THE SENSE OF CHENGDU:
EMBODIED HERITAGE IN TASTESCAPE

BY
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Master’s Committee:

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Abstract

Chengdu is famous for its Sichuan Cuisine with its unique spicy flavor. From the sources distributed and transported to local restaurants, then prepared, served, and eventually eaten by consumers, food is a significant part of Chengdu’s culture. Eating is not only just about the food itself, but also about where to eat, how to eat, when to eat, whom to eat with. Culinary heritage is proposed to be conserved through the concept of “tastescape”, which is planned as a combination of landscape and culture in which eating becomes a situated event. The design study focuses on the streets in historic neighborhoods in the inner city of Chengdu. The relationship between food, landscape and culture, and tastescape is proposed by combining eating with participating in theaters, local artworks, and cooking.
To My Parents

Thank you for the endless support
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Thanks to Professor M. Elen Deming, who helped me develop my thesis topic in the first stage. Also, many thanks to my parents and friends, without your endless love and support, this thesis would not have been possible.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chengdu

Chengdu is a city with 3200 years of long history, according to findings from Jinsha archaeological site. During Tang Dynasty, Chengdu became one of the biggest four cities. Chengdu was also the center of lacquers and is the birth place of Chinese tea culture. It also was a prosperous commercial area where paper money was first officially used (“Introduction to Chengdu” n.d.). As a historic city, there are many natural and cultural heritage sites in Chengdu. The famous Dujiangyan Irrigation System, which is listed as World Heritage Site by UNESCO, was built in 256 BCE during the Warring States Period. Mountain Resort and its Outlying Temples was listed as the World Cultural Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2000, and Sichuan Giant Panda Sanctuaries - Wolong, Mt Siguniang and Jiajin Mountains were listed as the World Natural Heritage in 2006. And there are more than one hundred kinds of intangible heritage listed as national heritage, which include literature, music, dance, theatres, plays, games, paintings, cooking skills, medicine, and festivals. Most of the heritage sites are well managed and fully conserved (“List of intangible heritage, Chengdu” 2013), but the overlap between tangible and intangible heritage is ignored. This thesis studies the landscape and culture of Sichuan Cuisine and proposes it as tastescape, thereby integrating multiple heritage categories.
1.2 Sichuan Cuisine

Sichuan Cuisine, originated in Ba and Shu (ancient Chengdu area), has a 2000-year history. The early period of Sichuan Cuisine began before the Bronze Age. Before this time, people here had already been able to make potteries to carry food. Then, people also made fine bronze utensils. And there were also plentiful food materials like grain, livestock, vegetables and condiment. Sichuan Cuisine started evolving from 210 BCE. The Dujiangyan Irrigation System was built in 256 BCE, which benefited the development of agriculture in this area. After Qin Shi Huang unified China, people from Central China came to Ba and Shu area and brought advanced cultivating technology. The cooking techniques and dietary habits fused together, and the Cuisine formed a unique spicy flavor.

During Tang (618 CE – 907 CE) and Song Dynasty (960 CE – 1279 CE), Sichuan Cuisine reached its high point of excellence. Due to the stable society and good economic conditions, Sichuan Cuisine developed quickly. Ingredients such as fishes, rice and vegetables were plentiful; and the cooking skills improved a lot. During this period, plenty of different styles of meals like touring meal (eat in natural environment and have tour in the same time, similar to picnic) and boating meal (having meal on moving boats) appeared (Du and Zhang 2014). However, war with Mongolia lasted for 51 years (1228 CE – 1279 CE). The economy and culture of Sichuan were destroyed and Sichuan
Cuisine suffered (“Sichuan Cuisine” n.d.).

Modern Sichuan Cuisine began between 1860 to 1906. Since Sichuan area was far from central China and was not influenced by wars in coastal area, plus new immigrants brought energy to the area, life was good and cultural activities increased. Modern Sichuan Cuisine developed and had formed its own character (Du and Zhang 2014). From 1906 to 1937, modern Sichuan Cuisine had been through its first reinvention period. Actually, modern Sichuan Cuisine has been influenced by immigration and is the mix of various cuisines. From 1938 until now, modern Sichuan cuisine has matured and is in its second reinvention period (Zhang 2012) (Figure 1.1).

Sichuan Cuisine is an important part of Chengdu’s culture. But Sichuan Cuisine is barely acknowledged by public as a form of cultural heritage and the historic neighborhoods as the settings of the culinary heritage are paid little attention either. The neighborhoods have been interrupted by the development of the city; the number of residents in the historic neighborhood is reducing, and some of the neighborhoods are fading away. Moreover, food industry of Sichuan is worth 6,255,300,000 Yuan (Lian and Liu 2010), and data from economic report in 2009 from Chengdu government shows that the food industry has contributed 8% to the whole tourism income (Chengdu Tourism Authority 2010). But there are few tourists who visit the historic neighborhoods for food. All the
facts show that the culinary heritage in historic neighborhoods needs to be paid more attention and conserved.

Though the concept of food as a form of heritage is not that popular among by public, Sichuan Cuisine as a form of cultural heritage is acknowledged by professionals, and cooking methods are considered as the key of conservation (Du and Zhang 2014). But conservation for food mainly focuses on the cooking techniques and that is not enough to conserve the cuisine. The taste of food is not only about the cooking techniques. According to Pollan (2006):

To answer the questions we face about what to eat was to go back to the very beginning. To follow the food chains that sustain us, all the way from the earth to the plate – to a small number of actual meals… a creature that could conceive of eating anything (including, notably, other humans) stands in particular need of ethical rules, manners, and rituals. We are not only what we eat, but how we eat, too. (p.6)

This is also true about how to conserve food heritage. Where the ingredients come from, how to cook, and even when to eat, where to eat, and whom to eat with influence the taste of food. To keep the authenticity and integrity of food, the whole food network from cultivating to consuming needs to be conserved.

Also, food is our daily life. To conserve Sichuan Cuisine as a form of heritage means
engaging all the people to involve in growing, making and eating food. According to Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program, “A collaborative effort to build more locally based, self-reliant food economies – one in which sustainable food production, processing, distribution and consumption is integrated to enhance the economic, environmental and social health of a particular place” (cited from Feenstra 2002, p.100). In 1971, Alice Waters founded Chez Panisse restaurant in Berkeley that uses organic, local and fresh food source to cook, and is considered to be the inspiration of California Cuisine. The philosophy of Chez Panisse is that “the best-tasting food is organically and locally grown and harvested in ways that are ecologically sound by people who are taking care of the land for future generations.” The restaurant today uses locally, organically and sustainably grown materials and the menu changes daily and in different seasons. Also, according to its website, “Since 1971, Chez Panisse has invited diners to partake of the immediacy and excitement of vegetables just out of the garden, fruit right off the branch, and fish straight out of the sea” (“About Chez Restaurant” n.d.). Local farms that grow food, restaurant that make food, and consumers who eat food all come together in Chez Panisse.

1.3 Methodology
The project researches tastescape through ethnographic interviews and mapping to study the food heritage in Chengdu and develop conservation strategