48}\) were allowed to enter the ancestral halls that were dedicated to their ancestors on the day of Qingming. Participant C3 (M, 79) recalled that there were three ancestral halls in Yanxia that he was entitled to enter: Shiyuan Ancestral Hall, Zuozun Ancestral Hall, and another small ancestral hall that was hosted by individual descendant families in turns. After his visits, he could receive half a kilogram of rice, a piece of meat, and two pieces of tofu from Shiyuan Ancestral Hall; he could receive the same things from Zuoxun Ancestral Hall; and he could also receive some money from the third ancestral hall. As someone who was from a poor family, participant C3 always felt thankful to his ancestors for their generosity. As a result, the ancestral veneration rituals that individuals practiced and the goods that individuals received from their ancestors further tied the extended family together by bringing individuals emotionally closer to their ancestors. However, the ancestral halls in Yanxia ceased to maintain this ritual practice after the start of the Cultural

\(^{48}\) The age 16 is referring to one’s traditional age. When someone is 16 in traditional age, he or she is 15 or even 14 in modern age.
Revolution, and the doors of these ancestral halls have remained closed during the Qingming Festival ever since then.

Another connection between self and ancestors is through food; this custom is still popular today. Almost every family in Yanxia makes *qingmingguo* or *jintuan* during the Qingming Festival. Both are made of glutinous rice, yet *qingmingguo* has a sweet filling made of white and brown sugar and is often colored red and green, while *jintuan* has a savory filling made of tofu, vegetables, bean vermicelli, and minced pork. Making *jintuan* is also popular during Winter Solstice. Making these traditional foods is labor intensive work. Participant C28 (F, 28) makes *qingmingguo* every year for another reason: her young children love them (Figure 6.16). For children, this once-a-year treat becomes inevitably associated with their ancestors and helps form their rudimentary understanding of ancestral veneration and lineage. When they follow their parents and grandparents to perform ancestral veneration rituals, they thank their ancestors for bringing them the foods they love (Figure 6.7).

![Participant C28 is making qingmingguo. Photo by the author.](image)

6.2.2.2 *Individual Family – Winter Solstice*

The day of Winter Solstice is another important date to worship ancestors, because the residents of Yanxia believe that the day of Winter Solstice is the New Year day for people living in the other world. Different from the Qingming Festival, when large scale ancestral veneration is organized by the head of the lineage or by each extended family, the ritual practice during
Winter Solstice is usually performed by the individual families that eat from the same stove. The ritual practice can happen on the day of Winter Solstice, or three days before or four days after the Winter Solstice. Individual families prepare *gengfan* (ceremonial meals for the dead) and wines and invite their ancestors of the previous four generations to come home to enjoy the meal (Figure 6.17). The family members, then, burn “money” and “silver ingots” made of paper as a way to send money to their ancestors living in the other world (Figure 6.18).

6.2.2.3 Individual Family – Zhongyuan Festival

The Zhongyuan Festival is on July 15 of the Lunar Calendar; it is also known as the Hungry Ghost Festival. The Zhongyuan Festival is another occasion when individual families perform ancestral veneration, yet it is less popular and the *gengfan* has fewer varieties. In addition to preparing *gengfan* for their ancestors, residents of Yanxia also put additional foods in baskets and take them to open spaces to “feed” the dead who do not have any descendants. In so doing, the hungry ghosts will not disturb the ancestors of the people who feed them.

6.2.2.4 Dialog between Self and Ancestors – The Chinese New Year

Since the residents in Yanxia believe that the “new year” for people living in the other world is Winter Solstice, the purpose of worshipping ancestors on the Chinese New Year day is not to
wish them a happy new year, but rather to build a connection between self and ancestors similar to the practice on the day of Qingming. Before the Cultural Revolution, all the ancestral halls in Yanxia used to open their doors between New Year’s Eve and January 3 of the Lunar Calendar. The portraits of the ancestors, to whom the ancestral hall was dedicated, were hung in the hall. For example, participant C25 (M, 75) recalled that Shaochang Ancestral Hall used to hang the portraits of Lichong, Lichong’s wife, and their seven sons. When visiting the ancestral halls, individuals asked their ancestors to protect them and their family members in the coming year. After the Cultural Revolution, the Main Hall of Degeng-Ju became the place where this ritual practice continued to take place.

6.2.3 Kinship Affairs and Ancestral Halls

The ancestral halls of the Cheng family in Yanxia have been the physical, spatial, and ideological representations of the Cheng lineage. They are the places where li, manifested through kinship affairs, is practiced and executed (see discussion in Chapter 3). There are three major ancestral halls in Yanxia: Shiyuan Ancestral Hall, Zuoxun Ancestral Hall, and Shaochang Ancestral Hall (Figure 5.3, 1.14, 6.19). Even though Degeng-Ju was not built as an ancestral hall, it has been considered one by the local residents for many generations because it has been a place for important ritual and sociocultural activities.

Figure 6.19: Shaochang Ancestral Hall. The space in front of Shaochang Ancestral Hall is used as a parking space. Photo by the author.
There are another three ancestral halls of the Cheng family that were built in the early twentieth century: Zhaofu Ancestral Hall, Qiwen Ancestral Hall, and Lufang Ancestral Hall (Figure 5.3). Zhaofu Ancestral Hall was privately owned and was built as part of Chengzhenxing Hotel, the largest hotel in Yanxia; it was later confiscated by the government in the 1950s along with the rest of the hotel properties. Qiwen Ancestral Hall was also a private ancestral hall built by the grandfather of participant C2, whose family still owns the building and uses it as a residency. Lufang Ancestral Hall, although not a private ancestral hall, was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution as the result of a fire. In addition, the Zhou family has an ancestral hall built in Yanxia (Figure 5.3). This discussion does not address these four ancestral halls, because the participants of this study did not indicate that these four ancestral halls had equivalent importance to the three major ancestral halls and Degeng-Ju.

6.2.3.1 Formal Kinship Affairs – Ancestral Halls

Before the Cultural Revolution, the three major ancestral halls in Yanxia shared similarities as religious sites; they were essentially the shrines for all the deceased ancestors of the Cheng family. In addition to being the shrines, these ancestral halls were also the places, as well as organizations, that handled formal kinship affairs, such as ancestral veneration rituals and education for children.

Prior to the 1950s, the three major ancestral halls were managed according to a set of specific rules. Shiyuan Ancestral Hall was collectively owned by all the members of the Cheng family in Yanxia. The residents understood this “ownership” as “everyone has a share;” in other words, everyone shared the responsibility and the benefit associated with this ownership. Zuoxun Ancestral Hall was collectively owned by all the descendants of Zuoxun (1646-1725), which included only certain members of the Cheng family. Similarly, Shaochang Ancestral Hall was collectively owned by all the descendants of Lichong (1736-1793), which included a smaller section of the Cheng family. These three major ancestral halls all used to have corporate estates and assets, which were usually donated by financially established descendants as their way to show respect to their ancestors. Senior members of the Cheng family were selected to manage

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49 According to local residents, the Zhou family might have lived in Yanxia before the arrival of the Cheng family. A descendant of the Zhou family has been living in Yanxia to guard the ancestral hall and the tomb of the first ancestor of the Zhou family, which is located in the wooded area behind the ancestral hall.
these estates and assets, as well as other kinship matters. For example, according to participant C25 (M, 75), Shaochang Ancestral Hall used to have a management committee of four to five people, and the agricultural land owned by Shaochang Ancestral Hall was rented out to poor families to cultivate. The rental income was then used to support ritual and sociocultural activities on special occasions, such as the ritual practices at the Qingming Festival, and daily education for children inside the ancestral halls. However, each ancestral hall only supported the descendants of that particular ancestor. In other words, only the descendants of Lichong could attend the school and the ritual events held inside Shaochang Ancestral Hall.

The most important function of each of these three ancestral hall was to be a shrine for the deceased descendants of the ancestor, to whom the ancestral hall was dedicated; ancestral halls were places that allowed future descendants to pay respects there to their ancestors during certain days of the year as described in the previous section. In the ancestral halls of Yanxia, all the deceased ancestors were enshrined in the form of wooden plates, on which their names were written (Figure 6.20). When a male member of the Cheng family in Yanxia, for example who was also a descendant of Lichong, passed away, three wooden plates engraved with his name would be made; one would be enshrined in Shiyuan Ancestral Hall, one in Shaochang Ancestral Hall, and one in Yongyan Ancestral Hall (in another Cheng lineage-based settlement). If the male descendant was married, three wooden plates engraved with his wife’s name would be sent to ancestral halls at the same time, yet each was covered with a piece of red cloth. The red cloth
would be removed when the woman passed away. If the wife of a Cheng male descendant passed away first, her name plates would be sent to the ancestral halls with her husband’s plates upon his death. All these wooden plates, set on an elevated shelf and arranged by generations, was be located inside the Rear Hall of each ancestral hall, where descendants of the Cheng family used to kneel down in front of all the deceased ancestors.

Shiyuan Ancestral Hall and Shaochang Ancestral Hall were also the places where young descendants of the Cheng family became educated and, also, learned prescribed social behaviors and obligations. The education inside these ancestral halls was unique in the way that each building was a living text book filled with rich and glorious family history. In the case of Shiyuan Ancestral Hall, the engravings on the columns and the wooden plates were the wisdom left by the earlier ancestors (Figure 6.21). The wood carvings on the doors of Shaochang Ancestral Hall included pictorial depictions of 24 Stories of Filial Devotion (Figure 6.22). Both Shiyuan and Shaochang ancestral halls were used as schools on a daily basis to provide free education for all the male descendants of the Cheng family; non-Cheng descendants could attend the school for small fees. Although the exact date is uncertain, girls have probably been allowed to attend the schools since some time in the early twentieth century, during the rule of the Republic of China.

Figure 6.21: The interior space of Shiyuan Ancestral Hall, which has engravings on columns. The large wooden plate is engraved with “Degeng-Tang (Hall of Degeng).” Photo by the author.
In addition, Shaochang Ancestral Hall was built with a theatrical stage, which used to hold performances for special occasions, such as during the Chinese New Year and after a good harvest (Figure 6.23). Sometimes, individuals also paid for the performances, either to celebrate a senior descendant’s birthday or as a gesture of goodwill.

Finally, ancestral halls were the place conflicts between family members were resolved by respected seniors. This ritual is called “opening the doors of the ancestral hall,” so involved parties can enter the ancestral hall and solve the problem inside. Clearly, the idea of this ritual practice is that the entire process could be witnessed by all the ancestors of the lineage to make sure that justice was done. However, according to participant C27 (M, 94), who was born in 1919 and is currently the oldest resident in Yanxia, this ritual practice never happened in Yanxia during his lifetime, although he is aware of the ritual.
6.2.3.2 Secular Practices – Degeng-Ju

Degeng-Ju has been the center for certain ritual and sociocultural activities, even though it was built as a communal house with public spaces in the middle of the sixteenth century. If the ancestral halls were the place for formal kinship matters, such as ancestral veneration, education, and justice, Degeng-Ju has been the place for secular practices.

The public spaces of Degeng-Ju are defined and enclosed by the residential spaces along the perimeter of the building. The public spaces include the Main Hall, the Rear Hall, the stage, and the courtyards (Figure 6.4). These spaces were owned by the entire Cheng family in Yanxia before the Land Reform and have been collectively “owned” by everyone in Yanxia since the Land Reform (see Chapter 1 for the discussion of the nature of this ownership). This change in “ownership” status did not substantially affect individuals’ understanding of their relationship with Degeng-Ju, since, as discussed in Chapter 5, in a lineage-based settlement, collective ownership by everyone in the village is almost equal to lineage ownership. In addition, according to the participants and participant observations, these public spaces have been an important place for ritual and sociocultural activities. As a result, residents of Yanxia have considered Degeng-Ju as another ancestral hall and a property in which everyone has a “share.”
Degeng-Ju used to be the center for the Chinese New Year celebration before the 1980s. The portraits of the earlier generations of the Cheng family used to be hung inside the Main Hall of Degeng-Ju between New Year’s Eve and the third day of the New Year. In addition, any Cheng descendants who did not have the shijian in their house could hang the portraits of their recent ancestors inside the Main Hall of Degeng-Ju and worship them there. Meanwhile, the entire second courtyard, which had a stage, became a theater that hosted theatrical performances for multiple days. The upper level of the Rear Hall was used for the premium seating, while the lower level was the place where snacks, such as fried peanuts, smoked tofu, and wontons, were sold. In addition, the entire second courtyard, including all the Side Rooms, was packed with people during the performances. Degeng-Ju and the open space in front of the building were also the most important places for the Dragon Dance that usually happened on January 14th of the Lunar Calendar. This kind of theatrical performance could also occur when an individual paid artists to perform as a way to celebrate a senior family member’s birthday. However, after the construction of the assembly hall in 1984, Degeng-Ju gradually ceased to be the village theater (Figure 5.3).

Degeng-Ju has been the place for other ritual activities besides holding theatrical performances. The ground level of the Rear Hall was used for hosting “red” (wedding) and “white” (funeral) events until it was burned down in 2005. Since then, funeral ceremonies have been hosted inside the Main Hall when the family of the deceased member does not have the shijian in their house. After a member of the Cheng family passes away, the coffin or the cremation urn will be displayed inside the Main Hall until the next “good” day to bury it, during which family members and relatives will come to visit the deceased for one more time. Meanwhile, no wedding ceremonies have been hosted inside the Main Hall since 2005; it is because the younger generation prefers having their wedding ceremonies and receptions inside the banquet hall of a hotel or a large restaurant instead.

6.2.3.3 Kinship Affairs in the Present Day

The social and cultural roles of the ancestral halls, as well as the responsibility and power of kinship in Yanxia changed after 1949. Although many of the cultural traditions are no longer practiced in the same way as before, kinship affairs still play an important role in rural society as they do in Yanxia. Even without the physical space of the ancestral halls and the financial power
that the ancestral halls used to have, kinship affairs and lineage organization still exist, yet they are managed in a different form and practiced on a smaller scale.

After the Land Reform in the 1950s, according to participant C3 (M, 79), Zuoxun Ancestral Hall was given to four families as their residential space, one of which was the family of participant C3 that had been living there since 1945. In other words, Zuoxun Ancestral Hall ceased to function as an ancestral hall. In the meantime, Shiyuan Ancestral Hall and Shaochang Ancestral Hall became collectively “owned” by everyone in Yanxia (see Chapter 1 for the discussion of the nature of this ownership) and remained as the places for ritual and sociocultural activities on special occasions until the start of the Cultural Revolution. In addition, according to participants C23 (M, 70) and C25 (M, 75), the school inside Shaochang Ancestral Hall closed soon after the Land Reform, while Shaochang Ancestral Hall remained as a school on a daily basis until a modern elementary school was built at the other end of the valley in 1989. Shaochang Ancestral Hall then served as a kindergarten until the 1990s. Participant C16 (M, 23) still clearly remembers that he walked to the kindergarten inside Shaochang Ancestral Hall every day. As a result, almost everyone that was born in Yanxia before the early 1990s spent at least a few years in one or both ancestral halls when they were young.

Currently, both Shiyuan and Shaochang ancestral halls have their doors tightly closed. Shaochang Ancestral Hall was named a Cultural Relic at the county level in 1985. The local government then carried out a renovation project between 2005 and 2007 and locked up the building afterwards. As a result, Shaochang Ancestral Hall did become a cultural relic and ceased to be part of the cultural life of the Cheng descendants in Yanxia. As participant C23 (M, 70) concluded, “Shaochang Ancestral Hall belongs to the state,” even though, by law, it belongs to everyone in Yanxia. The residents seemed to have learned a lesson from the fate of Shaochang Ancestral Hall. At the time of the fieldwork in 2014, they had begun to raise money to renovate Shiyuan Ancestral Hall themselves; they planned to turn it into a senior center like Chenglu Village had done with Run’er Ancestral Hall. They also planned to have a kitchen and dining area that serves three low-priced meals a day to senior residents of Yanxia. Although the function of the ancestral hall changes in the present day, the idea behind these different activities is the same: the ancestral hall is the place that helps sustain the bonding relationship between family members and makes them proud of being a Cheng descendant because of the benefits they receive.
Without the corporate estates and assets that used to be owned by each ancestral hall, the Cheng family in Yanxia has come up with a different way to financially support their ritual and sociocultural activities. Following the tradition of “rule by elders” (Fei, 1992), a Senior Association has been formed to manage the finance of the lineage, as well as ritual and sociocultural activities. The alternative way to get financial support for kinship affairs is to try to raise money from all the residents in Yanxia, who are asked to contribute on a voluntary basis in an amount that they can afford. The most important opportunity to raise money is during the annual Dragon Dance on January 14 of the Lunar Calendar.

The Dragon Dance invites and requires the participation of every family in Yanxia; it is recognized as one of the important cultural traditions by many residents (Figure 6.24). Even though it is called as a “dance,” it is a very intense and laborious activity with potential danger (Figure 6.25, 6.26). Therefore, the “dancer” are usually limited to young men. The unwritten rule followed by the residents is: if a family has the manpower, send the young men to join the dance; if a family does not have the manpower, that family can help the dance financially instead; of course families are welcome to do both. If a family does not have a young man to participate in the dance that year, the family will donate money in an amount they choose. If the family is too poor to donate, they can prepare foods to feed the dancers. In addition, the “dragon” will visit financially established families during the dance. It is believed that the “dragon” can bring good fortune to the family in the coming year, so the family always prepares a hongbao (a red envelop with money inside) as their way to show appreciation for the “dragon’s” visit. Sometimes, certain families, especially owners of hotel businesses and families who want to have children in the coming year, invite the “dragon” to their houses and ask for its blessings. In return, they also prepare a big hongbao. As a hotel owner, participant C17 prepared a hongbao with 288 yuan during the Dragon Dance of 2014 in exchange for a blessing for his business in the coming year. All the money collected during the Dragon Dance every year is managed by the Senior Association of Yanxia. For example, during the Dragon Dance in 2014, over 50,000 yuan was raised, of which about 10,000 yuan was used to financially support the event, such as to repair the head and tail of the dragon and to pay the music performers. The Senior Association distributed the rest of the money for various purposes. 2,000 yuan was given to the Women’s
Association and 3,000 yuan was awarded to the Joint Defense Team, so each organization can use this money to support future activities and award the all-volunteer defense team members. Over 30,000 yuan was saved for the purpose of renovating Shiyuan Ancestral Hall. Finally, the Senior Association kept 10,000 yuan in a fund to host future ritual and sociocultural activities.

This kind of volunteer-based fund-raising happens for other ritual purposes as well. For example, even though Chenglu Village raised a large amount of money from Cheng descendants, who are successful businessmen, for the Qingming celebration in 2014, residents of Chenglu still donated various amounts themselves to pay for small things, such as the pig used for the

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50 The Joint Defense Team is responsible for keeping of the residents in Yanxia and their properties safe. The people who work for the Joint Defense Team are all volunteers. Participant C22 used to work as member of the team.
offering. As an acknowledgement of the people’s generosity, the pig was slaughtered immediately after the ceremony and the meat was distributed among all the families that helped pay for the pig regardless of how much they contributed. When being asked whether “fairness” matters in this context, since certain pieces of meat are much better quality than others, the organizer answered, “not at all. This is just a gesture to appreciate the families’ donations.” In another example, the descendants of Yichen (an ancestor of the 14th generation) get together every year to worship Yichen during the Qingming Festival. After the ceremony, the descendants, which can include up to 100 people, have a group dinner at a local restaurant, paid for by different families every year. At the dinner, a family, or two families, volunteers to organize next year’s event and pay for next year’s group dinner. When answering the question of “fairness,” since the cost for each hosting family can vary dramatically depending on the number of participants and the number of families that pay every year, participant C34 (M, 40) explained, “we are not that calculative. Paying for dinner is volunteer anyway. We are not trying to make it cut-and-dried, because we are all brothers!”

Therefore, it is the very idea that we are all “brothers” and members of the same family that makes this kind of volunteer-based fund-raising possible and sustainable. The practice of volunteer-based fund-raising is not new; it is a continuation of the way in which residents used to handle kinship affairs when ancestral halls were active corporate organizations. The construction of an ancestral hall and the maintenance of its assets were all based on donations, either in the forms of money, time, or labor. While the corporate entities represented by ancestral halls have ceased to function, the volunteer-based fund-raising organized by senior family members sustains kinship practice. At the same time, the tradition and practice of carrying out kinship affairs in collaboration with “brothers” and family members further reinforces the unity of the extended Cheng family of Yanxia.

6.3 Home

As discussed in the above sections, the history, lineage structure, and kinship affairs of the Cheng family in Yanxia help to construct, as well as maintain, the understanding of family as it is understood by the Cheng descendants in Yanxia. A family is an extended lineage with changing organizational boundaries, and it includes all its members in the past, present, and future. As a result, the understanding of home varies as the consequence of changing organizational
boundaries of the family. More importantly, a home not only includes the space where residents are currently living, but also the buildings that were constructed and inhabited by the residents’ ancestors and the places and objects that have meanings in the context of the family history because of their associations with certain family members.

There are three ways in which this understanding of family affects the concept of home as understood by residents of Yanxia. First, residents feel attached to the three major ancestral halls, and also Degeng-Ju, because these structures symbolize the Cheng ancestors of the distant past and their great achievements. Second, the strong sense of pride that certain residents have towards their recent ancestors and relatives, and their great achievements, affects the residents’ understandings of the concept of home. Lastly, the understanding that the entire Cheng lineage in Yanxia forms and performs as an extended family enables residents to develop an emotional attachment to the historic sections of Yanxia, which makes these places feel like home. These three factors are interwoven; a participant’s understanding of home can be affected by a combination of one or more of these factors.

This understanding of home – which extends beyond any individual homestead and expands to include historic buildings, buildings and objects that are associated with renowned family figures, and historic vernacular settlement – is prevalent among participants. Among the 20 participants that took photographs, 15 participants included one of the three categories of vernacular built environments just mentioned as content in their photographs. Specifically, seven participants photographed ancestral halls and Degeng-Ju; ten participants photographed buildings and objects that are associated with renowned family figures; six participants included historic sections of Yanxia. Among the 16 participants that were interviewed, six discussed their attachments to the historic vernacular settlement of Yanxia. Three of the six particularly discussed their affections towards the ancestral halls or Degeng-Ju.

6.3.1 Signifier of Ancestors in the Distant Past

The reason that the ancestral halls and Degeng-Ju are an important aspect of participants’ understanding of the meaningful aspect of home is because these places represent the Cheng family in Yanxia as a whole by signifying the ancestors and their achievements in the distant past. The connection between these buildings and the distant ancestors grows from three characteristics. First, these buildings were built and inhabited by these ancestors, or even named
after certain ancestors. Second, these buildings were, or still are, the places for ritual and sociocultural activities that unite the Cheng family by bringing them physically together and, therefore, facilitate the construction of the idea of an extended Cheng lineage. Lastly, most of the Cheng descendants in Yanxia greatly respect their ancestors because the ancestral veneration rituals repeatedly reinforce the significance of the Cheng ancestors to their descendants.

The significance of Cheng ancestors is mainly conveyed through the ritual performance that verbally glorifies family history (Figure 6.27, 6.28). When being asked where he learned the vivid stories of his family history, participant C25 (M, 75) said that he learned them from attending the ancestral veneration rituals during the Qingming Festival. Participant C25 further noted that senior residents, such as participant C27 (M, 94), used to tell the same stories during the ritual practices at the Qingming Festival every year. These rituals also facilitate the construction of the significance of Cheng ancestors through food customs. Participants C3 (M, 79) appreciated the meat, tofu, and rice he received in the name of his ancestors after visiting the ancestral halls. In the same way, the children of participant C28 (F, 28) relish their beloved qingmingguo that they usually only have one time every year; families enjoy the feast during

Figure 6.27: Participant C25 keeps a copy of the script, which is read during the ancestral veneration ritual that happens ten day before the Qingming Festival. Photo by the author.

Figure 6.28: In the same notebook, participant C25 keeps a diagram of his family tree, which traces his family to Kai, the first generation of the Cheng family that moved to Yongkang. Photo by the author.
Winter Solstice after they send their ancestors back to the other world. More importantly, preserving, collecting, editing, and distributing the family record makes the family history accessible to all the Cheng descendants (Figure 6.29). The memories, esteem, and gratitude that the residents of Yanxia have towards their ancestors from the distant past are manifested through their attachment to the ancestral halls and Degeng-Ju. These places have become symbolic of the important family history and the achievements of Cheng ancestors.

For these reasons, many participants included the ancestral halls and Degeng-Ju in their photographs that represent their understanding of the meaningful aspect of home. The very first thing participant C23 (M, 70) did after receiving the camera was to run to Degeng-Ju and take three photographs of the façade of Degeng-Ju (Figure 6.30). He explained the reason for doing so was “this building was a heritage left by our ancestors from the distant past.”51 Like participant C23, other participants that included the ancestral halls and Degeng-Ju could not elaborate the detailed reasons for including these buildings in their understanding of the meaningful aspects of home, other than simple, yet firm answers like “this place belongs to us (participant C18 (M, 67) in reference to Degeng-Ju);” “this is the most important place (participant C21 (F, 61) in reference to Degeng-Ju);” “this is an old relic (participant C3 (M, 79)

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51 The word “heritage” was a translation of the Chinese word “遗产,” which, in this context, does not have any implication of the concept of heritage in heritage studies, but only means “things left by one’s ancestors.”
in reference to Shiyuan Ancestral Hall.” In particular, participant C18 allocated three of the ten photographs he shot to Degeng-Ju. His deep attachment to this building is also demonstrated through the action of filing a report to the local government to request money for building preservation.52

![Degeng-Ju Facade](image)

Figure 6.30: The façade of Degeng-Ju. The very first photo participant C23 took after he received the camera.

For the same reason, participant C9 (M, 77) also photographed Run’er Ancestral Hall as his understanding of the meaningful aspect of home (Figure 6.31). He explained the reason for doing this, “the ancestral hall represents the ancestors of the village. So of course I have to include it!” Not only did he include Run’er Ancestral Hall, he, using the first camera he had, shot ten photographs of Run’er Ancestral Hall from different perspectives and inside out. This is a particularly critical action considering that participant C9 did not include any photographs of the building he has been living in for over 40 years. The differing attitudes toward the ancestral hall and his residential space clearly demonstrate participant C9’s understanding of the meaningful aspects of home; the ancestral hall, which symbolizes the extended Cheng family, is clearly more meaningful than his own residential space in contributing to participant C9’s understanding of home.53

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52 According to participant C18, he never heard a word back from the government.  
53 The second camera that participant C9 received broke after he took 14 photographs. If the camera had not been broken, he might have included photographs of the building he was living in. However, the fact that he did not include his own house in the 40 photographs he completed still supports the argument that he considers the ancestral hall is the more meaningful aspect of home, which symbolize the extended Cheng family, than his own residential space.
6.3.2 Pride in Ancestors

The strong sense of pride certain residents have towards their recent ancestors and relatives, who had significant accomplishments, affects their understandings of the concept of home. In some cases, the organizational boundary of the family is redefined by a resident to include the recent ancestors or relatives. As a result, the size of home is expanded accordingly to include buildings and places that used to be owned by these renowned figures. On other occasions, a resident’s respect towards his or her recent ancestors endows additional meanings to his or her house or certain objects in his or her house that he or she inherited from his or her ancestors.

Participant C19 (M, 72) is one of the residents whose understanding of the meaningful aspects of home is greatly influenced by the sense of pride he has towards his recent ancestors and the once glorious family history. He proudly stated: “the mountains behind the houses used to belong to our family. All these agricultural lands in front of the houses used to belong to my family. My family used to dry crops at the open space in front of the houses that used to belong to my family. Our family had everything!” In this statement, participant C19’s understanding of family clearly goes back five generations to those who first purchased this housing complex and the adjacent properties. According to Participant C19, soon after Lichong’s descendants built the two courtyards in 1797, his ancestor five generation ago, who was an official, purchased them. In the middle of the nineteenth century, participant C19’s ancestor four generation ago, who was also an official, added the third house to the south of the existing courtyards (Figure 5.28). His great-grand father, who was a very rich man, inherited the courtyard in the middle. With the way
in which the organizational boundary of his family is defined, participant C19’s understanding of home expands to include the properties his family used to own (Figure 6.32, 5.29). In addition, as discussed in Chapter 5, the historic family ownership endows participant C19 the claimed ownership towards properties he does not really own. In turn, this claimed ownership further supports participant C19’s understanding of the meaningful aspects of home as delineated by his definition of family.

In the similar way, Participant C2’s (M, 74) understanding of the meaningful aspects of home is redefined by the way he sets up the organizational boundary of his family, which includes his grandfather and his two uncles. Participant C2 rarely talks about his own family, except that his father used to run the largest umbrella store in Yanxia, which he inherited from participant C2’s grandfather. When speaking of family history, participant C2 always started from his grandfather, who built Qiwen Ancestral Hall for himself and Lufang Ancestral Hall that was named after an ancestor in distant past (Figure 5.3). In particular, participant C2 is especially proud of the two wooden tablets that used to hang inside Qiwen Ancestral Hall. One tablet was signed by Zhejiang Provincial Government, while the other was signed by the judge of the Supreme Court of Zhejiang Province. He displays the tablets inside the entrance hall of his house, because, for him, they not only represent the achievements and honors his grandfather received when he was alive, but also the important family history to which he feels related. Therefore, these two tablets became the subject of the first four photographs participant C2 took after receiving the camera (Figure 6.33). In addition, participant C2 repeatedly talked about his
two older uncles and their distinctive achievements. One of them was a scholar who spent most of his life working and living in Shanghai and Beijing, and the other was a famous painter and educator that lived in Shanghai for most of his life. There is no doubt that participant C2’s grandfather and his uncles are outstanding Cheng descendants with extraordinary achievements. For participant C2, only when he redefines the organizational boundary of his family to include his uncles and his grandfather, can he share, as well as feel entitled to, these family accomplishments. Meanwhile, participant C2’s understanding of the meaningful aspects of home included buildings and objects associated with these figures. Besides photographing the wooden tablets, participant C2 included a photograph of the entrance of Qiwen Ancestral Hall, in which his nephew is living (Figure 6.34). He also included the view from his terrace of the building built and once inhabited by his two uncles (Figure 6.35). While taking the photograph, he even commented on the importance of being able to see this building from his terrace and repeated the important history of the building, “I can clearly see that house from my terrace. It was once the Supreme Court of Zhejiang Province.”

54 This building used to house the Supreme Court of Zhejiang Province during the Second World War. The provincial government of Zhejiang Province was temporarily relocated to Yanxia between 1938 and 1942 for a total of four years and five months. During that period, many buildings in Yanxia were used as government offices and residential spaces for the staffs and their families. See Zhao (2013b).
In other cases, some residents expressed a deep attachment to particular objects within their houses because of the connection between these objects and the ancestors, from whom they inherited the house. Meanwhile, the pride and respect these residents have towards their recent ancestors endows additional meanings to their understanding of home. Participant C1 (F, 63) is one such resident, who, for over 40 years, has been living in the same courtyard house built by her husband’s grandfather around the turn of the twentieth century. This house was once a family hotel, Chengchengchang Hotel. It was built with lavish wood carvings that were used to decorate the windows and doors. Participant C1 took ten photographs (out of 54) of these wood carvings that she adores (Figure 6.36), because she feels that she can “never get tired of looking at these...
beautiful carvings.” Facing the possible future forced relocation, she said “if we have to move, I am going to take these window panels with me!”

![Figure 6.36: One of the window panels inside participant C1’s house. Participant C1 considers the three wood carvings on the lower section of this window the best ones in her house. Photo by participant C1.](image)

Participant C15 (F, 72), similar to participant C1, treasures the mural inside her house, in which she has been living for 45 years. Before she agreed to take the cameras, she kept asking the researcher to photograph the mural so she could keep them as a memory. She did eventually agree to try herself and took six photographs (out of 36) focusing on the murals, which she sees whenever she walks out of her room or sits inside the courtyard ([Figure 6.37, 7.38](image)). For participant C15, this mural recalls the good memories she had inside this house, when she was “spoiled” by her mother-in-law and her husband. In addition, this mural has special meaning because her mother-in-law helped build this house when she was 12, and this is the only house in Yanxia that has a mural like this. Yet, due to losing the backing of her mother-in-law after she passed away, participant C15 did not get a fair share of the house due to family conflict. The death of her husband in 2007 further immersed her into memories of the past, and made her feel sorrow about the present. She said that she married into an established family living inside a beautiful house. However, people that once “spoiled” her all died, and the once lively courtyard became quiet and dilapidated. Yet there is nothing she could do because she currently does not own most of the property. Only the mural on the wall remains. For participant C15, this mural represents and recalls the good memories from the past, as well as the pride she feels towards her mother-in-law and the once glorious family history.
6.3.3 Providing Emotional Support

The understanding of the extended family that includes the entire Cheng lineage in Yanxia enables residents to feel attached to the built environment of Yanxia. In particular, the historic sections of the village, which recall childhood or past memories of all the residents, provide emotional support to the residents in the present day. These recollections make these places feel like home. This feeling was well summarized by participant C38 (M, 36):

When I am tired of hectic life, I go to the section of the village where the historic path and the old houses are located, and where it is quiet. When I am there, I feel like I have
the support from older generations and the support from friends. I sometimes go there to visit. I go there to stroll along the historic path, to clear the weeds, to touch the columns, and to look at the roof tiles. The feelings of the old houses are the same; this will never change. When I close my eyes, I can feel that I am there.

As he stated, participant C38 feels that the historic path and the old houses provide the same kind of emotional support that parents and friends do. Participant C38 is in his late thirties and has ambitions. After exploring alternative career choices in the northern part of China for many years, he came back to Yanxia in 2012 and opened a small factory in a nearby town that manufactures metal accessories. The competition between numerous small local factories is fierce, which makes the profit margins very low. To keep the costs down, instead of using an assembly line to complete certain work, participant C38 hires senior people in Yanxia for simple tasks at extremely low pay. Participant C38 had his first child in 2012, which is considered quite late compared to fellow villagers of his own age group. In addition, he is the only son in his family. Therefore, the pressures he faces, including the need to have a successful business, to save enough money for his daughter before he becomes too old to work, and to take care of his parents, must be tremendous. Thus, participant C38 identifies the unchanging historic sections of Yanxia, where he lived until he was 17, as a place that grounds him and, more importantly, contrasts with the stressful urban life and everything else that is changing and demanding his attention. The historic sections, on the other hand, provide him with peace of mind and the feeling of home, where, according to him, “cigarettes taste different.”

In another case, participant C17 (M, 63), who has been running the family hotel business, took 21 photographs (out of 44) along the historic pilgrim path of Yanxia, even though he has been living off the historic path since 1980 or 1981. Among the 21 photographs participant C17 took, 11 photographs were focused on the buildings that used to be owned by his great-great-grandfather, who owned the once largest hotels in Yanxia. As discussed in the previous section, the great pride that participant C17 feels towards his recent ancestors and their achievements makes him attach these properties to his understanding of home, although he cannot even enter some of the buildings that his great-great-grandfather used to own (Figure 6.39). For the other ten photographs, participant C17 included views of the historic pilgrim path and the properties that were once owned by his great-great-grandfather’s business rivals (Figure 6.40). For
participant C17, however, these buildings do not represent the competition, nor the conflicts, between his ancestors and other hotel owners, but rather the dwelling places of his relatives and childhood friends. While looking through the photographs he took, he recalled, “I went there (the section of the historic pilgrim path sandwiched by his great-great-grandfather’s business rivals) to play when I was young! These houses belong to my grandfather’s cousins’ families. We went there and play every day. We used to play hide and seek, and jump rope … There were no televisions; very few families had radios. We went to play until it was after 8pm, then we came back with a troche.” For the success of other hotels in the past, instead of feeling hatred as his ancestors did, he recognizes them as the glorious past of the Cheng family in Yanxia as a whole, in which he also has a share (for conflict between hotel owners in the past, see Chapter 7). With this understanding of family, participant C17 included all these buildings that were once large hotels as his understanding of the meaningful aspects of home, because he wanted to keep this family history and the buildings that represent family history for “memory.”

Figure 6.39: Inspired by this project, participant C17 took photographs of the house his great-great-grandfather used to own using his own camera. While he was taking photographs, he asked his wife to take a photograph of him taking the photograph. Photo by participant C17’s wife with the instruction of participant C17.
Conclusion

The discussion of home in the context of rural China is inseparable from the understanding of the Chinese family, because these two concepts, together, construct the Chinese word jia. For the residents in Yanxia, the history, lineage structure, and kinship affairs of the Cheng family help to construct, as well as maintain, the understanding of family: a family is an extended lineage with multiple and changing organizational boundaries. A family with a set of organizational boundaries is defined and constructed through the activities of the various scales of lineage as it evolves and within the context in which the concept of family is examined. For the descendants of the Cheng family in Yanxia, the size of their family can range from an extended family that includes all of the Cheng descendants who claim Kai as their ancestor to a core family of a few generations or even a nuclear family. As a result, the understanding of home varies. For residents of Yanxia, a home not only includes the residential space in which they are currently living, but also places, buildings, and objects that are associated with their ancestors. Specifically, the three major ancestral halls and Degeng-Ju are included in residents’ understandings of home because they symbolize the Cheng ancestors in the distant past. In addition, certain residents’ understandings of home comprise buildings and objects that are associated with their recent ancestors and with relatives who are renowned for their great achievements. Lastly, the concept
of home also includes historic and vernacular sections of Yanxia, because these environments provide the kind of emotional support that makes residents feel at home.

Although most participants’ understandings of home extend beyond the residential space in which they are living to include places, buildings, and objects that they associate with their ancestors, the ways in which the definition of family affects the understanding of home vary among participants. These differences are affected by gender, age, and family history. Senior male participants tend to value the ancestral halls and Degeng-Ju as an important aspect in their understanding of home more than females and young people. This difference can be attributed to the fact that the senior males have longer and deeper personal involvements with these buildings and places, while the same opportunities for involvement were either lacking for females, or ceased to be in practice in recent decades, which prevented younger people from having the same experiences. These Cheng senior male descendants, such as participants C3 (M, 79), C9 (M, 77), C13 (M, 64), C18 (M, 67), C23 (M, 70), and C25 (M, 75), attended school in ancestral halls when they were young, received food and blessings there for decades after they reached adulthood, and have started to participate in managing the kinship affairs since they became seniors. In addition, the participants, including participants C1 (F, 63), C2 (M, 74), C9 (M, 77), C13 (M, 64), C15 (F, 72), C17 (M, 50), and C19 (M, 72), whose recent ancestors are known for their great accomplishments, tended to show stronger attachments to buildings and objects that are associated with these well-known family figures. Under the circumstance of recent ancestral accomplishment, gender and age do not appear to influence the strength and importance of these attachments. Lastly, younger participants appear more likely to feel attached to historic and vernacular settlements in a general and even abstract way, such as participants C5 (F, 26), C7 (F, 19), C16 (M, 23), C17 (M, 50), C34 (M, 40), C37 (M, 50), and C38 (M, 36). Most of these participants have experienced, or are living, the busy and modern lifestyle outside Yanxia. Therefore, for these young participants, the unchanging historic settlement that sustains their childhood and past memories becomes an anchoring point that contrasts with their stressful everyday lives; the familiarity of the historic settlement makes them feel at home. This aspect of home is further discussed in Chapter 8.
CHAPTER 7  THE HOME: DIVIDED HOUSES AND FAMILIES

What is my home and what is not? What is my hotel and what is not? There are no differences between my home and my hotel, as long as I can make money!

- Participant C30 (F, 41)

7.1 Introduction

As a complement to the analyses in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, each of which focuses on one attribute of vernacular settlement in rural China and its influence on the meaning of home as it is understood by the residents of Yanxia, this chapter examines a unique and dominant cultural tradition of Yanxia, which is the family-based economic practice that has been serving the pilgrims of the local deity, Hugong Dadi, since the 1850s, and its impact on the understanding of home for people that are involved in this hospitality business. In contrast to the argument established at the earlier two chapters, which is that the meaning of home in vernacular settlement in rural China often extends beyond the physical boundary of houses and is affected by the place-bound relationship and lineage structure, this chapter examines a set of cultural traditions associated with this family-based economic practice and its influences on the meaning of home. It argues that this set of cultural traditions, although reinforcing the Cheng lineage at a whole, creates isolations among families and individuals that are involved in the family-based economic practice. As a result, this set of cultural tradition often leads to detached and distant home, and the kind of residential space that is unable to support self-expression.

Before setting up the cultural background for the discussion in this chapter, the original meaning of jia needs to be reviewed. As discussed in Chapter 3, the concept of jia represents an economic entity for both production and consumption; therefore, a financial conflict can lead to the division of a jia in a similar way to how shared household budgets can unite a jia (Cohen, 1976; Faure, 2005; Jervis, 2005; Shiga, 1978). The “interest” of a household is not only associated with its properties and expenses, but is also possibly connected with the economic practices that are carried out by the family.

This kind of family-based economic practice exhibits three important traits. First, a Chinese family is the foundation for the economic practice in the way that family members are the critical resources for the family-based economic enterprise; therefore, a Chinese family-based business often extends and continues through lineage (Fei, 1992; Wong, 1985). Secondly, a
Chinese family-based business often tries to involve as few family members as practical, since a smaller group running the family-based business is likely to encounter fewer conflicts between family members (Tang, 2007). In particular, in the region where lineage structure is firmly established to handle kinship matters, family-based businesses can be managed by families as small as nuclear families (Tang, 2007). 55 Lastly, Fei (1992) argues that Chinese family-based economic practice only do business with people outside the consanguineous relationships. In other words, Fei believes that Chinese families only work with customers who are either physically or socially distant from themselves. In summary, these three important traits are 1) businesses extended through consanguineous relationships, 2) nuclear-family-based business operation, and 3) maintenance of physical and social distance between business owners and customers.

Residents of Yanxia have been participating in family-based economic practices since the 1850s. These businesses mainly involve hosting pilgrims who come from afar and selling ritual goods and local products to pilgrims as souvenirs. The family-based economic practices in Yanxia exhibit the three traits of Chinese family-based business discussed above. First, all the hospitality businesses in Yanxia have been managed by individual families and extended through consanguineous relationships. Second, the lineage structure of the Cheng family has been well presented in Yanxia and has been responsible for organizing all the kinship matters (see Chapter 6). Therefore, almost all the family-based hospitality businesses in Yanxia have been managed by nuclear families. Once the male heirs of a business have reached adulthood, the practice has been to divide the business between all the heirs. As a result, a large family is divided into multiple smaller nuclear families, each of which is led by a male heir. Lastly, the nature of the hospitality business owned by the Cheng family determines that all the customers have been both physically and socially distant from the Cheng family themselves. In other words, none of the customers are part of the Cheng family in Yanxia, and all of them live away from Yanxia.

In order to understand the ways in which this family-based economic practice has affected the meanings of home as it is understood by the people involved in the hospitality business, this chapter has two sections that answer three questions. The first section examines the tradition of this family-based economic practice in Yanxia and its impact on the family structure

55 In contrast, Tang (2007) argues that in the absence of a family lineage organization and kinship protection, a family-based business is usually managed by a joint family or a stem family of six to eight people.
of the people that were involved in the business. The second section examines the ways in which this tradition has influenced the understandings of the meaning of home for the residents that are involved in the business.

7.2 The Business that Consumes Hugong

The locals call all the hospitality businesses that serve the pilgrims of Hugong Dadi (Hugong is the abbreviation for Hugong Dadi) the “business that consumes Hugong;” in the same way, the people involved in these businesses are referred to as the “people who consume Hugong.” As outlined in Chapter 1, Hugong Dadi is a local deity that has been enshrined on the top of Fangyan Mountain since the eleventh century. Since the 1850s, hospitality businesses serving the pilgrims have provided the main source of income for most of the residents living in Yanxia. A local idiom vividly depicts the importance of Hugong-centered economic practices in providing the foundation for people living in Yanxia: “Consume Hugong; use Hugong; there will be nothing left without Hugong.” More importantly, these economic practices have been an important factor in shaping the cultural traditions and family structures of the people that are involved in the hospitality business. To understand this cultural tradition, this section first introduces the development of the local deity; it then examines the family-based economic practices, particularly the hotel business, and their influences on local cultural traditions and family structures.

7.2.1 Local Religious Traditions

In 850 BC, probably being attracted by the Danxia landform that was characterized by red-colored sandstone, a traveling Buddhist monk built Dabei Temple on the top of Fangyan Mountain. In the spring of 988, a local resident of Yongkang County, Hu Ze (963-1039), stayed inside Dabei Temple to prepare for the imperial examination. He taught the young monks during his residency at the temple. After receiving a high rank on the examination in the following year, Hu became a regional official and served for 40 years (Figure 7.1). Upon Hu’s death in 1039, the monks of the temple, whom he had taught during his residency, set up a wooden tablet.

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56 The original Chinese phrases for business that consumes Hugong and people who consume Hugong are 吃胡公的生意 and 吃胡公的人, which literally mean business that eats Hugong and people who eat Hugong.

57 The history of the Buddhist temple is mainly based on the interviews with the previous Abbot in September, December 2007 and July 2008, unless otherwise noted.
inside the temple to memorialize their teacher. After a devastating fire in 1065, the temple was rebuilt and renamed Guangci Temple. Meanwhile, the monks placed a little statue of Hu and his tablet in front of the statue of the Buddha. As a result, Hu, sitting next to a divine god, started to receive offerings from pilgrims.

Figure 7.1: The portrait of Hu Ze, depicted in the *Family Record of Hu*. Figure 7.2: The statue of Hugong Dadi inside the present day Hugong Temple.\(^{58}\) Photo by the author.

In the following hundreds of years, Hu gradually became accepted as a powerful god, *Hugong Dadi*, under a series of political, social, and cultural events and interplays that involved not only the Cheng family, the Hu family, and the monks of Guangci Temple, but also the emperors, the local government, and the people of this region (Figure 7.2).\(^{59}\) *Hugong* became a popular folk deity and started to attract pilgrims from the whole region of southeast China. As late as the seventeenth century, the pilgrimage season that centered around Hu’s birthday, which is believed to be on August 13 of the Lunar Calendar, had developed into a months-long Temple Fair (Shen, 1698). Before 1949, the annual Temple Fair from August 1 and September 14 of the

\(^{58}\) For details regarding the relationship between Guangci Temple and Hugong Temple, see Zhao (2013a).

\(^{59}\) For the details of the political, social, and cultural events that enabled the creation of the local deity of *Hugong Dadi*, see Zhao (2010).
Lunar Calendar attracted thousands of pilgrims every day, who traveled down the path winding through Yanxia and eventually reached the top of Fangyan Mountain (Figure 7.3, 7.4, 7.5). In addition, extensive parades organized by nearby villages also traveled this path to reach Guangci Temple, and religious ceremonies were performed in front of the Shrine of Hugong (Figure 7.6, 7.7).60 The Chinese New Year was another time period that attracted large number of local pilgrims, because people believed that worshiping Hugong at the beginning of the year could bring good fortune to them for the rest of the year. February 25 was another important date to worship Hugong, since many local people also believed that it was Hu’s birthday.61

60 For details of the Temple Fair and other religious rituals related to Hugong Dadi, see Zhao (2013a, 2013b).  
61 Many local people believe that February 25 of the Lunar Calendar is Hu’s birthday instead of August 13. According to the previous Abbot of Guangci Temple, Guangci Temple use to organize a three-day celebration around Hu’s birthday on February 25, during which traditional operas were preformed inside the temple.
religious practices and rituals were able to be rebuilt by returning monks, pilgrims, and local residents.

Figure 7.4: Pilgrims include people of different genders and ages. Photo by the author.

Figure 7.5: Pilgrims include people of different genders and ages. Photo by the author.

Figure 7.6: The parade team is climbing Fangyan Mountain. Photo by the author.

Figure 7.7: Different parade teams from different villages are performing in front of the shrine of Hugong Dadi. The performances act as a form of competition between villages. Photo by the author.
7.2.2 Hotel Business

During the pilgrimage seasons in January, February, August, and September of the Lunar Calendar, pilgrims coming from afar always stayed in the monastery of Guangci Temple before 1849. Historically the monastery was a large building complex that once housed over 800 monks (Figure 7.9). However, a devastating fire destroyed almost the entire temple on September 4, 1849 of the Lunar Calendar. The Cheng family in Yanxia immediately started to host pilgrims after this incident, and the first hotel was opened for business either in the same year or a year afterwards (Yongkang Shi Zhengxie Wenshi Committee, 1995, p. 90). During the last few decades of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), Guangci Temple experienced a continuous decline, including the collapse of some buildings and a drastic decrease in the number of monks in residence. Meanwhile, the Cheng family in Yanxia opened more hotels to provide alternative lodging for the pilgrims, as well as stores to sell ritual goods and local products (Fangyan, 1925), and the development of this hospitality business continued for a few decades. By the middle of

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62 According to the Yongkang Record (1991, p. 668), Guangci Temple used to have over 500 monks.
63 According to Yongkang Mingdian Mingchang [Noted Shops and Factories in Yongkang] (1995, p. 90), the first hotel, Chenglongxing Hotel, was opened for business in the Daoguang Period, which was between 1821 and 1850. Therefore, the hotel was either opened for business in 1849 or 1850.
the twentieth century, the Cheng family had transformed Yanxia into a linear-shaped settlement and populated the mile-long pilgrim path with over 40 hotels and stores on both sides.64

The hospitality business in Yanxia experienced significant changes in the first thirty years after the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949 because of a series of political movements.65 By the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, all the hotels and stores had ceased operating, and three of the once largest hotels became public property and were used as factories and warehouses. Three years after the end of the Cultural Revolution, the Abbot returned to Guangci Temple on October 3rd of the Lunar Calendar and started the reconstruction process of

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64 The details and culture of the hospitality industry are based on the interviews with local residents in September, December 2007, July 2008, September to December 2013 unless otherwise noted.
65 For the changes in the hospitality business in the first 30 years after 1949, see Zhao (2013b).
both the statues and the building. Meanwhile, the family-based hotel business gradually resumed, following the return of the pilgrims. With the construction of a new concrete road along the western side of Fangyan Valley in 1985 (Yongkang Xianzhi Committee, 1991, p. 607), hotel and store owners relocated their business to the new road, along which pilgrims arrived in automobiles. In addition, more residents became involved in hospitality businesses to serve the growing number of tourists (Figure 7.10, 7.11).

Figure 7.10: Hotels, restaurants, and stores are located along both sides of the new road. Photo by the author.

Figure 7.11: Participant C3 is selling local food product to visitors during the pilgrim season. Photo by the author.

66 According to local residents of Yanxia, in the early morning of August 1st, 1978 of the Lunar Calendar, three women carried a small statue of Hu to the top of Fangyan Mountain.
During the first hundred years of the development of the hospitality industry in Yanxia, this set of family-based economic practices, particularly the hotel business, also nurtured a particular dimension of cultural tradition that influenced the family structure of the people involved in hospitality businesses. This set of cultural traditions included the ways in which the businesses grew and divided, the culture of competition among businesses, and a new language that was developed with respect to the hospitality industry. These aspects of cultural tradition also reflect the three attributes of family-based economic practice discussed at the beginning of this chapter: businesses extended through consanguineous relationships, nuclear-family-based business operation, and maintenance of physical and social distance between business owners and customers.

7.2.2.1 Growth and Division of Family-Based Business

From the very first lodging, Chenglongxing Hotel, the hospitality businesses in Yanxia grew along consanguineous relationships. After the owner of Chenglongxing Hotel, Yuebiao, passed away, his second and fourth sons, Zhaoqing and Zhaoheng, inherited the existing hotel and renamed it Laolongxing Hotel. His oldest and third sons, Zhaoxiang and Zhaoye, collaborated to build a new building on the pilgrim path to the north of the existing village settlement and named it Xinlongxing Hotel (Figure 7.12).67 However, the collaboration between Zhaoxiang and Zhaoye was soon dissolved due to financial conflicts. In 1882, Zhaoye left the partnership and built a new building further to the north on the pilgrim path, naming it Chengrenchang Hotel (Yongkang Shi Zhengxie Wenshi Committee, 1995). In the following 50 years, Zhaoye expanded his hotel three times with four additional buildings. By the early 1930s, Chengrenchang Hotel had become the largest hotel in Yanxia with a capacity of over 250 beds. At the peak season, with temporary beds set up inside the courtyards and the main halls, Chengrenchang Hotel could host over 700 guests a night (Yongkang Shi Zhengxie Wenshi Committee, 1995) (Figure 7.12). In the middle of the 1930s after the death of Zhaoye, the two heirs of Zhaoye soon divided the family business, thus avoiding the financial conflict between brothers that their father had experienced. Each of them inherited half of the property and named the two hotels Laorenchang Hotel and Xinrenchang Hotel.

67 Lao, in Laolongxing, means old. Xin, in Xinlongxing, means new.
Figure 7.12: The estimated detailed plan of the pilgrim path in the 1940s. Drafted by the author based on survey drawings completed by Na Sun, Ge Mao, and Yongming Lin, as well as a map provided by the local government.
Another example of growth and division in Yanxia’s family-based economic practice is evident in the business owned by another family of the Cheng lineage, Yuelai and his family. Yuelai and his seven sons started their business around the same time as Yuebiao’s family. Among Yuelai’s seven sons, six of them were involved in the hospitality business, and three of them were the owners of large hotels in Yanxia. In particular, Yuelai’s third son, Zhaofu, opened Chengzhenxing Hotel in 1880 (Yongkang Shi Zhengxie Wenshi Committee, 1995), which later became the largest business rival of Chengrenchang Hotel. Chengrenchang Hotel was at an advantage during this competition because it was located to the north of Chengzhenxing Hotel on the pilgrim path. This location enabled Chengrenchang Hotel to advertise itself to pilgrims ahead of other hotels and, in some cases, lure Chengzhenxing Hotel’s pre-booked guests to stay at Chengrenchang Hotel instead. To address this disadvantage, Zhaoye, the owner of Chengzhenxing Hotel, financially sponsored one of his younger brothers, Zhaogong, to open Chenglongchang Hotel at the very northern end of the pilgrim path. In return, Zhaogong was responsible for not only promoting both hotels, but also escorting the pre-booked guests of Chengzhenxing Hotel to their destination (Figure 7.13). Meanwhile, Zhaofu kept enlarging his hotels by building more courtyard houses. Chengzhenxing Hotel’s final addition was completed

Figure 7.13: As the result of the business collaboration between Chengzhenxing Hotel and Chenglongchang Hotel, the owner of Chenglongchang Hotel had the signboards of both hotels. The heir of Chenglongchang Hotel, participant C6 is the owner these signboards. Photo by the author.
in 1942, three years after Zhaofu’s death. With this new building, Chengzhenxing Hotel surpassed Chengrenchang Hotel to become the largest and the most luxurious hotel in Yanxia with over 130 rooms and over 350 beds (Yongkang Shi Zhengxie Wenshi Committee, 1995) (Figure 7.12). Shortly after this final triumph, the partnership between the heirs of Zhaofu fell apart. In 1945, Chengzhenxing Hotel was divided between the two heirs of Zhaofu and was renamed Laozhenxing Hotel and Xinzhenxing Hotel respectively.

7.2.2.2 Culture of Competition

The growing hotel business inevitably stimulated competition between the hotel owners as has been illustrated in the previous section. In the meantime, competition between these hotel owners, families, and even brothers fostered some unique practices among these family hotels in Yanxia. Although the size of family hotels ranged from a small hotel with a few rooms to a grand hotel with many courtyards, every family hotel provided a one-night and two-meal package to the pilgrims. In order to compete with other hotels, most medium and large size hotels developed additional services to attract more guests. First, they had variously priced packages with different standards of lodging and food service for the pilgrims to choose from. For example, a 30-fold price difference distinguished packages of various degrees of luxury (Yongkang Shi Zhengxie Wenshi Committee, 1995), and the standard of lodging ranged from straw bedding inside the courtyard to Chengrenchang Hotel’s private suites with stylish furniture designed to answer the needs of rich and modern customers from large cities such as Shanghai. In addition, many hotels also offered extended services including guidebooks and guided tours of Fangyan Mountain, local products as gifts to their guests, entertainment at night, and free pick-up service via carriers sent to the end points of long-distance bus and train lines in the nearby city of Yongkang. Specifically, one month before the pilgrim season each year, owners of the large hotels also sent employees to visit their prestigious guests in large cities for advanced booking and to ensure their return that season. In particular, the most important guests would be personally escorted back to Fangyan. To ease this heated competition, the family hotel owners

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68 Fangyan Zhinan [Fangyan Guide] is a locally edited and printed guidebook; the existing copy was printed in 1925. It includes the location of Fangyan, the transportation to Fangyan, the descriptions of all the scenic places in Fangyan Mountain and nearby areas, the Chronicle entries of Hu Ze, the legend of Hugong Dadi, the list of hotels and stores in Fangyan, the schedule of the Temple Fair, the historic literatures related to Fangyan, and the distance chart between other cities and Fangyan.

69 For additional information regarding the history and culture of the hospitality service, see Zhao (2013a, 2013b).
tried to establish a guild to regulate the service. The guild attempted to set up specific rules to prevent inappropriate competition and also establish a system of penalty for breaching the rules. However, agreements were breached repeatedly as the temptation for higher profits outweighed the penalties for breaking the rules. As a result, the guild was established and dissolved many times.

This competition not only turned the hotel owners against each other, but also made family members into enemies. Participant C17 (M, 50), the descendent of the owner of Chengrenchang Hotel, told a story of his ancestor, Zhaoye, and his largest business rival Zhaofu, who was actually a cousin of Zhaoye. In the early 1920s, Zhaofu wanted to build the third building for his Chengzhenxing Hotel, which was on a site right next to Zhaoye’s property. After learning this information, Zhaoye immediately hired people to build a pond right along the property line (Figure 7.12). The water weakened the foundation of the new building, therefore the new building collapsed many times during the construction process. The conflict between the two cousins escalated, and finally a senior member of the lineage had to get involved to mediate the case. The negotiated result was that both the building and the pond had to be set back one foot from the property line, so the foundation of the new building of Chengzhenxing Hotel could be stabilized.

Another example of family division as the result of business competition happened between an uncle and his nephew. According to participant C25 (M, 75), upon the death of both of his grandparents, his father, the owner of Chengchengchang Hotel, went to borrow money from his uncle, Zhaofu, to bury his parents, who were Zhaofu’s brother and sister-in-law. Zhaofu refused to lend the money. Instead, he asked his nephew to mortgage two jian of his courtyard house at 50 percent below the market rate to him, with the agreement that Zhaofu would return the property to his nephew when he paid back the money in the following year. However, when participant C25’s father went to see his uncle in the following year with the money he made from the pilgrim season, Zhaofu denied the existence of the contract and kept the property. Participant C25’s father believed that this was a planned scheme to defraud, so that Zhaofu could open stores inside his newly acquired property, which protruded into the pilgrim path. In actuality, this new property brought greater advantages to Zhaofu’s business than just the additional profit from the new store. Augmenting this new property, Zhaofu later built a covered corridor over the pilgrim path and an archway underneath the walkway to form a spatial threshold in the middle of
the already narrow pilgrim path (Figure 7.12, 7.14). This threshold served two additional purposes in benefiting Zhaofu’s hotel business. First, the threshold slowed the pilgrims’ movement; in addition, the store at the threshold, and occasional performances by traveling artists beneath the archway, further slowed the pilgrims. This caused the pilgrims to spend more time passing through Zhaofu’s new stores and Chengzhenxing’s Hotel, which was located directly to the south of the threshold. The extra time that the pilgrims spent there increased the opportunity for them to either purchase things from the store or to decide to stay at Chengzhenxing Hotel. More importantly, the covered walkway at the second level connected all the buildings of Chengzhenxing Hotel, which were located at different sides of the pilgrim path. Clearly, considering all these benefits, Zhaofu chose to betray his nephew, as well as his deceased brother, and to sever the family relationship.

Figure 7.14: The threshold on the pilgrim path created by Zhaofu (looking towards the south). The building on the right side used to be Chengzhenxing Hotel and the building on the left side used to be Chengchengchang Hotel. Photo by the author.

7.2.2.3 Hugong Hua (The Language of Hugong)

Fei (1992) argues that commercial activities can only happen outside consanguineous relationships in China because familiarity, either in social or physical relations, hinders businessmen from maximizing their profits. For the hotel owners in Yanxia, physical and social distance between their customers and themselves was insufficient to distinguish themselves from their customers, because some of the pilgrims were their fellow farmers also from Yongkang
County, who not only spoke the same Yongkang dialect, but also might have been their distant relatives living in other Cheng-lineage-based settlements (see Chapter 6). Therefore, the businessmen in Yanxia developed their own language, *Hugong Hua*, which they used to use to communicate with each other in the presence of their customers. This was the language of the people who consumed *Hugong*. This new language mainly developed a vocabulary that was useful in the communications between owners and staff within the hospitality industry, such as words for different kinds of foods. The practical benefits for this language was that when a businessman was borrowing or purchasing certain goods from another businessman, because his or her guests requested it, or when two businessmen were negotiating with each other, they could do that in the presence of their guests without making their guests feel that the hotel is incompetent in providing good service. More importantly, this invented language not only differentiated the people who consumed *Hugong* from the pilgrims and visitors, but also bonded the people who consumed *Hugong* together through language. This new relationship among the people involved in the hospitality industry, which included most families in Yanxia, crossed the boundaries between individual families and reinforced the Cheng lineage in Yanxia as a whole.

After 30 years of interruptions in the hospitality business between 1949 and 1979, *Hugong Hua* is currently not widely used by the business owners. However, most of the senior people still know this language and they use it occasionally when talking about money-related issues. In particular, some of them are trying to pass it on to the younger generation. For example, participant C21 (F, 61), who learned this language from other senior people in the village, always tried to teach *Hugong Hua* to participant C31 (F, 37). Even though participant C31 has no motivation to learn it, since no one around her is using it, when asked what are considered the traditions of Yanxia, her answer included *Hugong Hua*, since people from nowhere else speak this language.

### 7.2.2.4 Summary of the Cultural Tradition of the Hospitably Business

These three aspects of the cultural tradition within the hospitality business – the ways in which the businesses grew and divided, the culture of competition among businesses, and a new language – are closely intertwined. The interplay between the tradition of extending business

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70 Hua means language.
through consanguineous relationship and the practical desire for nuclear-family-based business operation led to an ongoing process of growing and dividing the family-based business. During this process, new businesses emerged and stimulated the competition between all the business owners. The competition, then, not only further promoted the growth of the hospitality business, but also fostered new cultural practices, such as the establishing of a guild and the development of a new language. The new language, as well as the guild, not only established a bond between everyone involved in the business, but also distinguished the family business owners from the customers. Meanwhile, both the bonding between business owners and the separation from outsiders ensured the maximum profits for all the business owners of Yanxia.

These aspects of cultural tradition also affected family structure for people involved in the hospitality business. Even though a business might have grown through a consanguineous relationship at the beginning, division of both business and family was nearly inevitable to alleviate financial conflict between close family members. Maximizing profit was the goal of this economic practice, which led to continuous competition between hotel owners, most of whom were without exception family members or relatives. As a result, this competition not only isolated many families involved in this business, mostly nuclear families that ran their own business, but also led to estrangement of family members, relatives, and neighbors, who were in the same business. As well, the failure to establish a guild also demonstrates the heated competition among individual family-based businesses. On the other hand, a new language was possible because this shared language did not interfere with profitability of individual family-based businesses and in a sense protected the economic practice as a whole.

In summary, the conflicts propagated by this family-based economic practice divided hotel properties, which were also the residences of family members. Thus, these conflicts also divided families. Meanwhile, the shared identity, represented by their common ways of living and their unique language, enabled the construction of a larger social group, the people who consume Hugong. This larger social group is largely identical with the Cheng lineage in Yanxia. In short, family-based economic practices in Yanxia largely isolated individual nuclear families, yet reinforced the extended family, the Cheng lineage in Yanxia.
7.3 People Who Consume Hugong

This section examines the ways in which these dimensions of cultural tradition have influenced the meaning of home for the residents who currently engage in family-based businesses that service the pilgrims of Hugong. These people refer themselves as “People Who Consume Hugong.” As discussed in the earlier section, the competition between business owners resulted in isolated family-based businesses, which are largely managed by nuclear families to maximize profit and to survive the heated competition. This social and cultural context influences the meanings of home as it is understood for the business owners and their family members in three ways. Home become detached, distant, and a space that is for strangers and unable to support self-expression.

The following section focuses on data collected through participant observations and interviews, which focused on the participants that either they or their families are involved in the hospitality industry. The number of respondents is small. Nevertheless, the finding outlined here seem to represent a common characterization of the meanings of home by other business owners in Yanxia, who have been affected by this family-based economic practice and its associated cultural traditions.

7.3.1 Detached Home

As the result of the isolation of the family-based business, the homes of the business owners became detached from the social context in which they belonged. The social context consisted of relatives, neighbors, and other fellow villagers. This impact on the meaning of home is exemplified in the case of participant C29 (M, 45) and C30 (F, 41).

Participants C29 and C30 opened their family hotel, Shanwaishan Hotel, on the new road in 1995 inside a small, one-story structure. After four years of operation, as well as continuous construction in the meantime, this hotel finally became a four-story structure with a restaurant at the first level, two rooms for the family on the second level, and another 22 guest rooms. As of 2014, Shanwaishan Hotel is the largest hotel in Yanxia. On a daily basis, participant C29 is the cook, while participant C30 takes care of everything else, including preparing the vegetables, cleaning the dishes and rooms etc. During the pilgrim season in the early fall, they also hire one or two people for additional assistance. They have an older daughter who is in college and twins who are attending kindergarten as of 2014.
Compared to participant C29 who drives to the market to buy groceries and to drop children at the kindergarten every day, participant C30 rarely leaves her hotel, which, along the restaurant, is open 24 hours a day and 365 days a year. She often repeats, “it is easy to open a business, but it is difficult to maintain a business. Because in order to maintain a business, you have to be here all the time. If guests come but you are not here, then they will leave, and then there will be no business.” Therefore, she is not only at the hotel every day, but also actively and aggressively promotes her business. Even at lunch and dinner time, she often sits at the far end of her property and right on the edge of the street, so she can carefully examine all the passing pilgrims and visitors to search for potential guests (Figure 7.15).

![Figure 7.15: Participant C30 (the one in distance to the left) is sitting at the far end of her hotel and eating lunch. Meanwhile, she is carefully examining all the passing pilgrims and visitors to search for potential guests. Photo by the author.](https://example.com/image)

By keeping their business as the priority, participant C29 and C30 have missed many social and cultural opportunities that could connect them with their fellow villagers, as well as their relatives. Participant C30 said that she has never observed the Temple Fair because she has not had the time during that time of the year to visit Fangyan Mountain; she has only seen the parade teams passing by her hotel. Actually, the only time she might visit Fangyan Mountain is when guests hire her to accompany them and teach them the ritual of worshiping Hugong.⁷¹

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⁷¹ Some pilgrims believe that people must follow a specific procedure when worshiping Hugong. Not knowing this procedure, some pilgrims, especially the ones who come to Yanxia the first time, often hire hotel owners to take them to the top of Fangyan Mountain and show them what to do.
Similarly, participant C29 rarely participated in the Dragon Dance as part of the Chinese New Year celebration. The last time he participated in the Dragon Dance was the year their twins were born; he hired people to assemble 11 segments of the dragon-lantern according to the tradition. In other years, he has always stayed at his hotel since his business was his priority, even though he stated that participating in the Dragon Dance can bring prosperity for the coming year. In addition, participant C29 missed the opportunity to attend the annual ancestral veneration ceremony held by Chenglu village in 2014 (see Chapter 6), when he had to stay in his hotel and cook for the coming guests. Moreover, he stayed in and attended to his guests again when his parents-in-law hosted a family gathering in their residential place during the Qingming Festival in 2014; his wife, participant C30 also cut short her visit with her parents and family members, leaving for her hotel soon after the lunch.

In addition to being detached from the social context constructed by the relatives of participants C29 and C30 and their fellow villagers, the home of participants C29 and C30 is also isolated from their neighbors. As participant C30 said, “I do not talk to the people in the neighboring hotel, because we had a fight before. We do not talk to each other because of that fight. I talk to business owners living at a distance.” The “people in the neighboring hotel” are the family of participants C13 (M, 64) and C24 (F, 63), who own Yuanlong Hotel. According to participant C30, they haven’t talked to each other for over ten years as the result of a business competition over a group of guests. Although these guests agreed to stay at Yuanlong Hotel first, they later changed their mind to stay at the hotel of participants C29 and C30, Shanwaishan Hotel, because it was cheaper. The owners of Yuanlong Hotel, participants C14 and C24, became really angry, because the action of participants C29 and C30 was against one of the traditional business practices among hotel owners in Yanxia. The practice is that once guests step into one hotel, other hotel owners cannot take them as their guests. Since then, the owners of Yuanlong Hotel have been trying to fight back and win the competition by keeping the prices of their goods and services slightly below the prices for the same goods and service in Shanwaishan Hotel. As a result, the owners of these two hotels stopped talking to each other.

According to the tradition of Yanxia, the family that has a newborn boy that year needs to assemble ten segments of dragon-lantern. When including the segment of the dragon-lantern that is required for each family, that family needs to assemble 11 segments of the dragon-lantern. In that case, the family have to hire other people to participate in the dragon dance.
Moreover, participant C30 does not socialize with another neighboring woman living across the street, because, according to participant C30, “she has a bad mouth.” Even though the neighboring woman’s attitude toward participant C30 is unknown, according to participant C30, the neighboring woman had to close her restaurant because she was losing money in the competition with the restaurant of participants C29 and C30 across the street, as well as Yuanlong Hotel next door.

In summary, due to the heated competition between business owners, participants C29 and C30 have been focusing on and prioritizing their family-based hospitality business over many other aspects of their lives that happen outside the realm of their family hotel. The aspects of their lives that have been given lower priority include family gatherings, kinship matters, friendly social interactions with their neighbors, and other sociocultural activities that build social relations with their fellow villagers, as well as extended family members. As a result, participants C29 and C30 remain aloof from their neighbors, their relatives, and the Cheng lineage as a whole as the result of their family-based hospitality business; meanwhile, the home of participants C29 and C30 has become isolated and detached from its social context.

### 7.3.2 Distant Home

In contrast to participants C14 (F, 64), C24 (F, 63), C29 (M, 45), and C30 (F, 41), as well as participants C10 (F, 62) and C11 (M, 63), who are operating hospitality businesses at their places of residence, participants C2 (M, 74), C21 (F, 61), C31 (F, 37), and C35 (F, 49) manage their restaurants and stores at the entrance of Fangyan Mountain and away from their residences and families. Because Fangyan Mountain is open 24 hours daily, and many guests come outside the normal business hours, these business owners usually arrive very early in the morning and leave late in the evening, as well as have all three meals inside their stores (Figure 7.16, 7.17). As a result, these business owners become distant from their residences, their family members, and their homes. The change in the meaning of home due to this factor is evident in the cases of participants C31 and C21.
Participant C31 (F, 37) spends most of her days inside her store, except on some Sunday afternoons when she accompanies her young child to travel to a boarding school in the city of Yongkang. As a result, her husband, participant C22 (M, 37), teased her that she has not yet visited every corner of their little house since they got married in 2004. In another case, participant C21 (F, 61) and her husband often stay in the little space they rent next to their store. They only go back to their new and large house, which is located about ten minutes walking distance from their store, to “take a shower and pick up things,” according to participant C21.
(Figure 7.18, 7.19). When asked for the reasons for not living in her new house, participant C21 responded: “after all, here is better. I am used to living here. It is convenient here. It is convenient to do business here. Sometimes, if there is business in the evening, then I will be too lazy to go home.” Therefore, by spending most of their days in their stores, participants C31 and C21, as well as other business owners that run hospitality businesses outside their residences, become detached from the places that they call home, as well as the family members that are waiting for them in their homes.

Business owners are not the only ones that can be detached from their homes and families because of their prolonged hours at work, the family members of the business owners can also become detached from their homes and families. Participants C29 (M, 45) and C30 (F, 41) have young twins who were born in 2008. During the pilgrim season of 2013, the twins were sent to a boarding daycare for the first time, where they spent five days and four nights at the daycare every week. When asked how she can bear to be apart from her young twins, participant C30 said “I wish they could sleep in the daycare every single night!” Even when the twins were at home, participant C29 and C30 usually had no time to take care of them. One twin, the boy, was usually sent to his grandparents’ place; the other twin, the girl, refused to go, so she stayed at home and kept herself entertained with some simple toys. According to participant C7 (F, 19), their older sister, at the age of four or five, the twins already understood that guests always eat before them. So when they felt hungry, they might tell their sister, or they would simply go to
find some snacks for themselves. Although the young twins could not be interviewed as part of this study, one can speculate that their feelings and understandings of home are likely to be different from other children who spend more time at home with their parents. For the young twins, especially the boy, home and parents clearly became distant in the pilgrim seasons.

7.3.3 Un-Private Home

The nature of family-hotels is to incorporate public spaces into a private domain. This kind of spatial arrangement inevitably leads to the loss of privacy at the residential space for the hotel owners and their family members. Home, instead of being symbols of the self (Cooper, 1974), becomes the temporary shelter for the guests. This changing meaning of home is manifested in the case of participant C7 (F, 19) and her family.

Although participant C7, the older daughter of participants C29 (M, 45) and C30 (F, 41), was not born in her family’s hotel, she has been living there since she was one year old. She grew together with the hotel and spent her childhood in the hotel, and she has been watching her young brother and sister growing up in the same space that she calls home. However, within these 24 rooms (22 guest rooms, two private rooms, and some support rooms) in her family’s hotel, she does not have a corner that she can use to express herself. As she said, “I used to really want a room for myself. But because of the demand of guest rooms, I never have a room for myself, a room that I can decorate.” Before she started college in the summer of 2013, she brought it up with her mother many times. However, the answer from her mother was always, “there is nothing I can do. This is the nature of our home. If there are no guests, you can take ten rooms and sleep wherever you want. But if guests come, you have to move out.” She never took this “offer.” Clearly, for her, a room of her own is more than a private space just to sleep; she wants a place that she can “decorate.” She wants a corner of this four-story building that she can use as a representation of her self. For a few years, she did have a corner that answered a small part of her needs; it was the wall next to the staircase at the first level, where she taped her awards certificates on the wall. However, her father tore all of them down a few years ago when he repainted the restaurant walls, and her mother did not choose to stand on her side to save these award certificates. Again, for her parents, participants C29 and C30, pleasing the guests is more important than satisfying their daughter’s desire for private space and self-expression. Probably as the result of not being able to find a corner in her family’s large house that truly belongs to
her, participant C7’s favorite place in that house is the roof deck, where, according to her, she can “look at the stars and listen to the radio,” “contemplate” when she needs a quiet place, and pray to Hugong when she does not have the time to visit the temple on the top of Fangyan Mountain.

In addition, participant C7, as well as her family, might lose the only privacy they have in their two private rooms during the pilgrim season. In the busiest days of the year, participant C7’s parents, participants C29 and C30, usually do not get the chance to sleep at all, except for short naps on the reclining chair whenever they can. When the hotel is fully, or even over booked, and participants C29’s and C30’s private rooms remain vacant, guests, especially the ones who are too tired to climb another level or too drunk to find their rooms, are often found sleeping in participants C29’s and C30’s rooms instead. Participant C30 seems to be very used to seeing guests sleeping in her rooms and was never really bothered by it; she commented “if they want to sleep there, then let them sleep. It is not a big deal. We won’t wake them up.” The underlined reason for her attitude toward guest sleeping in their bedroom is, as quoted at the beginning of this chapter, “What is my home and what is not? What is my hotel and what is not? There are no differences between my home and my hotel, as long as I can make money!” Therefore, satisfying her guests ensures the return of the guests in the following years, which assures more money to be made from the guests. For that reason, she is willing to give up her home for her hotel. This is not a new phenomenon in the hospitality business in Yanxia. Before 1949, according to participant C26, hotel owners usually gave up their own rooms to their guests during the pilgrim seasons and slept in the kitchen or storage rooms instead.

Therefore, as the result of prioritizing their guests’ needs over their own desires, participants C29 and C30, as well as participant C7, not only lose the opportunity to use their residential space to support their personal identities, but also willingly give up their home for their hotel. Even if participants C29 and C30 might not have the strong desire to use their house as symbols to build the self (Cooper, 1974), their daughter, participant C7, as someone in the younger generation, does have the aspiration to express herself through her own private space within her residential environment. However, her family’s large house, which she shares with dozens of guests every day, cannot support a private space for her to express her self.
7.4 Conclusion

The family-based economic practice in Yanxia, which has been serving the pilgrims of Hugong Dadi since the 1850s, has established its own set of cultural traditions during the processes of the development of this hospitality service and the competitions between business owners. This set of cultural traditions includes three interconnected traits. First, although the hospitality business is always managed by individual families and grows along consanguineous relationships, the financial conflict eventually leads to the division of both business and family. Meanwhile, the presence of the Cheng lineage enables most business operations to sustain themselves at the size of nuclear-family-based economic practices and to minimize potential conflicts among family members. Second, the heated competition between individual businesses also estranges business owners, who are either close family members or who belong to the extended Cheng family. Lastly, the emergence of a new language further facilitated the construction of this social group, which consisted of people who consume Hugong. Even though this language is not widely practiced by the people involved in this hospitality business today, their shared family history and lifestyles remain the bond between everyone in Yanxia who are participating in this family-based economic practice.

This set of cultural traditions has significant impacts on the family structure and the understandings of the meaning of home for the ones involved in the family-based economic practice. One the one hand, individual nuclear families become more isolated as the result of business conflict and competition. On the other hand, the Cheng lineage in Yanxia, which is largely identical to all the people currently involved in the hospitality business, is reinforced due to another layer of shared identity.

In the same way, home becomes detached and distant and starts to lose its meaning as a private place for self-expression as the result of heated competition between business owners. In some cases, the business owners who operate their businesses inside their residential spaces often prioritize things related to their family-based economic practice over other activities that happen outside their living and working space, such as family gatherings, kinship affairs, and other sociocultural activities. As a result, they isolate their homes and families from their neighbors, extended family members, and fellow villagers. In other cases, the business owners that operate their businesses away from their residential spaces become distant to their homes and family members due to their prolonged working hours. Finally, by prioritizing their guests’ needs over
their own needs, some hotel owners are willing to give up their *homes* for their hotels and suppress their desires for privacy and self-expression inside their *homes*.
I will feel sad, and I will have conflicted feelings, because all the old houses in the village are falling apart and are going to be demolished. But if they do decide to demolish my share of the courtyard house owned by my family, I will be happy to accept the offer.

- Participant C5 (F, 26)

Fei (1992, p.123) argues, “in our rural society, one’s geographical location does not create a distinctive identity. Our native place is the same as our father’s native place, rather than the place of our birth or the place where we currently live. We inherit a native place just as we inherit a family name … ones’ native place is only the projection of consanguinity into space.” In Fei’s argument, the phrase “native place” is the English translation of the Chinese word 籍貫 (Fei 2008, p.89), pronounced as jīguàn, which means the place that one’s family used to live. In addition, jīguàn is a rather formal and technical term that is mostly used in the administrative context, such as in the hukou system (a household registration system), and the common practice is that one’s jīguàn is the birthplace of one’s father’s father. In the context of rural China, where large scale urban migration only started recently (see Chapter 1), one’s jīguàn is also one’s jiāxiāng, which means the place that one’s family has been living for generations. The Chinese characters for jiāxiāng are 家乡, where jīa means home, and xiāng (the same character as in the phrase xiāngtu, see Chapter 5) here means native land. Therefore, building on the concepts of jīa and xiāng, the very construction of the phrase jiāxiāng not only represents a consanguineous relationship that people inherit from their families, but also ties this concept to the place-bound relationship. These two underlined meanings in the concept of jiāxiāng are the extension of the two attributes that help to construct the meanings of home in rural China as discussed in Chapter 6 and Chapter 5 respectively. Therefore, the analysis of the concept of jiāxiāng facilitates the understanding of the meaning of home from another perspective. Meanwhile, the increasing scale of urban migration in rural China results in many young people living in cities other than the rural villages they grew up. The urban migration inevitably leads to a detachment of jīa from jiāxiāng. In other words, as the consequence of urban migration, one’s residential space is no longer inside one’s jiāxiāng, and one, as well as one’s nuclear family members, becomes distant from one’s extended family members. However, the emotional attachment these new urban immigrants have to their jiāxiāng endows distinctive identity to all the individuals who claim a
common jiaxiang. Therefore, examining the concept of jiaxiang is not only an important complement to the discussion of the meaning of home in rural China, but also a contemporary subject that is critical when examining issues related to urban migration.

This chapter extends the previous discussions carried out in Chapter 5, 6, and 7 by focusing on young and middle-aged participants, who live in other cities but who consider Yanxia as their home, or jiaxiang, or both. These young and middle-aged participants include participants C5 (F, 26), C7 (F, 19), C16 (M, 23), C34 (M, 40), C36 (M, 50), and C37 (M, 50). Except for participant C5, these participants grew up in Yanxia, and all of them are currently living in other cities. In addition, all these participants have family members, either parents, grandparents, siblings, or other close relatives, who are still living in Yanxia. Therefore, each of them maintains a strong relationship, yet at different scales, with the place they grew up and with their family members in Yanxia. Some of them still consider the place they grew up in Yanxia as their home and Yanxia as their jiaxiang, while others only consider Yanxia as their jiaxiang. Some of them visit their family members in Yanxia every day or a few times a week, while others only come back to Yanxia occasionally on weekends or during holidays. As the descendants of the residents of Yanxia, all these participants will inherit, or have already inherited, properties, including homesteads, private plots, and agricultural land, from their family members in Yanxia. Some of them have never lived in the houses that they are going to inherit, or have already inherited, and some of them have never tended to the land to which they will have, or now have, a share.

This chapter focuses on the meaning of home through these young and middle-aged participants’ understandings of home and jiaxiang. Their understandings are influenced by the same two main factors as those of other participants, which are the place-bound relationship (Chapter 5) and the consanguineous relationship that these participants have with their family and lineage (Chapter 6). However, their understandings of home and jiaxiang are also greatly affected by their personal experiences, mainly including their childhood experiences in Yanxia and their present living experiences in other cities, as well as their educational backgrounds and current occupations. In particular, the fact that these young and middle-aged participants are currently living outside Yanxia enables them to separate their present residential space from their jiaxiang and to detach their present life experience from past memories. This separation and detachment leads to four significant outcomes. Firstly, these young and middle-aged participants
have become less attached to the physical built environment in Yanxia. Comparing the physical built environment in Yanxia with their residential space in cities with better infrastructure and apartments with modern appliance, they desire some kinds of change to the existing built environment of their family’s residential space in Yanxia and the vernacular settlement of Yanxia as a whole. On the other hand, they express strong emotional attachment to the land ownership and vernacular place that sustains their childhood memories, which they are longing to preserve. In addition, away from the daily reality of Yanxia, these young and middle-aged participants often romanticize and abstract the vernacular built environment of their jiaxiang in contrast with their present lifestyle in cities. Finally, this separation and detachment fosters a different kind of attachment to their distant jiaxiang, from which they build their identities.

8.1 Desire for Change

Most of these young and middle-aged participants, having lived in cities with modern infrastructure and apartments that are equipped with bathrooms, are no longer satisfied with the physical condition of their family’s residential space to which they still have physical and emotional connections. Therefore, they often express a desire for general upgrades to the physical environment of the vernacular settlement of Yanxia. In particular, the three youngest participants, participants C5 (F, 26), C7 (F, 19), and C16 (M, 23), are the most articulate in expressing their desires and the specifics of change. However, the definitions of, the degrees of, and the reasons for the changes differ among these participants. In addition, most of these participants associate the concept of change with the idea of demolishing old houses and rebuilding anew on site because they believe 1) change is inevitable, and 2) new is better than the old. These two sentiments respectively correspond to the characteristic of the Chinese building tradition discussed in Chapter 3 and the present sociopolitical contexts in rural China.

8.1.1 Change is Inevitable

As discussed in Chapter 3, one of the characteristics of Chinese architectural tradition is the preference to construct a new building on site to replace an old one rather than repairing the old building. With this in mind, the demolishing of an old building is not considered regrettable as long as it is replaced by the construction of a newer version of the building. This idea is clearly elaborated by participant C16 (M, 23), who spent his early childhood living in the old courtyard
house owned by his family and later moved to a new style house across the pilgrim path. When discussing the future of his family’s two houses, participant C16 said, “there will be nothing to pity if my houses get demolished, since they are going to fall down eventually anyway because of their gradual decay.” He then added, “even for a brand new house, it is not like it will never become deteriorated and get demolished. After it falls down, people can build newer and better ones.” Participant C16’s voice clearly expressed his preference for new and even newer buildings rather than repairing the old ones. Influenced by this same idea, participant C7 (F, 19) also believes that “demolishing old houses is an inevitable trend,” as time goes. When articulating the reasons for demolishing these old houses, participant C5 (F, 26) believes that these old houses are “not suitable for the current lifestyle.” She continued to talk about the impracticality of retrofitting a toilet in her grandmother’s old courtyard house and concluded by saying that including a toilet is easy when building a new house.

In summary, influenced by the Chinese building tradition, these young and middle-aged participants expressed little attachment to the physical buildings themselves because they believe that change in the built environment is inevitable. As a result, they showed no reluctance towards constructing new buildings to replace the old ones. More importantly, they believe that the new buildings can better support “the current lifestyle.” However, their understanding of the current lifestyle is largely based on their recent personal experience of living in the city, instead of the lifestyle of rural residents such as their parents and grandparents.

8.1.2 New is Better; New Represents Progress

“Building a New Socialist Countryside” is a nationwide political movement launched in 2006 (see Chapter 1). With the underlying idea that modern houses provide a higher quality living standard and therefore provide better residential space, large numbers of residents in rural China are being relocated to newly planned settlements with rows of nearly identical houses. Meanwhile, old houses and vernacular villages are demolished. According to Jicai Feng ("Zhongguo meitian," 2012), the Associate President of Chinese Local Artists, there are 80 to 100 vernacular villages “disappearing” every day, most of which are the result of demolition.

In the case of Yanxia, the local government in charge of Yanxia announced the relocation plan for the entire village as early as 2007. Demolition, compensation, and settlement guidelines were printed into brochures and distributed to every household in 2009; meanwhile, large
billboards were set up at the entrance of the village advertising the new settlement. In addition, the local government demolished three houses in Yanxia, belonging to three village-level officials, on November 15, 2011, to set up “model examples.” This action sent out a clear statement that the local government was determined to fulfill the demolition and relocation plan (Yongkang, 2011). As a result, all these participants, as well as everyone in Yanxia, are aware of the destined future of the built environment in Yanxia. In addition, after seeing what is happening in nearby villages in the region and reading stories of similar vernacular settlements in the news, they must have foreseen that the day when Yanxia will be demolished according to the relocation plan will arrive eventually.

Acknowledging the fate of Yanxia, some of these participants happily accept it since they believe that new is better and represents progress and opportunities. After calmly stating that “our village will get demolished sooner or later,” participant C16 (M, 23) then added, “as long as my family still owns the land, we can build another one ... we can always build a newer and better house!” In his statement, participant C16 clearly associates “new” house with “better” house. From another perspective, participant C5 (F, 26) believes that demolition provides opportunity for development, because “development means that there will be a piece of land that is available either for renting or making profits.” Here, participant C5 did not necessarily value the new buildings, but rather the new opportunities, which can lead to better economic returns.

In the case of participant C7 (F, 19), the youngest participant in this study, her feeling was more ambivalent. On the one hand, she was clearly influenced by the ideas embedded in Building the New Socialist Countryside, as well as the associated urbanization movement. She believes that, “history has to move forward … moving forward means old houses become new houses, rural areas become cities.” On the other hand, she had a rather strong feeling against demolishing her family’s house and hotel and moving to the new settlement area. Conflicted with both ideas, she acknowledged that she did not know whether this kind of “moving forward” equaled “positive progress.” In addition, participant C7 revealed her understanding of the relationship between the concepts of “new” and “positive progress” when discussing the future of her family’s hotel business. She believes that it would not be positive progress if her brother inherits the family hotel, because making positive progress means that her brother “has to go to a

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73 For detailed analysis of the demolishing, compensation, and settlement plan, see Zhao (2013a).
larger city to open a larger hotel!” Therefore, in participant C7’s understanding, being newer and larger is required criteria in making positive progress.

8.2 Longing to Preserve

Although some of these young and middle-aged participants expressed that they expected or preferred certain levels of change in the historic built environment in which they grew up, all of these participants revealed some levels of, or even strong, emotional attachment towards certain physical aspects of the house where they used to live, the land ownership (see Chapter 1 & 5), the vernacular place (see Chapter 3 & 5) that sustains their memories, and Yanxia, as their jiaxiang, at large. However, their different personal experiences and their current relationships with their or their family’s residential spaces in Yanxia affect their understandings of home and jiaxiang and which aspects of home and jiaxiang they would like to have preserved.

8.2.1 Preserving the Land Ownership

The strong desire to preserve the land ownership is exemplified in the case of participant C16 (M, 23), who is the sole male descendant of his family. Although, in his words as quoted in Section 8.1.1, participant C16 expressed little emotional attachment to either the old courtyard house partially owned by his family or the new style house where he lived before his marriage, participant C16 took five photographs of the roof of the old courtyard house (Figure 8.1). When asked for the reasons to include these photographs as the meaningful aspects of his home, he said, “the old house … is left by my ancestors. According to the tradition here, only the men, but not women, of the family can inherit the family property. I am the only child.” He then added “for the old house, people generally preserve them. People only sell them when they encounter some seriously financial problems. Otherwise, people usually keep the old house intact.” In other words, by including the old courtyard house as part of his understanding of the meaningful parts of home, participant C16 declared his future sole-ownership of his family property.

In addition, his photographs of the old courtyard house were taken from the balcony of his parents’ new style house across the pilgrim path, which are distinctively different from the photographs of the old courtyard house taken by his grandmother who is living inside. His outsider’s perspective suggests his attitude toward this old courtyard house; he sees it only as a physical entity that he can possess in the future. Moreover, he will keep the house intact as long
as he can, because it symbolizes an ownership that can be traced back in history, even though he is not willing to live in the old house.

![Figure 8.1: The roof of the old courtyard house that belongs to participant C16’s family. Photo by participant C16.](image)

More importantly, although participant C16 also expressed that he would not feel sad if the old courtyard house were demolished, his statement was based on “as long as [he and his family] still own the land,” so they can “build a newer and better house.” Therefore, only when the ownership of the property is intact, can participant C16 and his family continuously build newer and better houses on the existing land. In other words, as a young male heir, participant C16’s understanding of home, although it is not attached to any physical structure, is bonded to the property ownership.

### 8.2.2 Preserving the Vernacular Place

Participant C7 (F, 19), who grew up in Yanxia and spent much time traveling between her parents’ (participants C29 and C30) house and her grandparents’ (participant C26) house on different sides of the Fangyan valley ([Figure 1.8](image)), expressed a strong attachment to the vernacular place that sustains her childhood memories. For that reason, even though she believes that it is a general tendency that new style houses replace old style houses and cities replace rural areas, she does not want either her family’s house to be demolished or her family to be relocated. Her strong attachment to the vernacular place is clearly demonstrated through the 16 photographs she took that focused on vernacular place. She included them as meaningful parts of her home and enriched each photograph with her personal stories.
In Figure 8.2, participant C7 photographs the path and the bridge that connects her parents’ house and her grandparents’ house. She explained, “when I was young, I stayed at my grandparents’ house at night and went to school from there. In the morning, it was very early that you can see the stars. Grandma always walked me to the middle of the bridge.” In addition, she added that “there is a special plant that exists only on both sides of the bridge. Children used the seeds of this plant to make necklaces.” Then she proudly presented one of the necklaces she made when she was young. In another example, Figure 8.3 focused on a section of the historic pilgrim path, because her father often took her there to see one of his best friends living in the building. She recalled that she used to sit on those stones and his father’s friend often “used his beard to poke her, and the older girl next door often gave her an apple to eat.” Therefore, it is these vivid childhood stories that make her deeply attached to the vernacular place, in which feelings, friendships, and memories are preserved.

Figure 8.2: The path and bridge that connect participant C7’s parents’ house and her grandparents’ house. Photo by participant C7.
In addition, she has another reason to be against the relocation plan: she does not want her family to lose their way of living. Even though she acknowledged that her parents have a demanding lifestyle, especially during the pilgrim seasons, and that she will never want to take over the family business, she did not want to move out of this vernacular place. In addition, she believes that her parents, as well as other residents in Yanxia, can provide a better service to the pilgrims, since they know this place and the history of Yanxia very well and have already become friends with many guests.

8.2.3 Alternative Plan to Preserving the Land Ownership and Vernacular Place

Instead of moving away, certain residents have an alternative idea for preserving their land ownership and vernacular place. Although participant C37 (M, 50) left Yanxia more than 30 years ago, he hopes that his extended family members, who are still living in Yanxia, and the fellow villagers can still sustain their vernacular place and live on the land that they have been living on for centuries. As a government official, yet not in a high position, participant C37 has to carefully negotiate his opinions between the government’s decision and his personal emotions associated with his jiaxiang and his extended family members. As a result, he suggested an alternative relocation plan to the local government, which, on the one hand, still supports the idea of the relocation, yet, on the other hand, tries to keep the residents of Yanxia from moving away from their own land. Participant C37’s plan is that all of the residents move into one of the secondary valleys, Shang-Keng (Figure 1.8), which is collectively owned by all the residents of Yanxia.
Yanxia. Participant C37’s vision of the new settlement consisting of a central pathway and houses against the low hills on both sides. His arguments in supporting his alternative plan are that “the people of Yanxia have rooted here for centuries. They contributed to the development of Fangyan. If they were asked to move away, they will not be willing to do so … their land is here, so is their roots.” Participant C34 (M, 40), as well as participant C11 (M, 63), also suggested the same alternative plan. The reason that participant C34 preferred the alternative plan to the plan proposed by the government was: “I spent more time here. This is also my home. I will miss here if I leave. I do not want to leave here because of this land.” In addition to this reason, participant C11 stated that the alternative plan also “saves money for the state.” In addition, according to participant C34, 70 to 80 percent of the residents in Yanxia also support this alternative plan, so they do not have to leave the land their ancestors have been living on for centuries.74

8.3 Sentimental Feelings and Idealistic Projections towards Jiaxiang

For these young and middle-aged participants who are living in the cities where life is fast, chaotic, competitive, and full of strangers, Yanxia is a quiet, tangible, and intimate place that they can see themselves being connected to. This feeling is clearly articulated by participant C5 (F, 26): “I want to photograph the continuous shingles, because there are fewer shingles in large cities… This represents a difference … After I stayed in cities for a long time, I started to have some sentimental feelings when I return to Yanxia.” The kind of sentimental feelings described by participant C5 are often represented in the ways in which she, as well as other young and middle-aged participants, romanticizes and abstracts the historic buildings and vernacular built environment in Yanxia, their jiaxiang, in contrast to their real life.

8.3.1 Romanticized Views of Jiaxiang

Participant C5 (F, 26) grew up in various cities and only visited both sets of her grandparents living in rural areas over the schools breaks when she was younger and occasionally in the recent past. Because of her limited experience of rural life, her artistic background, and her present lifestyle, in which, according to her, she is surrounded by “rich yet unartistic women [that] try to

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74 For the detailed discussions that analyze residents’ deep attachment to the land, see Chapter 5.
use money to repackage themselves,” she has a rather romanticized view of rural life, exemplified by Yanxia.

She is fond of shingles, because they remind her of the kind of vernacular houses in Yanxia (Figure 8.4). She explained that she realized the special feeling she had towards shingles when she lived in Northern China, where houses do not use shingles because of their flat roofs. She likes the adobe houses in Yanxia, because “after all they are very beautiful,” and they have “a harmonious relationship with the environment” (Figure 8.5). She wishes that the entire historic path could be restored and flanked by buildings like the adobe houses, so it can retain its identity compared to cities like Yongkang, which, according to her, “just looks like another city.” She adores the windows and doors of old courtyard houses that have decorated patterns defining the openings, because “windows and doors are like the decorations of the spirit” (Figure 8.6). In contrast, she thinks that the people in cities are too busy and rushed to create and enjoy decorations like these. She loves the little vegetable garden next to her grandparents’ house, which they attend to every day. Although she laughed at herself because she cannot recognize any of the vegetables in the field, she considers the place where the vegetable garden is located as “the most perfect representation of rural life” (Figure 5.27). When asked what the most perfect rural life is, she quoted a popular phrase, “it has farmers, mountains, spring water, and land.”

75 She further explains that such an idea comes from both her childhood experience and external influences, such as The Peach Colony by Tao Yuanming.76 Above all, she has a dream, even though she admitted that she might never be able to realize her dream: “I want to have a small courtyard house in rural China and use it to run a tea house.” Because she believes that “all urban dwellers want some kind of ‘return,’ a return to a simple and primitive lifestyle.” Therefore, she included these romanticized views as her meaningful parts of home, as well as

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75 This phrase derives from a kind of bottled water; it is branded as 农夫山泉, pronounced as nong fu shan quan, which means Farmer’s Spring. Its advertisement, or slogan, is “Farmer’s Spring is a little sweet.” In Chinese, the word 农夫 means farmer; 山泉 means mountain and spring respectively; the word “sweet” has the same pronunciation as “land.” Therefore, this slogan can also be understood as “farmer, mountain, spring, and a small piece of land.” As a result, the general public borrows the pronunciation of this slogan to refer to their understandings of the ideal lifestyle or ideal rural life.

76 The Peach Colony, by Tao Yuanming (365-427), is one of the classical writings included in textbooks for the middle school students; therefore, it is well known in China. The Peach Colony describes an isolated paradise hiding in the deep woods, where residents have lived simply and happily for generations. The general interpretation is that Tao, through this writing, expressed his dissatisfaction towards society at the time and his longing for a better life.
Building upon this romanticized view, she has constructed an ideal lifestyle and her future dreams.

Figure 8.4: The continuous shingles that participant C5 tried to capture. Photo by participant C5.

Figure 8.5: The adobe house. Photo by participant C5.

Figure 8.6: The door that has a unique decorated frame. Photo by participant C5.
8.3.2 Abstract Views of Jiaxiang

In the case of participants C16 (M, 23), even though he showed excitement about his new life and new family in the city of Yongkang, and he seemed to have little emotional attachment when discussing the possible demolition of the houses he grew up in, he undoubtedly still has a strong sentiment towards the place he grew up. This rather romantic feeling is clearly demonstrated through the fact that he chose to take his wedding photographs at places near the old courtyard house owned by his family.77 When asked for the reasons for such a choice, he could not articulate any, but simply said that “the scenery here is not bad.” Participant C16’s reaction exemplifies Shils’s (1981, p. 13) argument: “people who accept a tradition need to call it a tradition; its acceptability might be self-evident to them.”

During the process of shooting his wedding photographs, participant C16 also asked the photographer to shoot another set of photographs with one of the two single-use cameras he received during this study. In many of these photographs, he and his wife were posing in front of the vegetable garden his grandmother tends and the old courtyard house owned by his family (Figure 8.7), as well as the old houses that he expressed no reluctance to take down (Figure 8.8). As a popular practice in portrait photography, especially wedding photography, the background is usually treated as out of focus in order to bring out the subjects, the newly wedded couple in this case. Therefore, in participant C16’s wedding photographs, which were done professionally and probably displayed inside their new house, the blurry images of the old courtyard houses and the vegetable garden become not only the backdrop of this newly formed jia, but also the abstract representation of his jiaxiang that is projected into the future.

In addition, participant C16’s sentimental feelings towards his jiaxiang as an abstracted representation is also evident in his comments regarding the wall paintings. During the latter part of the interview, he recalled his experience in a coffee house in a large city, which was retrofitted into an old house, and commented, “it is very nice to spend some time there after living in a new style house for a while.” He then stared at the paintings on the wall of the old courtyard house and said: “it will be a pity if we have to demolish this courtyard house. The mural on the wall … no one can do it now. As a historic relic, it will be a pity to demolish it.” Clearly, participant C16 only sees the mural as a historic relic, and the reason it is valuable is because it cannot be

77 It is a common practice in China that the couple have their wedding photographs taken before their wedding, either inside a studio or at places chosen by them or by the photography studio.
reproduced. This attitude greatly contrasts to his grandmother’s view towards this mural, which she sees every day; she appreciates the aesthetic beauty of it, and believes that it represents good memories and family pride. Therefore, the mural in the old courtyard house, for participant C16, is another abstract representation of his *jiaxiang*, which has many other historic relics.

Figure 8.7: Participant C16 and his wife are taking their wedding photographs in front of the old courtyard house owned by his family and the vegetable garden his grandmother attends. Photo by a photographer instructed by participant C16.

Figure 8.8: Participant C16 and his wife are taking their wedding photographs in front of an old courtyard house adjacent to his parents’ house in Yanxia. Photo by a photographer instructed by participant C16.

8.4 **Forever My Jiaxiang**

All these young and middle-aged participants, regardless of where they live and where they consider their *homes* to be located, regard Yanxia as their *jiaxiang* for the present time and
forever. The fact that these young and middle-aged participants are currently living outside Yanxia enables them to separate their present residential space from their jiaxiang. This separation enables the growth of sentimental feelings and fosters a different kind of attachment towards their jiaxiang, from which they build their identity and to which they seek to return in the future. This notion of jiaxiang is comprehensively summarized by participant C36 in a metaphor of falling tree leaves. He said: “all the tree leaves always fall back to their roots." When people become older, they will understand this. The concept of jiaxiang is deeply rooted in every Chinese person’s mind.”

Participant C16 (F, 26) clearly expressed this kind of attachment and the desire to return to his jiaxiang in the following statements: “even if I move away, even when I become old, I will still consider myself a resident of Yanxia … In the future, we will definitely take our children to come to visit, and we will tell them that this is the place we used to live and the place our ancestors used to live.” Participant C37 (M, 50) also used almost the same words to describe the reasons for his sentimental feelings towards his jiaxiang, “all my ancestors used to live here, I grew up here as well!” In addition, participant C37’s wife stated that their son started to identify himself as someone from Yanxia after he started studying in the United States. She continued that although their son only spent limited time in Yanxia over some summers while growing up, he now often takes his friends back to visit his jiaxiang. Therefore, it is the separation between these participants’ present residential spaces and their jiaxiang that promotes the sentimental feelings towards their distant jiaxiang. This separation also helps them to build a different personal identity to distinguish themselves from people in their daily lives.

For some participants, jiaxiang is more than a physical location, but rather an ideological concept. When discussing jiaxiang as an ideological construct, the phrase jiaxiang is often interchangeable with its abbreviated term, jia, which means home and also can be an ideological construct. Participant C36 (M, 50) and C5 (F, 26), a father and his daughter, both used the concept of roots to explain their attachments to their jiaxiang and home. This consensus is probably the result of their earlier life experience, when they moved between different cities in different parts of China for many years and struggled to settle down. Using a well-known idiom as a metaphor, participant C36 described his growing attachment to his jiaxiang as “tree leaves always fall back to their roots.” He further explained that this kind of sentimental feeling towards

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78 The sentence of “all the tree leaves always fall back to their roots” is an idiom.
one’s *jiaxiang* is a deeply embedded emotion for all Chinese people and will become stronger as one ages. As an ideological concept, participant C36 also recognized that the physical representation of *jiaxiang* or *jia* could change depending on the context. For example, he said, “though I have no personal experience, but I think when you are in the United States, China is your *jia*. When I was in Shenyang (a city in Northern China), Yongkang (the name of the county where Yanxia is located) is my *jia*.” Here, participant C36 used the word “*jia*” to represent the concept of *jiaxiang*, because for him, as ideological constructs, both *home* and *jiaxiang* represent the *roots* to which one should return in the same way that tree leaves fall back to their roots.

Still in her 20s, participant C5 (F, 26) also has her understanding of the concept of *roots*, as a representation of *home*. She does not see the apartment where she and her parents live as her *roots*. She believes that *roots* are “what are left by [one’s] ancestors; they are spiritual and therefore requires its physical carriers.” She further explained that “the physical carriers include old houses and everything inside.” Therefore, she believes that the physical carrier of her *roots* is her grandparents’ house in Yanxia, where various kinds of cultural traditions continue and where one can see “the most traditional and the most essential aspects of life.” Meanwhile, she said, “*home* represents the *roots*.” Yet she articulated that this *home* is not the apartment she lives in every day with her parents, but the *home* that she, her parents, and her relatives all return to during holidays. *Home* is centered on the courtyard house where her grandparents live. Therefore, participant C5’s understanding of *home* is her *jiaxiang*, which is exemplified by her grandparents’ residential environment and is enriched by vernacular cultural traditions.

### 8.5 Conclusion

The Chinese phrase *jiaxiang* is constructed based on the understandings of consanguineous relationship and place-bound attachment, which are the two attributes that help to construct the meaning of *home* in rural China, as discussed in Chapter 6 and Chapter 5 respectively. Therefore, the discussion of the concept of *jiaxiang* is an important complement to the understanding of the meaning of *home* in rural China.

These young and middle-aged participants’ understandings of *home* and *jiaxiang* are not only influenced by place-bound attachment and kinship relations, as those understandings of other participants are, but they are also greatly affected by the personal experiences of these participants. These personal experiences include both the earlier experience of living in Yanxia
and the present experience of living in other cities. The fact that one’s current residential space is different from where one was born and where one’s families are from leads to a separation between one’s current residential space and one’s jiaxiang and a detachment between one’s present life experience and one’s past memories. As a result, these young and middle-aged participants have a rather conflicted feeling towards home and jiaxiang. On the one hand, being away from the vernacular environment of Yanxia and being influenced by both Chinese building tradition and the prevalent social and political movement, these participants become less attached to the physical built environment in Yanxia, including both the old courtyard houses and the new style houses. Comparing the built environment of Yanxia to their residential space and built environment in cities, they desire some kinds of change to the existing built environment of Yanxia, because they believe that either change is inevitable, new means better or progress, or both. On the other hand, these participants have strong attachment towards certain aspects of their home and jiaxiang, which they are longing to preserve. In particular, even if they are less concerned about demolishing the historic built environment, they prefer preserving the land ownership so they can also build new houses and new homes; they are also attached to the vernacular place because it sustains their childhood memories and family history. This conflicted feeling is best exemplified in participant C5’s (F, 26) statement quoted at the beginning of this chapter, in which she showed no hesitation in accepting the offer of demolishing her share of the old houses, while she felt deeply grieved that the vernacular built environment of her jiaxiang is disappearing. In addition to this conflicted feeling, these young and middle-aged participants often romanticize and abstract the historic buildings and vernacular place in their jiaxiang in contrast to their present lifestyle in cities, which is fast, chaotic, competitive, and full of strangers. Finally, the physical distance between these participants’ daily lives and Yanxia fosters a deep attachment to their jiaxiang, from which they build identities to differentiate themselves from people in their daily environment. Jiaxiang, as an ideological construct, is the roots to which these participants feel that they will eventually return. At this ideological level, home and jiaxiang become interchangeable ideas that hold the “most traditional and the most essential aspects of life,” as described by participant C5.

This conflicted understanding of home and jiaxiang varies in scale among these young and middle-aged participants. In general, the younger participants present ideas that are more contradictory; these younger participants include participants C5 (F, 26), C7 (F, 19), and C16
(M, 23). They are the ones who, on the one hand, are less concerned about the demolition of the existing old houses, but, on the other hand, have the most romantic and idealized views about the historic built environment of their jiaxiang. Specifically, the less personal experience they have in Yanxia, the weaker the attachment they have towards the existing built environment, which is evident in the case of participant C5. Meanwhile, participant C5’s educational background, artistic personality, and current lifestyle largely shaped her romantic views and idealistic projections towards vernacular built environment. When combined, participant C5’s understanding of home and jiaxiang is the most conflicted among all participants, which is clearly demonstrated in her statement:

I will feel sad, and I will have conflicted feelings, because all the old houses in the village are falling apart and are going to be demolished. But if they do decide to demolish my share of the courtyard house owned by my family, I will be happy to accept the offer.

In the same way, the desire for change is also evident among the middle-aged participants, participant C34 (M, 40), C36 (M, 50), and C37 (M, 50), but at a different scale. The additional personal relationships they have with Yanxia leads to stronger attachment to the land and to the vernacular place, in other words, to their jiaxiang. As a result, they seek for the kind of change that enables them to preserve most aspects of their jiaxiang in the way they have, such as the alternative relocation plan that reconstructs Yanxia in one of the secondary valleys. In addition, aging not only enables these middle-aged participants to be more realistic and less romantic and idealistic, but also makes them feel a stronger attachment to their distant jiaxiang. Finally, earlier life experiences and struggles away from Yanxia also foster a deeper emotional bond towards one’s jiaxiang on return.
CHAPTER 9  THE STUDY: ITS CONTRIBUTIONS, STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS, AND SUGGESTED DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

9.1 Summary of this Study

This dissertation examines the ways in which cultural traditions have affected the meanings of home as they are understood by the residents living in Yanxia village, Zhejiang Province, China. In doing so, this dissertation investigates the relationship between shared cultural traditions, recognized by the local residents, and the physical, psychological, and social constructions of home in a vernacular settlement in rural China.

Rural China has been experiencing drastic changes since 2006 under the policy of Building a Socialist Countryside. This policy was part of the 11th Five-Year Plan, released by China’s central authority on February 21st, 2006. One of the main goals in the 11th Five-Year Plan was to address “Three [deeply rooted] Rural Issues,” which were considered obstacles in achieving nation-wide industrialization and urbanization. To that end, the policy of Building a New Socialist Countryside focuses on five critical concerns in rural China: boosting modern agricultural development, increasing rural affluence, building a civil society, enhancing clean and ordered settlements, and advancing regulated democracy. However, at the local level, these fairly broad concepts are being implemented by literally constructing a new countryside. As a result, historic houses and vernacular villages are demolished, and residents are relocated to new settlements with rows of nearly identical new-style houses. Meanwhile, the lifestyle of residents, which has been previously supported and sustained by the vernacular settlement, is endangered. Social relations among residents break down due to the destruction of the spatial relations within which social relations have been constructed. Cultural traditions become impractical and are abandoned as the result of their detachment from associated cultural landscapes.

Yanxia village was selected as the site for this research because it is one of many villages in China affected by the policy of Building a New Socialist Countryside. Yanxia, which has about 2,000 registered residents, is part of Yongkang County and is located in the middle of Zhejiang Province. Since 2007, the local government planned to relocate all the residents to a new settlement away from the cultural landscape of the Fangyan valley. In addition, there was an underlying agenda for this relocation plan; the local government planned to demolish the existing built environment inside the Fangyan valley as a way to “clean up” the natural landscape. This
would clear the way for the local government to seek to have Fangyan Mountain included as an extension project of an existing World Heritage Natural Site, China *Danxia*. When the relocation plan was first announced in 2007, it met with great resistance from the residents. As a result, the vernacular settlement was still largely intact when the research for this dissertation was carried out between September 2013 and May 2014.

Moreover, Yanxia was selected as the research site because Yanxia is both a unique and representative rural settlement in China owing to its history, settlement type, and cultural traditions. The written history of Yanxia can be traced back to the early fourteenth century, when the Cheng family moved to Yanxia. Until the middle of the twentieth century, the Cheng family not only transformed Yanxia into a lineage-based settlement, but also stretched the village into a linear-shaped mile-long settlement. More importantly, since the 1850s, the Cheng family has run family hotels and stores to service the pilgrims and visitors who came from afar to worship *Hugong Dadi* on the top of Fangyan Mountain. *Hugong Dadi* is a local deity enshrined since the early twelfth century. This family-based economic practice has been providing the major source of income for most of the households in Yanxia. In addition, the younger generation of the Cheng family in Yanxia not only inherited the tradition of craftsmanship, but also subsequently joined other entrepreneurs in Yongkang in the manufacturing industry for small metal products. Therefore, Yanxia is a representative site because lineage-based settlements represent the majority of the historic and vernacular built environment in rural South China. The fact that young residents of Yanxia are moving to cities also represents a common phenomenon in rural China. As well, the unique set of cultural traditions of Yanxia makes it an ideal site for this study. The cultural traditions of Yanxia include the well-established kinship structure, the popular religious rituals, the dominant family-based economic practice, and, more importantly, the residents’ attachment to the land that they and their ancestors have lived on since the early fourteenth century.

This dissertation research was built on two preliminary studies, which focused on 1) the vernacular built environment and the cultural traditions of Yanxia before 1949, and 2) testing the applicability and effectiveness of the method of photovoice. The dissertation research was a two-phase ethnographic fieldwork combining the method of archival research. It was conducted on site between September and December in 2013 and between February and May in 2014. In particular, participants were asked to take photographs of aspects of their *jia* that were
meaningful to them, which was followed by semi-structured and in-depth interviews focusing on
the contents of the photographs. There were a total of 36 participants (38 were recruited and two
withdrew) of different genders, age groups, residence types and locations, and relationships with
the hospitality industry. Among these 36 participants, 20 participants took photographs and 16
others only participated in the interviews. The photographs taken by the participants and the
interviews represent the most important dataset for this study, which was triangulated with data
obtained from archival research and observations. This dataset was analyzed using three
methods: content analysis of all the photographs, data-driven inductive coding of the interviews,
and contextualizing strategies (Maxwell, 1996, p.79) that locate and analyze each photograph
within participants’ personal and social backgrounds. The content analysis shows that 49 percent
of all 610 identifiable photographs, or 297 photographs, focus on things outside the physical
boundary of the homestead and on traditions that are either treasured by an individual family or
collectively shared by all the residents of Yanxia. This result provides a general understanding of
the role of tradition in shaping participants’ understandings of home, while the detailed analysis
of the findings is summarized in the following section.

9.2 Study Findings and Contributions to the Existing Literature

9.2.1 A Brief Summary of the Study Findings

This dissertation argues that, in the context of rural China, the concept of place in vernacular
settlements combined with certain aspects of Chinese culture challenges the spatial boundary of
the house. The meaning of home as it is understood by residents in Yanxia, a lineage-based
vernacular settlement in rural China, goes beyond the physical boundary of house or the legal
boundary of homestead and is affected by shared cultural traditions, including the objects, the
ideas, and the practices of tradition, recognized by the local residents. Specifically, the meaning
of home for residents living in Yanxia ties to three sets of cultural traditions.

The first one is the place-bound relationship that attaches residents to the land in which
their residential spaces have been situated for generations. The second one includes lineage
structure and its associated kinship affairs established in the early fourteenth century, which
extends the meanings of home to include places, buildings, and objects that are associated with
residents’ ancestors. Lastly, Yanxia has a unique set of cultural traditions affecting the meaning
of home, which grow from the family-based economic practices started in the 1850s. For those
influenced by the last set of traditions, *home* becomes relatively isolated and distant and starts to lose its meaning as a private place.

In addition, Yanxia is considered as *home*, or *jiaxiang*, or both, by the younger descendants of the residents in Yanxia. These descendants grew up in Yanxia but moved to other cities later in their lives. This condition results in a separation between their residential space and *jiaxiang* and a detachment between their present life experience and past memories. As a result of this separation and detachment, their understandings of *home*, and of *jiaxiang* as well, are largely conflicted, romanticized, and abstracted. More importantly, as a place of multiple nested and embedded traditions, *home*, including *jiaxiang*, becomes not only an ideological construct that support dreams and future perspectives, but also a representation of ideas such as roots and reconnection.

The findings of this dissertation are also applicable to a broader context. The relationships between the meaning of *home* and the first two sets of cultural traditions — place-bound relationship and lineage structure — are likely present in other lineage-based vernacular settlements in rural China which have similar histories and geographic contexts. In addition, the findings that are related to younger generations of rural residents who moved to cities later in their lives are also likely relevant to other rural areas where urban migration has become a prominent phenomenon.

### 9.2.2 Contributions to the Existing Literature

Situated amidst the scholarship on place, home, and tradition, this dissertation offers a unique understanding of the relationship between tradition and the physical, psychological, and social construction of *home* within the context of the historic and vernacular built environment in rural China. This dissertation expands and advances the literature on place, home, and tradition in vernacular settlements of historically rooted non-western cultures. Specifically, the findings of this dissertation make the following contributions to the existing literature.

#### 9.2.2.1 Illustrate: On Place and System of Settings

The findings of this dissertation not only illustrate the concept of place as a contextual, relational, and cultural construct (Appadurai, 1995; Hall, 2003; Gupta & Ferguson, 1992; Hayden, 1995; Lovell, 1998; Massy, 1994; Rodman, 2003), but also exemplify the concept of the
“system of settings” when studying residential environments (Rapoport, 2005, p. 20) (Chapter 5). The vernacular place in Yanxia becomes an essential part of residents’ daily lives because it provides the fundamental resources for living that sustains the xiangtu lifestyle. Residents have to constantly step outside their houses to perform various activities within associated systems of settings. In addition, the collectively owned spaces in Yanxia, including ancestral halls, ponds, and other open spaces, support various kinds of daily activities that are either not spatially supported by the vernacular house or are preferred to be done outside the house. As a result of these daily activities, vernacular place not only becomes socially and culturally constructed, but also helps construct social relations and sustains the performance of cultural traditions.

9.2.2.2 Elaborate: On Place as a Projection of Consanguineous Relationships

Based on Fei’s (1992) theory that space in rural China is an extension of consanguinity, this dissertation elaborates the understanding of place as a contextual, relational, and cultural construct in the context of vernacular settlements in rural China. The findings of this dissertation demonstrate that the vernacular place of Yanxia rests on social relations established on consanguineous coordinates (Chapter 6). For residents in Yanxia, certain places and structures become meaningful aspects of home because of the ways in which these places and structures are situated among the consanguineous coordinates. The reason that ancestral halls and the ancestral house, Degeng-Ju, are important vernacular places and critical components in residents’ understandings of the meaning of home is that these structures represent the origin and the continuity of the Cheng lineage. In the same way, some residents consider certain historic buildings, as well as objects, as meaningful aspects of their home because these buildings and objects are the projections of past consanguineous relationships. Moreover, the understanding that the entire historic section of Yanxia grows from the consanguinity of the Cheng lineage in the past deeply bonds residents to the historic place and enables them to consider it as part of their home, because this place rests on the consanguineous relationships to which they belong.

9.2.2.3 Exemplify: On Home as an Economic Entity

This dissertation examines the aspect of home as an economic entity (Jervis, 2005) (Chapter 7). The findings exemplify the claim that a financial conflict can lead to the division of a home, while, in a similar way, a shared household budgets can unite a home (Cohen, 1976, Shiga, 1978,
Faure, 2005). In Yanxia, the operation of the home as an economic entity can be seen in the residents’ unique family-based businesses, which have served pilgrims and visitors since the 1850s. This family-based economic practice has developed its own set of cultural traditions, including businesses extended through consanguineous relationships, nuclear-family-based business operations, estranged business owners and even family members, and the emergence of a new language that has further facilitated the construction of the identity of the social group who consumes Hugong. As a result of this family-based economic practice, characterized by business conflict and heated competition, individual nuclear families become more isolated, even while the Cheng lineage in Yanxia is reinforced through the additional layer of shared identity – “People Who Consume Hugong” and who speak the language of Hugong. Influenced by this set of traditions, home becomes detached and distant and starts to lose its meaning as a private place.

9.2.2.4 Expand: On Home as Symbols of Identity

This dissertation expands and advances the understanding of the relationship between home and identity (Cooper, 1974; Duncan, 1985). The findings of this dissertation demonstrate that certain aspects of home are used as symbols of identity (Chapter 5 & 8). However, home here does not represent the individual house, as in Cooper’s (1974) argument. The aspects of home that facilitate the construction of both individual and collective identities for residents of Yanxia include the featured landscapes, the place-bound relationships, and family-based businesses. Residents use these meaningful aspects of home to identify that they are People of Fangyan, someone who is living underneath Shizi Mountain, someone who is not a city dweller, but one who is deeply attached to the land. Residents involved in family-based businesses that service pilgrims and visitors identify themselves as people who consume Hugong. Rather than identifying themselves as unique individuals distinct from their neighbors next door or their extended family members also living in Yanxia, residents in Yanxia use these dimensions of self, which also constitute their understandings of the meaning of home, to inform their own sense of who they are. This self-recognition, when exhibited in multiple other residents, contributes to building a collective identity.
9.2.2.5  Advance: On Home as an Ideological Construct

This dissertation advances the understanding of home in the context of rural China with the incorporation of another Chinese concept, jiaxiang (Chapter 8). Jiaxiang means the place that one’s family has been living for generations, which is closely associated with the idea of home as roots (Somerville, 1992). At this ideological level, home and jiaxiang are interchangeable: both signify roots – the roots to which one can return. In addition, the very construction of the Chinese phrase jiaxiang suggests that this concept also rests upon the same set of dual concepts that underpin the meaning of home in rural China: consanguineous relationship and place-bound attachment. Therefore, when incorporating the concept of jiaxiang, the findings of this dissertation advances the literature of home in the way that the concept of home is examined under a broader spatial and temporal context.

This dissertation examines the understanding of home and jiaxiang from the perspective of younger descendants of the residents of Yanxia, who grew up in Yanxia but moved to cities at some point in their later lives. Living in other cities, some of them still consider the place they grew up in Yanxia as their home and Yanxia as their jiaxiang, while others only consider Yanxia as their jiaxiang. In either case, the fact that these younger descendants currently live outside Yanxia enables them to separate their present residential spaces from their jiaxiang and to detach their present life experience from their past memories. This separation and detachment suggests that the importance of home is embedded in China’s rural vernacular landscapes for other contemporary urban migrants in China. More importantly, this detachment and separation enables these young descendants to become less concerned with the specific details of the physical built environment of their home or jiaxiang, and instead to emphasize the importance of preserving the ideas behind these two concepts. In other words, they, on the one hand, desire general physical improvements, including demolition and reconstruction, to the physical environment of the vernacular settlement of Yanxia. On the other hand, they want to preserve land ownership and other cultural traditions embedded in the vernacular place. At the same time, the ideas of home and jiaxiang have become romanticized and abstracted in contrast to their “real” lives in the everyday urban built environment. These ideas enable this group of participants to build their dreams and project the ideas of home and jiaxiang into their individual and collective futures.
9.2.2.6 New Contribution: On Home and Ownership

In addition to expanding the existing literature on home, this dissertation also makes a new contribution. The findings of this dissertation suggest that the meaning of home is also connected with a sense of ownership (Chapter 5). In the context of rural China, even though complete legal ownership of a house or a piece of land is not achievable under Chinese law, residents of Yanxia still acquire a sense of ownership of the built environment and land through endowed and claimed ownership. Endowed ownership, including personal ownership and collective ownership, is experienced by the residents as a result of the use rights of private plots and the collective ownership of all the land within Yanxia according to Chinese law. Meanwhile, claimed ownership can be acquired in two ways. One kind of claimed ownership can derive from the time and effort that people devote to the spaces they inhabit, either private lots or shared public spaces. This kind of claimed ownership can be established through historic family ownership originated before 1949, which was a complete ownership including land ownership as currently defined by Chinese law, use rights, and the rights of ultimate disposition. Regardless of whether ownership is personal or collective, or whether it is endowed or claimed, the findings of this dissertation demonstrate that a sense of ownership is essential in constructing the meaning of home in Yanxia. This finding suggests perhaps a broader conclusion: people cannot recognize a place as home if they do not feel some sense of ownership. In the same way, the meaning of home can go beyond the boundary of the homestead and extend to include associated places to which people feel a sense of ownership.

The argument that the meaning of home is dependent on a sense of ownership is evident from another perspective (Chapter 8). The findings of this dissertation suggest that the younger descendants of the residents of Yanxia have a strong desire to preserve land ownership, even though they have less concern for the reconstruction or even the demolition of the historic built environment in Yanxia. They believe that as long as land ownership is preserved, they can always build bigger houses and a better home.

9.2.2.7 Elaborate and Advance: On Tradition

This dissertation elaborates and advances the understanding of the concept of tradition in the context of vernacular settlements in rural China. Specifically, the findings of this dissertation not only illustrate, but also advance the argument that “tradition … relies on the continuous
‘representation’ and re-articulation of ideas” (Alsayyad, 2014, p. 10). As a result, tradition, as a complex matrix of actions and ideas, incorporates changes and sustains itself in history (Alsayyad, 2014; Bourdier, 1989; Oliver, 1989).

The findings of this dissertation, specifically the evolution of the Cheng lineage through the ways in which it has been presented and managed, elaborate and advance the understanding of tradition as ideas (Chapter 6). The tradition of the Cheng lineage is represented by its ancestral house, Degeng-Ju. However, it is not the building itself, but the idea embodied in the building that sustains the tradition. Degeng-Ju has always been associated with Quan, the very first Cheng family member who settled in Yanxia in 1353. In addition, 14 participants photographed or discussed Degeng-Ju as a meaningful aspect of their homes during this study because it represents the tradition of the Cheng lineage. However, the current Degeng-Ju is neither the house in which Quan lived, nor is it sitting on the site of that house. In fact, the residents of the Cheng lineage in Yanxia knew very little about their very first ancestral house. The idea of the ancestral house was carried over by the sixth generation Kui, when he built his new house in the early sixteenth century and named it Degeng-Ju, after Quan. Nevertheless, the house built by Kui was completely burned down and rebuilt on site in 1789. However, as of 2014, only the middle section of the brick façade of Degeng-Ju remains from the reconstruction completed in 1789. The rest of Degeng-Ju was reconstructed on site again following the destruction during Cultural Revolution, when the highly decorated wooden elements were taken down and burned to ashes. Despite all these changes, the residents in Yanxia still consider Degeng-Ju as the “very old ancestral house” (C21, M, 61; C23, M, 70). Therefore, the tradition of the ancestral house of the Cheng lineage does not rest on the physical structure itself, nor is the tradition strictly limited to the original year of construction and the original building site (Liang, 1998). The tradition has rested on the idea embedded in these buildings, which were built through the course of almost 500 years. Each version of the new ancestral house has represented both the continuity and the continuous tradition of the Cheng lineage.

The tradition of kinship affairs of the Cheng lineage is another example where the idea of tradition has been re-articulated, while the tradition itself has changed in order to survive through time. Before 1949, the ancestral halls and their associated properties were the spatial, physical, and financial representation of the Cheng lineage and its kinship affairs. After 1949, the kinship affairs of the Cheng lineage first lost their financial means of support when the properties owned
by each ancestral hall were confiscated, and later lost their spatial and physical support when the ancestral halls were closed down. However, the traditions of kinship affairs evolved and persisted, because these traditions were embedded in the idea of consanguinity and collectivity—collective efforts between blood-related individuals for collective interest. Without the spatial, physical, and financial support provided by the ancestral halls, the tradition of kinship affairs has been re-articulated through the Senior Association and volunteer-based fund-raising, and in the spaces of restaurants and other kinds of public areas in the village. This history suggests that despite current or future government policies, the idea of tradition will continue to sustain the Cheng lineage and may re-emerge in a new form.

9.2.2.8 New Contribution: On Place, Home, and Tradition

This dissertation makes another new contribution to the existing literatures on place, home, and tradition in the way that the findings of this dissertation suggest an overarching argument that connects all three concepts: the meaning of home rests on the ideas of tradition, which are deeply attached to the place where home is rooted. Specifically, the meaning of home in lineage-based vernacular settlements in rural China goes beyond the physical boundary of house or the legal boundary of homestead and is attached to place-bound relationships and lineage structure. Both of these traditions rest on certain ideas and have been continuously represented and re-articulated in the past. The tradition of place-bound relationships is embedded in the ideas of social relations, land ownership, and identity, as well as the practice of xiangtu lifestyle (Chapter 5), while the tradition of lineage structure rests on the ideas of consanguinity and collectivity (Chapter 6). Both of these two sets of traditions are deeply attached to the vernacular place, which not only enroots and nurtures the Cheng lineage, but also embodies the meanings and the spirits of the cultural landscape.

The representation and re-articulation of these cultural traditions as ideas can best be seen in the ways in which young and middle-aged participants understand the meanings of home (Chapter 8). Home, for them, can be independent from the physical house in which they live; it is the idea of home rather than the physical carrier of home that bears the meaning. Therefore, a house can be demolished and rebuilt, while the idea of home continues. Because it is the re-articulation of the ideas of land ownership and identity that enables the reestablishment of the meaning of home. A house can merely be a space to sleep, while home need not have a bed
inside. Because it is the representation of the idea of consanguinity that fosters the feeling of rootedness, which nurtures and sustains the meaning of home, as well as jiaxiang.

9.3 Contributions to Policy and Practice

This study offers significant contributions to the local practice supporting the policy of Building a New Socialist Countryside. Specifically, this study suggests guidance with respect to the local practice of this policy where it touches upon vernacular built environments. However, before discussing the contributions to the practice of this policy, it is important to clarify the original intention of this policy from the central government’s perspective. Aiming to solve the Three Rural Issues – agricultural industry, the farmers, and the rural built environment – the policy of Building a New Socialist Countryside first and foremost places emphasis on economic construction and ideological construction, and only secondarily does the policy apply to the physical construction in rural China. The economic construction includes boosting modern agricultural development to increase rural residents’ income; ideological construction emphasizes improving healthcare and education systems for rural residents and regulating democracy at the rural and local levels. Finally, the physical construction touches upon issues like upgrading infrastructure and enhancing the built environment.

Before discussing the suggestions regarding the local practice of Building a New Socialist Countryside, this study first and foremost reveals a critical issue underlying the belief that supports the local practice. This underlying belief, embraced by some scholars and local governments, is that a modern house not only provides a better home, but also serves as the foundation for the new socialist countryside. This underlying belief has resulted in large scale demolition of historic and vernacular built environments and construction of homogeneous new settlements in rural China. Contrary to this underlying belief, the findings of this dissertation demonstrate that a house does not equal a home; the meaning of home extends beyond the physical boundary of a house and the homestead and is attached to the vernacular place and social relations that are supported by the vernacular built environment. As Mr. Zhang’s story quoted at the beginning of the introduction of this dissertation suggested, modern houses do not necessarily provide better residential space nor happier lives for rural residents. On the contrary, based on the findings of this dissertation, modern houses that are built in a way to detach themselves from the local landscape and disregard the rural lifestyle will likely fail to become
satisfying residential spaces for rural residents; in other words, these modern houses do not necessarily offer the potential for a better home.

The findings of this dissertation provide the following general guidance to the local practice of Building of New Socialist Countryside that touches upon the built environment. It is important to note that this set of suggestions only aims to cover common issues shared by a majority of vernacular built environments in rural China. When circumstances allow, additional ethnographic research should be conducted to focus on individual cases and to further the general guidance suggested below with specific solutions detailed for a particular settlement. This kind of additional research can follow the Rapid Ethnographic Assessment Procedures set up by Low (2008, pp. 395-398). In addition, such guidance may also be applicable to similar projects worldwide that try to “improve” the living condition of rural residents by upgrading their built environment.

This set of general guidance include:

1. **Renovation of the existing built environment is strongly recommended** where possible as compared to the alternative of relocating residents to newly constructed settlements away from the vernacular cultural landscape. As this dissertation argues, both the meaning of home and social relations are deeply attached to the place in which the vernacular settlement is located. Therefore, maintaining the existing physical and visual relationship between residents and the cultural landscape, in which they have been residing and their culture has been rooted, is the premise in sustaining both the cultural traditions and the meaning of home that are recognize by residents.

2. **The scope of the project** might also include reconstructing a few selected buildings on site and constructing limited additions to certain structures. Preserving every single historic building is not the ultimate goal for this kind of renovation project; it is the ideas behind the cultural traditions and the meaning of home that need to be preserved.

3. **The professionals** involved in the renovation project should work closely with the residents during the process to identify criteria that are important to the local population. Specifically, the professionals should pay attention to the following six aspects of cultural traditions.
4. **The aspects of rural lifestyle** that residents want to preserve should be identified, respected, and incorporated into the renovation of existing built environments and the design of new residential and public spaces.

5. **Existing public spaces** inside vernacular settlements, including ancestral halls, temples, stores, assembly halls, schools, pavilions, bridges, open spaces, and all kinds and forms of water bodies, should be maintained and renovated to sustain or improve existing social relations and cultural activities.
   - In particular, for lineage-based settlement, the **ancestral halls** and their associated public spaces can be protected and renovated to become more suitable to support kinship affairs in the present day and serve as a bond for the entire lineage. For example, the interior space of the ancestral halls can be renovated to incorporate spaces for other programs, such as a senior center, a cafeteria, a village library, and a daycare center, which are open to all members of the lineage.

6. **The sense of ownership** that residents have towards their homesteads, private plots, and agricultural lands should be protected and preserved. This is particularly critical when building additions to the existing built environment that might change the nature of land ownership.

7. **The cultural landscape** that helps shape individual and collective identities should be preserved. This includes the preservation of visual, physical, and financial connections between the residents and the cultural landscape, for example when certain featured landscapes become tourist destinations and, as a result, fences and entrance fee gates are installed.

8. **Architectural elements** that are meaningful to the residents should be preserved when renovating an existing building. Even when an architectural element cannot fulfill its original function, such as being a structural member, its visual appearance should be largely preserved.

9. **The general ambiance of the vernacular built environment** should be preserved. In other words, the residents should be able to feel the same familiarity and comfort towards the built environment of their *jiaxiang* after the renovation; they should be able to feel at home when being immersed in the renovated built environment.
In addition to providing general guidance for the local practices of Building of New Socialist Countryside that touch upon the built environment, the findings of this dissertation also suggest that educating residents in how to inhabit the new built environment is essential in parallel with the renovation, reconstruction, or relocation project. This kind of education focuses on how to inhabit this environment in a “modern” way, including how to use modern fixtures and appliances such as a toilet and a stove. More importantly, the education should try to re-establish the idea and practice of sustainable development within the residential environment in the new context, where waste, water, and other natural resources are managed in different ways than the sustainable practices that have been carried out in rural China for generations. Only when residents know how to inhabit the new built environment as framed by the idea of the New Socialist Countryside, can they start to make this new built environment their home.

9.4 Strengths and Limitations of the Study

Adopting the method of photovoice in this study exhibited several strengths in helping to minimize possible researcher bias and reactivity imposed from the researcher during the ethnographic fieldwork. First, being in control of the camera enabled the participants to play a more active role during the process. During the photo-taking phase of the project, participants were able to review their own perspectives on personal and private experiences without any influence of reaction from the researcher. During the successive interviews, instead of simply answering researcher’s questions, the photographs taken by each participant directed the discussion. Second, photographs taken by the participants captured, revealed, and amplified critical information that could have been easily omitted during observations and pre-structured interviews. Therefore, these photographs allowed the researcher to examine the private world of each participant and obtain intrinsic information that otherwise would have been unavailable. Third, and most importantly, the cameras empowered the participants during the process and the subsequent interviews and made them feel that their opinions were being respected and valued. As a result, the method of photovoice helped to balance the asymmetrical power relationship between the researcher and participants, and between the interviewer and the interviewees.

This dissertation also has limitations. As a qualitative research, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to include other vernacular settlements in rural China. Meanwhile, using the method of photovoice in this study also revealed several limitations. Due to budget and time
limits, this study enrolled a relatively small number of participants. In addition, from the
participants’ perspective, it is easier to talk to the researcher than to take a camera and complete
a project following prompts of the researcher. Therefore, the enrollment of participants for the
photo-taking phase of the project not only took a longer time to develop trusting relationships
between the researcher and the residents, but also might have attracted only certain types of
participants. Lastly, the outcome of the photographs was affected by many factors. Some of these
pre-existing factors included the time of the year the participants had the cameras and how long
the participants had the cameras. However, the impacts of these factors do not have simple and
straightforward explanations. For example, all 20 participants who took photographs had the
camera over the Chinese New Year, yet only five participants included subjects or activities
involving the Chinese New Year Celebration within or adjacent to their residential space. This
does not suggest that only these five participants considered the Chinese New Year an aspect of
their jia that was meaningful to them. Other factors could be at play, for example how busy they
were with their personal business at that time or whether there were any photographs left in the
camera. There were also factors that were beyond the control of the researcher or that could not
be foreseen by the researcher. For example, a neighbor, included in the photographs, might
simply be there because that person happened to be at the place when the participant was taking
the photographs. Therefore, the content analysis of these photographs, which is based on the
presumption that all photographs are equal, can only provide a very general understanding of
responses to the research question. Meanwhile, it is the researcher’s responsibility to evaluate
individual photographs based on the additional information associated with each photograph that
was acquired during the subsequent interviews. In other words, each photograph needs to be
carefully examined not only based on the context in which the photograph was taken and the
intention as stated by the participant, but also in association with that participant’s personal and
family background.

9.5 Future Research Directions
This study examines the ways in which the understanding and practice of tradition has affected
the meaning of home as it is understood by residents of Yanxia village, Zhejiang Province,
China. Even though Yanxia, as a lineage-based settlement, represents a common type of historic
and vernacular settlement in rural Southern China, additional research on other types of
vernacular settlements in rural China can contribute to a comprehensive understanding of a broader research question: how has the understanding and practice of tradition affected the meaning of home for residents living in vernacular settlements in rural China? These types of vernacular settlements include: 1) a vernacular settlement that lacks any dominant lineage; 2) a vernacular settlement that has more than one dominant lineage; 3) a lineage-based vernacular settlement that is only financially supported by conventional rural economic practice, such as agriculture and animal husbandry. The study of the first two kinds of vernacular settlements can reveal whether lineage structures affect residents’ attachment to vernacular place. On the one hand, vernacular settlements without any dominant lineages, such as many vernacular settlements in rural Northern China, have different kinds of public spaces that are not associated with particular family history or ancestral rituals; in other words, the vernacular places in these settlements are not an extension of consanguineous relationships. On the other hand, the study of vernacular settlements with more than one dominant lineage can reveal whether residents’ attachment to vernacular place can transcend consanguineous relationships. Finally, the study of the third type of vernacular settlement can provide a better understanding of how family-based businesses affect the understanding of the meaning of home in rural China.

More importantly, additional research that focuses on residents living in newly constructed villages as part of the New Socialist Countryside can become a critical complement to this study. To set up a valid comparative study, the new research should focus on residents who come from a vernacular and lineage-based settlement and have moved to a new settlement that is away from the original vernacular cultural landscape. In particular, follow-up research on residents of Yanxia, including the participants of this study, in a few years after they move to their new houses in the new settlement can be of exceptional value. If adopting the method of photovoice, the photographs that represent these residents’ understandings of meaningful aspects of home may be different. The comparative analysis focusing on these changes, not the images themselves, but rather the concepts, meanings, and symbols these photographs represent, may reveal not only the nature of tradition in Yanxia, but also provide another level of understanding in the relationship between tradition and the physical, psychological, and social constructions of home.
EPILOGUE

As I was writing this dissertation towards the end of 2014, one of the participants informed me that residents in Yanxia started to sign over the ownership of their houses to the local government and gradually move out of Yanxia.⁷⁹ Throughout the entire winter, while residents were moving out, demolition continued. These residents did not even have their new houses built yet, so they moved in with their daughters, sons, or relatives that lived elsewhere, or found other temporary shelter on their own.

According to The Detailed Guidelines for the Demolition, Compensation, and Settlement Plan for the Central Scenic Area of Fangyan, Yongkang (Hereafter The Guidelines),⁸⁰ the local government is not responsible to build any residential buildings in the new settlement; the residents themselves have to build their new houses according to the style provided by the government as showed in the architectural renderings (Figure 10.1). In addition, according to The Agreement on Property Transfer and Settlement that residents signed before they moved out, the residents, after they have moved out, must wait for an entire year to get their individual assigned lots inside the new settlement, so they can start to build their new houses. During this year, the local government will pay each household a total of 12,000 yuan (less than $2,000) as the compensation for the temporary settlement fee.

Figure 10.1: The architectural rendered image of the residential section of the new settlement. Photo by the author.

⁷⁹ As discussed in Chapter 1, the land ownership in China is a very complicated issues. According to the Land law, the residents in Yanxia will still collectively own all the land in Yanxia even after they all move out of Yanxia. However, in practice, the residents will no long in control of what the local government can do on their land.

⁸⁰ For details and analysis of The Guidelines, see Zhao 2014.
Looking at the photographs that one of the participants sent to me, I cannot recognize the once very familiar village (Figure 10.2). I cannot correlate these gloomy and dead scenes with the sunny and lively Yanxia I left behind in May 2014. In these photographs, the hotels and stores are gone, the residents are gone, the pilgrims and tourists are gone, and so are the smells of local food, the smoke from burning candles, the noise from running cars, and the laughter and bargaining between business owners and customs. I do see, instead, the exposed Fangyan Mountain as the local government has wanted. However, those sandstone ledges have no meaning for me without reference to the once standing built environment (Figure 10.3). The natural landscape loses its charm when it is juxtaposed to a pile of broken bricks and crumbling walls. (Figure 10.4).

Figure 10.2: The unrecognizable Yanxia village. Photo by one of the participants.

Figure 10.3: The exposed Fangyan Mountain. Photo by one of the participants.
I wonder where these residents have gone. I wonder what these residents have taken with them when they left or what they could take with them. I wonder whether the un-harvested vegetables have died in the fields. I wonder whether the ponds have become cleaner or dirtier without people doing laundry and washing vegetables. I wonder how these residents have celebrated the beginning of another Chinese New Year away from their family members, relatives, and homes. I wonder how many people have been able to participate in the Dragon Dance in Yanxia this year. I wonder whether the spirits of the Cheng ancestors, if they still lingered inside the ancestral halls, felt left out or even abandoned when they watched their descendants leaving. I wonder where pilgrims and visitors have stayed during their trips to Fangyan Mountain, and I wonder whether they will come back next year. I have many more questions regarding their present living conditions and well-being, and my heart is with them, as well as the other 674 million people living in rural China.

I am drawn to return to Yanxia. Because I recognize that the current local government’s actions reflect a cycle that has been repeated in the history of this vernacular settlement. Therefore, I want to understand how the idea of traditions will be manifested in the next cycle of the history of the Cheng family.

More importantly, I want to go back to Yanxia to find the answers to these questions myself. I want to walk down the thousand-year-old pilgrim path one more time. I want to locate
as many participants of this study as possible at their new settlement. I want to see their new houses, and I want to listen to their new stories about their new homes.

Champaign, IL
April 2015
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Figure 1.4: Minfeng Village Network. Retrieved February 11, 2015, from http://www.blcx.gov.cn/mingfeng/xinxi.asp?id=41


APPENDIX A: PORTRAITS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

This section provides a short biographic description for each participant of this study. Each description includes a brief summary of the participant’s personal background and current living situation. This brief description also includes the style of his or her house, the location of his or her house in the village, especially in relation to the historic and new pilgrim paths, and whether the participating family was (before 1949), has been (both before 1949 and since the 1980s), or is (since the 1980s) currently involved in the hospitality business serving pilgrims and visitors. These brief descriptions aim to help contextualize the photographs each participant took and the comments each participant made, some of which were include in the following analysis chapters.
Participant C1

Participant C1 is a female born in 1950. As someone who was not part of the Cheng family, she moved to Yanxia with her parents when she was 8. She got married in 1972 and has been living in the same courtyard house since then (Figure 1.10, A.1). She has four sons and one daughter; one of her sons, who became handicapped due to brain damage years ago, is living with her and her husband. The courtyard house she has been living in was built around the turn of the twentieth century outside the village wall at that time and sandwiched between the pilgrim path on the west and Shizi Mountain on the east. The courtyard house was built to incorporate the function of a seasonal family hotel, Chengchengchang Hotel, which could host about 300 guests during the peak season. Currently, this house is one of best preserved courtyard houses in Yanxia and is owned by participant C1’s husband and his two brothers, who are currently not living in Yanxia.

Figure A.1: The place of residency of participants C1 and C25. Photo by participant C2.
Participant C2

Participant C2 is a male descendant of the Cheng family who was born in 1939 and grew up in a renowned family with both high social standing and sound financial status. His grandfather built two houses at the end of the historic pilgrim path. The southernmost one, which was on the path, was later replaced by a new-style building that participant C2 has been living in for about two decades (Figure 1.10, A.2). The northernmost one, which was away from the path, is the ancestral hall for his grandfather, which is currently owned by participant C2 and his relatives. Participant C2’s father ran a workshop that produced traditional umbrellas, as well as a store that sold umbrellas and other things to pilgrims. Participant C2 has two uncles; both of them were very educated and had jobs in Beijing and Shanghai. They also collectively owned a Western style house that is on the other side of the historic path from participant C2’s house. Participant C2 claims that he remade the statue of Hugong Dadi and brought it back to Guangci Temple in 1978. He has been running a store and a restaurant at the entrance of Fangyan Mountain since then.

Figure A.2: The place of residency of participant C2. Photo by the author.
Participant C3

Participant C3 was born in 1934 with a different last name. His family used to own a hotel in Yanxia, which was the only one owned by a non-Cheng family. However, the hotel caught fire and burned to the ground. Without the support from the lineage, his family had to struggle to survive. In so doing, his parents transferred him through the practice of *guoji* (a form of adoption, see glossary) to a male descendant of the Cheng family when he was 11. As a benefit of this *guoji*, participant C3, his parents, and his two brothers all moved in with his adoptive father, who then rented a section of Zuoxun Ancestral Hall for his new family (Figure 1.10, A.3). During the Land Reform in the 1950s, that portion of the ancestral hall was given to his family, and another three families also moved into the other section of the ancestral hall. Participant C3 worked as a traveling blacksmith for almost 40 years, from age 15. During this time he only returned to Yanxia around the Chinese New Year and occasionally in June of the Lunar Calendar as well. Meanwhile, his wife raised their four sons inside their share of the ancestral hall, which they shared with his biological brother who had a different last name. All these years of carrying the heavy shoulder-pole made his spine badly curved to one side; one of his legs is crippled because of a work-related injury. All of his sons are currently living in Yanxia and have their own business in either producing or selling metal products. Each of them gives him 1,200 yuan per month to cover his daily expenses.

Figure A.3: The place of residency of participant C3. Photo by participant C3.
Participant C4

Participant C4 is a female descendant of the Cheng family who was born in 1936 and has been living in the same courtyard house since then (Figure 1.10, A.4, A.5). This house was built and shared by her great grandfather and his brother. One quarter of the house was inherited by her. When she was young, she used to live at the second level of the courtyard house. As the youngest daughter of the four, she stayed in Yanxia after her marriage; her husband moved in and became a shangmen nvxu. Participant C4 worked as an elementary school teacher until she retired in 1984. A few years later, she built two additional kitchens outside the courtyard house for each of her sons and divided her property into two. Although her sons legally own her share of the house, she and her husband are the only ones living there and taking care of the place.

Figure A.4: The place of residency of participant C4 and participant C27 (until recent years); the place where participant C36 grew up. Photo by participants C4.
Participant C5

Participant C5 is a young woman born in 1987. Her father (participant C36) grew up in Yanxia and her grandparents (grandmother, participant C4) are living in Yanxia, where she spent quality time in the summer when she was young and which she has been visiting regularly. Participant C5 grew up in Yongkang and spent a few years in the northern part of China with her parents as a teenager. She then attended schools in Hangzhou and studied music performance in college. She came back to Yongkang in 2012 after her father was diagnosed with a severe health issue. Currently, she is teaching guzheng (a classical Chinese instrument with 21 strings) in Yongkang to “rich yet unartistic women who try to use money to repackage themselves.” As a single child, she will inherit one eighth of the courtyard house that she never lived in (Figure 1.10, A.4, A.5).

Figure A.5: The view of the courtyard house from the section in which by her grandparents live. Photo by participant C5.

Participant C6

Participant C6 is a senior male who is not a descendant of the Cheng family. Participant C6 withdrew from this study due to health issues.
**Participant C7**

Participant C7 is a young female descendant of the Cheng family who was born in 1994. Her parents (participants C29 and C30) have been running one of the largest hotels in Yanxia since she was one year old (Figure 1.10, A.6, A.24). When she attended elementary school, she spent most of her evenings at her grandparents’ (grandfather, participant C26) house located in the older section of Yanxia. Although her family’s hotel is a four-story building with 22 guest rooms, she does not have her own room as she has always wanted. She is currently attending college in another city in Zhejiang Province. She used to help her parents in the family business when she was younger through chores, such as doing dishes or laundry. However, she stopped doing that after she started college, because she believes that detergent will damage her skin. She believes that her youth, represented through nicer skin for example, is an asset that she has to protect.

![Figure A.6: The place of residency (building on the right) of participants C7, C29, and C30. Photo by the author.](image-url)

**Participant C8**

Participant C8 is a male descendant of the Cheng family. Participant C8 did not complete the study due to his sudden death.
Participant C9

Participant C9 is a male descendant of the Cheng family who was born in 1936. He is a resident of Chenglu village. Participant C9’s family owns two of the best preserved courtyard houses in Chenglu, which were built adjacent to each other with a shared central north-south axis. The smaller house to the south was built by participant C9’s ancestor five generations ago and later owned by his grandfather, who had two male heirs. His father had four sons, while his uncle died young. His father then transferred him through the practice of guoji to become the heir of his dead uncle, and he was then raised by his grandfather. In 1978 the property was divided. In principle, he was entitled to half of the house, and his three cousins (biological brothers in actuality) were entitled to the other half. However, he only kept one jian (a measure of width, a bay, see glossary) for himself, the place where he was born. He later built a small courtyard house next to the old houses and he has been living there since then (Figure 1.10, A.7).

Participant C9 mainly worked as a blacksmith when he was young and traveled to many provinces in China. In recent decades, he has been an activist in organizing seniors’ activities and kinship affairs. He goes to the ancestral hall, which serves as a seniors’ activity center, every afternoon to play majiang (a Chinese game) with other seniors in the village.

Figure A.7: The place of residency of participant C9. Photo by the author.
**Participant C10**

Participant C10 is a female born in 1951. Although she showed great enthusiasm in participating in the photo-taking phase of the project when the researcher distributed the cameras, she did not take any photographs before the researcher left Yanxia. However, she participated in the interviews. Participant C10 got married when she was 20 and moved in with her husband’s family, who owned one *jian* inside Degeng-Ju. She was one of the first people doing business on the top of Fangyan Mountain after it was reopened to pilgrims and tourists in 1979. She started selling wonton in 1980, while her husband worked in Hangzhou, the capital city of Zhejiang Province. With the money she made selling wonton for 5 years, her family purchase another *jian* inside Degeng-Ju and built a structure in the middle of the second courtyard of Degeng-Ju. She then started selling souvenirs on the top of Fangyan Mountain with rented space from the local government. In 1992, she won, with a bid of 34,666 *yuan*, the use rights of the land located on the new road, where she built her new house, as well as her hotel and restaurant (*Figure 1.10, A.8, A.9*). Currently, she mainly runs the restaurant and only keeps a few rooms for some return guests that she knows. She has two daughters and one son, who both started to help in her wonton business when they were very little. Currently, both of her daughters are in the hospitality business (participant C30 is the older daughter) and her son (participant C38) runs his own business producing small metal products.

![Figure A.8: The place of residency of participants C10, C11, and C38. Photo by the author.](image)
Participant C11

Participant C11 is a male descendant of the Cheng family who was born in 1950; he is the husband of participant C10 (Figure 1.10, A.8, A.9). Participant C11 grew up in a poor family that used to live inside Degeng-Ju. Before he was born, his mother had a few babies that died prematurely. Not expecting that participant C11 would live, his mother did not give him a formal name but only called him by his nickname. But he did live and he never had a formal name. Like most of the males in Yanxia, he worked in another city, Hangzhou, for most of his adult life. Participant C11 did not get to talk to the researcher regarding the photographs he took, because he finished his roll the day before my scheduled departure.

Figure A.9: The place of residency and the family restaurant. Photo by participant C11.
Participant C12

Participant C12 is a male descendant of the Cheng family who was born in 1942. Participant C12 has been living at the same location since he was born, which is in the older and more compact section of Yanxia (Figure 1.10, A.10). The place he grew up, a single jian inside a large house, caught fire in 2004. He rebuilt his section afterwards. Although he had worked different jobs in his earlier life, he became a carpenter in 1963. He was in charge of the construction of the assembly hall, or movie theater, of Yanxia, which was built between 1980 and 1984. He was also in charge of the deconstruction and the rebuilding of the Main Hall of Degeng-Ju. In 1982, he built, for his two sons, a house on an empty lot he acquired at the eastern edge of the village. His older son is currently living there, while his younger son is living and working in Yongkang and only comes back to visit during the weekends. He and his wife sometimes spend the night in this new house, since he believes that, as a carpenter, a house requires people’s presence, and an empty house is more vulnerable to collapse. He worked as one of the interpreters of the Hugong-Future-Telling-Poem between 1991 and 2012, although he is not religious. As a carpenter, he only believes in his own hands.

Figure A.10: The place of residency of participant C12. Photo by participant C12.
Participant C13

Participant C13 is a male descendant of the Cheng family who was born in 1949. His great grandfather opened Chengyuanlong Hotel in the older section of Yanxia, probably in the later part of the nineteenth century (estimated by the fact that his father was born in 1902 and his great grandfather was probably born around the 1850s). He started working at a mine in Yongkang in 1969 and was laid off in 1992. His wife (participant C24) started selling souvenirs on the top of Fangyan Mountain in 1987. In 1999, he and his wife traded their old house with someone else in exchange for the use rights of a lot next to the new road, where they built their new house and new hotel (Figure 1.10, A.11). They continued the family tradition and named their hotel Xinyuanlong Hotel, which has a total of 40 beds. A few years before this dissertation research, he found the old signboard of Chengyuanlong Hotel and hung it in his hotel. It had been used as the flooring in his brother’s house. Currently, he and his wife run the hotel and the restaurant with the help of their daughter-in-law (participant C28). Their son, daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren also live in the same house with them.

Figure A.11: The place of residency of participants C13, C24, and C28. Photo by the author.
Participant C14

Participant C14 is a female born in 1940. She is one of the few people born in Yanxia, who is not part of the Cheng family, because her father is a *shangmen nvxus* who moved to Yanxia to her mother’s family after marriage. Participant C14 quit school at the age of 10 in order to help her mother to take care of the 4 younger sisters and brothers and an older sister who was often sick. She started making and selling paper flowers to the pilgrims when she was in her 30s. During the off seasons, when there were no pilgrimage activities related to *Hugong Dadi*, she used to take the train to other provinces, including Fujian, Jiangxi, and Hunan, to sell the paper flowers. The house she is currently living in was built between 1985 and 1986 away from the pilgrim path (Figure 1.10, A.12). The old house (one *jian* of a three-*jian* house), where she and her husband used to live before 1985, is currently owned by one of his sons, who works in Shanghai and only comes back once a year during the Chinese New Year.

Figure A.12: The place of residency of participant C14. Photo by participant C14.
Participant C15

Participant C15 is a female born in 1941. She is from another village of Yongkang County and moved here in 1959 upon her marriage to a Cheng descendent, who passed away in 2007. Two years after her marriage, she started teaching at a local elementary school, where she taught until she retired in 1996. Participant C14 has been living in the same house since she moved to Yanxia, which was built in 1911 by her husband’s grandfather (Figure 1.10, A.13). She maintained a close relationship with her mother-in-law, who owned half of the courtyard house and ran a store serving the pilgrims with her daughter. However, due to a series of political events and family conflicts, she did not get the rooms that her mother-in-law had planned to give her after her mother-in-law died. She only has the jian that was once shijian (main hall), which she uses as the living room and guest room, and the jian, which was once the kitchen and in which she currently sleeps.

Figure A.13: The place of residency (the once shijian) of participant C15. Photo by participant C15.
Participant C16

Participant C16 is a young man born in 1990. He is the grandson of participant C15 and one of the few male residents of Yanxia who are not the descendants of the Cheng family. He spent the first five years of his life living in the old courtyard house in which his grandmother has been living since her marriage. He then moved to the new-style house built by his parents across the pilgrim path from the old courtyard house (Figure 1.10, A.14). He attended kindergarten and elementary school in Yanxia and middle school and high school in Yongkang. He went to college in Hangzhou, the capital city of Zhejiang Province, and studied business management. He came back home after graduation, as he always had planned, and started to manage his family’s business in manufacturing small metal products. He got married at the end of 2013 and has been temporarily living in Yongkang with his wife and her parents. However, he comes back to his parents’ house in Yanxia almost every day for lunch, which is closer to his company in a nearby town. He intends to move to Yongkang permanently.

Figure A.14: The place of residency (building on the right) of participant C16. Photo by the author.
Participant C17

Participant C17 is a male descendant of the Cheng family who was born in 1963. His great great grandfather, Zhaoye, opened Chengrenchang Hotel in 1882, which later became one of the two largest hotels in Yanxia. The hotel had five buildings and over 250 beds. In 1935, the hotel was divided by the two heirs of Zhaoye and named Xinrenchang Hotel and Laorenchang Hotel. This latter hotel was owned by participant C17’s great grandfather. During the first 30 years after the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, Laorenchang Hotel experienced a series of changes and eventually ceased operation in the 1960s. Meanwhile, the owner of Laorenchang Hotel lost the ownership of most of the building property. In 1980 or 1981, Participant C17’s father built a new three-story building between the historic and new pilgrim paths (Figure 1.10, A.15). It became his new home and the new Renmin Hotel (which means people’s hotel), equipped with 30 beds. Participant C17 started to help with the hotel business from that time. He inherited the hotel business from his father in 2006 or 2007. A few years ago, he changed the name of the hotel back to Laorenchang Hotel (this name was forbidden when his father started the business). As the descendant of this once great hotel, he still follows the business traditions. He personally visits his guests every year before the pilgrim season to ensure their return; he gives local gifts to his guests before they return home.

Figure A.15: The place of residency of participant C17. Photo by participant C17.
Participant C18

Participant C18 is a male descendant of the Cheng family born in 1946. He is the father-in-law of participant C17. Participant C18 has been living at the same location since he was born, which is in the older and more compact section of Yanxia. The place he grew up, a single jian of a large house, caught fire but was rebuilt by all the families living there in 2004 (Figure 1.10, A.16). Participant C18 left Yanxia and joined the military in 1963. He then received a job in Quzhou, another city in Zhejiang Province, after he completed his military duty. His entire family moved to Quzhou in 1990. However, when he retired in 2005, he gave up his residency in Quzhou and moved back to Yanxia with his entire family. He is a cancer survivor and has lived through multiple operations. He appreciates being alive and tries to offer whatever he is capable of giving back to the community. He is currently the volunteer that manages the village library.

Figure A.16: The place of residency (the jian on the very left) of participant C18. Photo by participant C18.
Participant C19

Participant C19 is a male descendant of the Cheng family who was born in 1941. He used to live in one of the most beautiful housing complexes in Yanxia, owned by his ancestor four and five generations prior. This housing complex consists of three independent yet connected courtyards and is surrounded by fields and mountains that were owned by the same family. Participant C19 inherited one jian of the courtyard house in the middle, he later purchased another jian from his brother. Although he tried to take care of the sections he owns, the rest of the house collapsed years ago and made his sections unsafe for habitation. He has been living in the new house he built in 1996 on the site of an old cellar that was outside the complex (Figure 1.10, A.17, A.18). He worked as a tinsmith when he was young and traveled across many provinces in China. Although he does not believe in Hugong Dadi, he worked as one of the interpreters for the Hugong-Fortune-Telling-Poem between 1991 and 2012. Since 1993 or 1994, he started managing a carnival shooting gallery on the top of Nanyan Mountain with his wife.
Participant C20

Participant C20, born in 1952, is the wife of participant C19, who is a member of the Cheng family. Although she is from Yanxia, she is not one of the Cheng descendants. She married participant C19 when she was 17 and started living in the new-style house that she and her husband built in 1996. This house is located across the path from the old courtyard house that his husband’s family owns (Figure 1.10, A.17, A.18). However, she does not know much about the distant history of the Cheng family nor their glorious recent past exemplified through her husband’s immediate family. She is also not familiar with the history of Hugong Dadi, yet she believes in him and worships him every year on the Chinese New Year day.

Figure A.18: The historic courtyard house (the one on the left) that participants C19 and C20 have a share. Photo by the author.
Participant C21

Participant C21 is a female born in 1952, who moved to Yanxia after her marriage in 1971. In the first few years, she and her husband shared a small four- Jian courtyard house in the older section of Yanxia with her mother-in-law and two brothers-in-law and their families. In 1977, she built a new house, adjacent to the old one, with some help from others. At that time, her husband worked in another city and only came back to Yanxia twice a year in June of the Lunar Calendar and around the Chinese New Year. So she had to carry her two-year old daughter on her back while quarrying in the mountain. In 1987, she started selling offering goods on the top of Fangyan Mountain. With the money she made, she built another new style house along the new road and away from her old houses in 1994 (Figure 1.10, A-19). Three year later, she quit her business on the top of Fangyan Mountain and started selling souvenirs at the entrance of Fangyan Mountain with the help of her husband. In the busy seasons, she and her husband stay in a rented room next to her store and only go home occasionally.

Figure A.19: The place of residency of participant C21. Photo by participant C21.
Participant C22

Participant C22 is a male descendant of the Cheng family born in 1976. He grew up in a single-jian of a large house along the historic pilgrim path with 6 siblings. When he was about ten years old, his family built another new-style house close by, which was also located along the historic pilgrim path (Figure 1.10, A.20, A.26). He got married in 2004 to participant C31 and has a seven-year old son. His family has been living in the upper level of the new house, while his mother has been living at the lower level. They still use the old house as a kitchen. He used to work as a volunteer that guards the safety of the village; now he helps his wife in her souvenir store and watches people play poker. Participant C22 was never interviewed, because he refused to talk to the researcher. The camera was given to his wife; however, she was too busy to take photographs and asked him to do so instead. Participant C22 completed the photographs, however he refused to talk to me. His wife helped the researcher to identify the photographs instead.

Figure A.20: The place of residency (the door at the very left and the house in distance on the right) of participants C22 and C31. Photo by the author.
Participant C23

Participant C23 is a male descendant of the Cheng family who was born in 1943. He has been living in a small courtyard house right next to Degeng-Ju for his entire life (Figure 1.10, A.21). Part of this courtyard house was built by his great grandfather, whose two sons divided the entire property into two. Currently, participant C23’s family is sharing the courtyard house with his cousin’s family. Like most males in Yanxia, he worked as a blacksmith between the age of 19 and 47 traveling across China; during that time he came back twice a year. Being too poor to run their own hospitality business, his grandfather and grandmother used to work for the largest hotel in Yanxia during the pilgrim season. For about 15 years after he quit working as a blacksmith, participant C23 and his family used to manage a small convenience store serving local residents. He has two sons, who both live in Yongkang. He purchased two-jian of Degeng-Ju in 1991 from a neighbor who moved away; his sons stay here overnight when they come back to visit.

Figure A.21: The place of residency of participant C23 and also the place where participant C34 grew up. Photo by participant C23.
**Participant C24**

Participant C24 is the wife of participant C13. She was born in 1950 in a village nearby. She started selling souvenirs at the top of Fangyan Mountain in 1987, and later she ran a small restaurant. She sold the name of the restaurant to someone else in 1999. She and her husband then opened a family hotel and restaurant on the new road inside the building they built together (Figure 1.10, A.11). She attends the business every day from dawn to dusk.

**Participant C25**

Participant C25 is a male descendant of the Cheng family who was born in 1938; he is the husband of participant C1. He grew up in the courtyard house built by his grandfather, which was also a seasonal family hotel located on the historic pilgrim path (Figure 1.10, A.1). The hotel was named Chengchengchang Hotel and could host about 300 guests during the peak season. When he was young, participant C25 witnessed the booming years of the hospitality industry, which was between the end of war with Japan in 1945 and the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. He also witnessed all the changes, the decline, and eventually the closing down of the hotel business after 1949. When the Cultural Revolution ended in 1976, he was working at a factory in Yongkang. Therefore, his younger brother reopened Chengchengchang Hotel inside the original courtyard house where the hotel was first opened for business. In 1991, his brother moved the business to a new building on the new road and rename it New Chengchengchang Hotel. Currently, participant C25 and his two brothers own the courtyard house, but only he and his family are living in it and taking care of the building. He retired in 1992.
Participant C26

Participant C26 is a male descendant of the Cheng family who was born in 1936. He has been living in a small courtyard house that was built by his ancestor about 80 years ago when his older brother was born (Figure 1.10, A.22). The courtyard is located in the older section of Yanxia and adjacent to Zuoxun Ancestral Hall. He left Yanxia for a job at the age of 14. He later worked at a factory in Hangzhou until he retired. During these years when he lived and worked in Hangzhou, he had 12 days a year to visit his family back home. His wife brought up their three sons and took care of his mother with the food she acquired from working on the land. He said that his family only had enough to eat after the implementing of the Household Responsibility System by Deng, Xiaoping (former President of China) in the 1980s.

Figure A.22: The place of residency (the backside-view) of participant C26. Photo by participant C7 in collaboration with participant C26.
Participant C27

Participant C27 is a male descendant of the Cheng family who was born in 1919; he is the oldest person living in Yanxia. He grew up in the courtyard house collectively built and shared by his grandfather and his grandfather’s brother (Figure 1.10, A.23). His parent died when he was three years old; his aunt (father’s sister) raised him, his brother, and his two sisters. He finished high school in 1940 and started teaching in the local schools. Although his family did not own much land, they owned more than most residents in Yanxia, and they rented some to others because of labor shortage in the family. As a result, his family was classified as “rich farmers,” and their “extra” land was distributed to other residents. During the political movement in the late 1950s, he was categorized as a “rightist” and forced to leave his teaching position on April 16, 1958, as he clearly recalls. He stayed home and read since then, accompanied by his wife, who also loved to read. He recently moved out of the courtyard house and has been staying with his sons in the new style houses they built close by.

Figure A.23: The courtyard house collectively built and shared by participant C27’s grandfather and his grandfather’s brother. Photo by the author.
Participant C28

Participant C28 is a young woman born in 1985 and the daughter-in-law of participant C13 and C24. She is from a village further into the mountains. She moved to Yanxia upon her marriage when she was 18. She has been living with her parents-in-law and helping the family business since then (Figure 1.10, A.11). She has two daughters, who are nine and five. Her day is simple, and she is satisfied with what she has right now, because Yanxia is a much more developed and convenient place than where she is from. She has much easier access to commodities than she did growing up. When she does not need to cook for guests, she watches TV, which is continuously showing soap operas.

Participant C29

Participant C29 is a male descendant of the Cheng family who was born in 1968. He is the son of participant C26, husband of participant C30, and father of participant C7. He grew up in a small courtyard house located next to Zuoxun Ancestral Hall. When he was 17, he went to Hangzhou and worked as a temporary worker at his father’s factory for about ten years. With the money he made, he came back to Yanxia, got married, and started building his new house, as well as his hotel, on the new road in 1995 (Figure 1.10, A.6, A.24). It took him four years to complete his four-story hotel. The first level is the restaurant; the upper levels have 22 guest rooms and two rooms for his family. As the owner of this hotel, he is also the cook. His wife helps prepare the vegetables and cleans the dishes. During the peak season, they hire one or two women from nearby villages for additional assistance and send their young twins to a weekly boarding nursery.
Participant C30

Participant C30 is a female descendant of the Cheng family who was born in 1972. She is the daughter of participants C10 and C11, the wife of participant C29, and the mother of participant C7. She grew up in Yanxia. She started helping her mother at her wonton stand on the top of Fangyan Mountain when she was 8 and started making wonton 2 years later. After she got married, she and her husband started building their new home, as well as their hotel, along the new road in 1995 and finished it in 1999 (Figure 1.10, A.6, A.24). She has three children: an older girl born in 1994 who is attending college and twins born in 2008. She helps her husband in the restaurant with such chores as preparing vegetables and cleaning dishes; she also manages the hotel rooms. During the peak season, she has to hire one or two women from nearby villages to help her and sends the young twins to a weekly boarding nursery. Even when they are back during the weekend, the young boy always stays at his father’s parents’ house, while the young girl refuses to go and stays home.

Figure A.24: The interior of participants C29 and C30’s restaurant, which is at the first level of their house, as well as the family hotel. Photo by the author.
Participant C31

Participant C31 is the wife of participant C22 and was born in 1976. She is from another village in Yongkang County, which is a little larger and more developed than Yanxia. She moved to Yanxia in 2004 after her marriage. Prior to that she worked as a hairdresser. Since moving to Yanxia, she has been living with her husband’s family in a new-style house on the historic path. She, her husband, and their young son are living in the upper level of the house, while her mother-in-law is living in the lower level (Figure 1.10, A.20). She runs a small souvenir store at the entrance of Fangyan Mountain.

Participant C32

Participant C32 is female who was born in 1970. She has been living in a small house in the older section of Yanxia for over 20 years since her marriage (Figure 1.10, A.25). The main structure of the house has two-jian: one for her, her husband, her 19-year old daughter, and her 13-year old son, and the other one for her mother-in-law. The kitchens, one for her family and one for her mother-in-law, are located in an adjacent one-story detached structure. She and her husband both work in Yongkang. She keeps a good relationship with her mother-in-law, who feeds her family with the vegetables she grows. She also keeps a good relationship with her neighbors; she allows her neighbors free use of the grindstone to make tofu for free.

Figure A.25: The place of residency of participant C32. Photo by the author.
Participant C33

Participant C33 is a male descendant of the Cheng family who was born in 1963. He grew up in an old house situated along the historic pilgrim path (exact location unknown). At the age of 15, he became a tinsmith and started traveling across China to seek employment. With the money he made, he built his own new-style house close to the starting point of the pilgrim path in 2000; he stayed and started working on the land. Currently, his land is abandoned because it has become too expensive to work on the land; he is managing the shrine of Hugong Dadi on the top of Nanyan Mountain.

Participant C34

Participant C34 is a male descendant of the Cheng family who was born in 1973; he is the older son of participant C23. He grew up in the small courtyard house built by his ancestors many generations ago (Figure 1.10, A.21). Like many people in his generation, he started helping his family when he was quite young. He recalls that he started carrying sweet potatoes from the field when he was seven and picking firewood when he was less than nine. He moved to Yongkang around 2002, because his wife worked in Yongkang. However, his daughter stayed in Yanxia for a few additional years while being taken care of by participant C34’s mother. Participant C34 is running his own business in a town between Yanxia and Yongkang; he visits Yanxia a few times a week and still considers the place he grew up as home.
Participant C35

Participant C35 is a female descendant of the Cheng family who was born in 1964. She is the sister of participant C22 and the sister-in-law of participant C31. She grew up in a single-jian house along the historic pilgrim path with 6 siblings (Figure 1.10, A.26). It is a deep room; people slept at the front part of the room, and the kitchen was at the back, where pigs were raised. She moved to the adjacent village located to the south of Yanxia in 1988 upon her marriage. She and her husband have been running a souvenir store inside a rental space at the entrance of Fangyan Mountain since 2001. They come to the store every day around seven in the morning and stay till seven in the evening; they have all three meals there. Her mother also comes to the store every day to see her and chat with her.

Figure A.26: The place participants C22 and C35 grew up. Photo by participant C22.
Participant C36

Participant C36 is a male who was born in 1963. He is the son of participant C4 and the father of participant C5. He used to have Cheng as his last name, since his father was a shangmen nvxu, and so he carried his mother’s last name. His last name was changed to Li, his father’s last name, before he started high school, for political reasons. If he had kept Cheng as his last name, he would have inherited his mother’s social status, which was that of a “small landlord,” and he might have lost the chance to attend high school. Having his father’s last name, he became the descendant of a peasant, who had priority to receive education. Similar to his relationship with the Cheng family, his relationship with Yanxia also had a convoluted path. He grew up in the courtyard house built by his ancestor four generations ago (Figure 1.10, A.4, A.5). In the following decades, the more education he received, the further he move from Yanxia, but never fully left the area. Then he became a painter and later a school teacher in this region. When he was in his twenties, he went to the northern part of China with his family and became a businessman. However, considering their daughter’s future, he and his wife came back to Yongkang and bought an apartment in 1998. In the past ten years, he has been staying during the week in an apartment supplied to him by the school where he teaches and going back to Yongkang to see his family over the weekends. His new apartment is within walking distance of Yanxia, and he used to hike to Fangyan Mountain every morning before he became ill a few years ago. Practicing Chinese calligraphy and reading books, he considers his apartment as his spiritual home.

Participant C37

Participant C37 is a male descendant of the Cheng family who was born in 1963 and is the nephew of participants C10 and C11. He grew up in Yanxia but moved to Yongkang after he finished high school. Although his parents passed away, he still comes back to visit regularly, visiting his uncle and aunt, whom he has been treated like his parents since his parents’ death. Participant C37’s mother is also from Yanxia, so he has another four uncles from his mother’s side of the family. His wife, who is a school teacher that grew up in a nearby town, used to bring their son to Yanxia during summer breaks. Currently, participant C37 works for the city government of Yongkang, and his son is studying in the United States.
Participant C38

Participant C38 is a male descendant of the Cheng family who was born in 1975 and is the son of participants C10 and C11. He grew up in the old house that his parents used to live in and started helping with his mother’s wonton stand when he was only five. He started selling soda at the age of six or seven. He attended the elementary school in Hangzhou with his father and came back to Yanxia for middle school. He started helping in the family business after he graduated from middle school. He has been living in this current house, as well as his family’s hotel, with his parents since he was 17 years old (Figure 1.10, A.8, A.9). He spent a few years doing business in the northern part of China and came back to Yanxia two years ago. Currently, he runs his own factory in a nearby town, where he and his wife, who is from Chenglu, spend most of their time. However, he comes back to his family’s residence in Yanxia for lunch every day and stays there overnight occasionally; he considers this house his home. His daughter, who is only 3 years old, spends most of her time in Yanxia with her grandparents.
APPENDIX B: MAPPING OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS

B.1 Photographs Taken by Participant C23

Participant C23 (M, 70) took 27 photographs. Among these photographs, 11 photographs were taken inside the boundary of the courtyard house he shares with his sister’s family, and 16 photographs were taken outside that courtyard house. These 16 photographs are mapped in the following image in colors. The darker point of each triangle indicates participant C23’s standing point when he took the photograph, while the wider end of the triangle represents the direction of shooting and the depth of field. All the photographs taken by participant C23 are also listed in the order they were taken. A brief title is given to each photograph to identify the content of the photograph.

Figure B.1: Mapping the photographs taken by participant C23. Drawing by the author.
Figure B.2: Degeng-Ju.

Figure B.3: Degeng-Ju.

Figure B.4: Degeng-Ju.

Figure B.5: “This is my old home.”

Figure B.6: Participant C23’s Kitchen, which was built by his grandmother.

Figure B.7: The back wall of the courtyard house.

Figure B.8: The historic path right in front of participant C23’s courtyard house (on the left).

Figure B.9: The stove inside the kitchen.

Figure B.10: The corridor inside Degeng-Ju.

Figure B.11: “The room in which my mother used to live when she was alive.”

Figure B.12: Participant C23’s granddaughter.

Figure B.13: The Family Record.
Participant C23 depended on it to bring goods to Yanxia when he ran the convenient store inside his house.

Participant C23 does laundry and goes fishing there.

Participant C23 and other neighbors use it to make toufu.

People believe that eating its bark can cure diseases. Participant C23 tried it when he was young.

It was where participant C23’s mother kept sewing kit and small pieces of cloth.

Figure B.14: Single-wheel cart.
Figure B.15: Single-wheel cart.
Figure B.16: A neighbor is preparing a special food for the Chinese New Year.

Figure B.17: The pond in front of Degeng-Ju.
Figure B.18: The neighbor’s grind.
Figure B.19: A neighbor’s tree.

Figure B.20: The Chinese New Year family dinner (too dark to see any people).
Figure B.21: The Dragon Dance of 2015.
Figure B.22: The Chinese calligraphy completed by his granddaughter.

Figure B.23: “My mother’s dowry.”

Figure B.24: Fangyan Mountain and Nanyan Mountain (where the tower is located).
Figure B.25: Fangyan Mountain Guangci Temple on the top of the mountain.
B.2 Photographs Taken by Participant C21

Participant C21 (F, 61) took 27 photographs, 26 of which are identifiable. All of these photographs were taken outside the boundary of the new-style house in which she lives and the other two houses she owns or has a share, although some of them were aiming at these properties. These 26 photographs are mapped in the following image in colors. The darker point of each triangle indicates participant C21’s standing point when she took the photograph, while the wider end of the triangle represents the direction of shooting and the depth of field. All the photographs taken by participant C21 are also listed in the order they were taken. A brief title is given to each photograph to identify the content of the photograph.
Figure B.29: Mapping the photographs taken by participant C21. Drawing by the author.
Figure B.30: Participant C21’s store.

Figure B.31: Participant C21’s granddaughter standing inside the room she rent next to her store, where she and her husband live.

Figure B.32: The decorative stone carvings of Degeng-Ju.

Figure B.33: The Main Hall of Degeng-Ju.

Figure B.34: The Side Rooms of Degeng-Ju.

Figure B.35: Participant C21 is posing in front of Degeng-Ju. Photo by another resident under the instruction of participant C21.

Figure B.36: The entrance of the old house, a section of which was inherited by participant C21.

Figure B.37: The old house, a section of which was inherited by participant C21.

Figure B.38: The new-style house participant C21 built in 1977.

Figure B.39: The new-style house participant C21 built in 1977.

Figure B.40: The path that is adjacent to participant C21’s new-style house and leads to Benbao Temple.

Figure B.41: The new-style house participant C21 built in 1977.
Figure B.42: Not identifiable.

Figure B.43: The new-style house participant C21 built in 1977.

Figure B.44: The new-style house participant C21 built in 1977.

Figure B.45: The entrance of the old house, a section of which was inherited by participant C21.

Figure B.46: The pond in front of Degeng-Ju.

Figure B.47: “They are all doing laundry together… I envy them doing laundry together.”

Figure B.48: The daughter of my nominal daughter.

Figure B.49: Participant C21’s store. Photo by another resident under the instruction of participant C21.

Figure B.50: Participant C21’s store. Photo by another resident under the instruction of participant C21.

Figure B.51: The new-style house that belongs to my son.

Figure B.52: My daughter-in-law’s car.

Figure B.53: Participant’s C21’s new-style house (the first bay).
Figure B.54: Participant C21’s new-style house (the bay on the right).

Figure B.55: The new-style house that belongs to participant C21’s son.

Figure B.56: The handrail inside the new-style house belongs to participant C21’s son.
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCRIPTS

C.1 Instruction on Taking Photographs

This is a single-use camera; it can take 27 photographs. I give this camera to you to take photographs of your jia that are meaningful to you. I will come back after the Chinese New Year (February 2015) to retrieve the camera. I will print the photographs and give you a copy of all the photographs. Then I will look at the photographs with you, and you can tell me the stories behind the photographs.

C.2 Semi-Structured Interview Scripts When Reviewing Photographs

Key Questions:

- What were you taking this photograph of?
- Why did you take this photograph?
- What do you think is jia (at the end of the interview)?

Other Questions Embedded in the Conversations:

It is important to note that not all these questions were asked to every participant, nor the questions being asked followed the order listed below. These questions were embedded in the conversations between the researcher and the participants during the seemingly causal discussions on the photographs they took. The photographs were meant to serve as a vehicle to lead the conversations. After the conversations on the photographs were completed, additional questions might be added to acquire additional information that the researcher did not obtain during the conversations on the photographs. In addition, the answers to some of these questions that touch upon basic personal information were obtained before the cameras were distributed as part of the sampling process.

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1 This Chinese sentence was designed grammatically incorrect for reasons; the word 部分 was intentionally left out, in the phrase “有意义的部分,” to avoid the indication that jia, 家, is a physical entity.
Sample Questions Regarding Personal Background

- When were you born?
- Which generation of the Cheng family are you (for males of the Cheng family)?
- Where did you go to school? Did you go to school inside the ancestral halls?
- When did you get married?
- What do you do for living, or what did you do for living (if retired)?
- How often did you come back to Yanxia (for people who used to work in other cities)?
- How many brothers and sisters do you have? What do they do?
- What is your father’s name, grandfather’s name (for males of the Cheng family)? What did they do?
- How many children do you have, where are they?

Sample Questions Regarding Residential History

- How long have you lived in this house?
- Where did you live before?
- Who are living here right now?
- Who built this house, and when?
- Did you hire people to help you when you built this house?
- How was this house divided between the heirs (if the house is share among family members)? When did it happen?
- How are the space inside the house being used?
- How were the space being used (if it was a family hotel)?
- When did you move to the new street, what happened to your old house?

Sample Questions Regarding Daily Activities for Non-Business-Owners

- What do you usually do in the morning, in the afternoon, and in the evening?
- Do you go to the (name of) pond, what do you do there?
- Do you grow vegetables, where is your private plot?
- How often you attend the vegetables?
- What do you grow? What else do you buy?
- Do you cultivate grains? When did you stop?
• Where do you wash your cloth?
• Do you go to other parts of the village, and why?
• Do you talk to your neighbors? What do you do?

Sample Questions Regarding Daily Activities for Business Owners
• When do you open your business on daily basis, when do you close it?
• Where do you eat your meals?
• When did you start doing this business? What did you do at the beginning?
• What kind of guests do you have? Do you know them?
• What kinds of relationship do you have with your guests?
• When is the busiest time? Do you hire helpers?
• Do you talk to your neighbors?
• Was your family involved in the hospitality business before, what did they do?

Sample Questions Regarding Cultural Traditions
• What do you think are the traditions in Yanxia?
• Do you believe in *Hugong*, and why?
• How often do you go to the top of Fangyan Mountain to worship him? How do you worship him? When was the last time?
• Do you watch the Temple Fair?
• Do you go to the top of Fangyan Mountain?
• What do you and your family do around the Chinese New Year?
• Do you participate in the Dragon Dance? How many times did you participate in the past years? When was the last time you did it?
• What is the procedure of Dragon Dance?
• Who financially sponsor the Dragon Dance?
• Did you ever invite the head of the dragon to come to your house? How much money did you put in the *hongbao*?
• Do you know *Hugong Hua*? Where did you learn it?
• Do you still speak *Hugong Hua*? Who do you speak *Hugong Hua* with?
• What do you and your family do during the Qingming Festival?
- Do you attend the ancestral veneration hosted by the Cheng lineage of Yongkang every year?
- Do you and your family go other places to preform ancestral veneration rituals?
- Who provide the financial support for these activities?
- Which ancestors do you worship, and why?
- Do you worship your ancestors on other occasions?
- What was the ancestral veneration ritual in the old days (for senior males)?
- Did your family participate in the hospitality business? What did they do?

Sample Questions Regarding Possible Relocation
- Do you want to move?
- Why do you want to move, or why do you not want to move?
- If you were have to move, will you miss here?
- What would you miss, if you were have to leave, and why?
- What are you going to take with you, if you were have to leave?
- What would you do, if you were have to move to the new settlement (for business owners)?

Additional Questions for Young and Middle-Aged Participants Living outside Yanxia
- When did you leave Yanxia?
- How often do you come back to visit? What do you do when you are back?
- Where is home, and why?
- What are the differences between these two places?
- Where do you like better, and why?

C.3 Semi-Structured Interviews with other Participants

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with other participants who did not participate in the photo-taking phase of the project. These interviews selectively used applicable questions from the semi-structured scripts listed above. In addition, interviews that focused on specific topics were conducted with certain participants. For example, participants C2 and C25 were interviewed for the history and culture of the hospitality business; participants C3, C25, and C27
were interviewed for the ancestral veneration rituals before the Cultural Revolution; participant
C25 was interviewed for the cultural practice and rituals of the Dragon Dance; participant C27
was interviewed for the general history and cultural tradition of Yanxia.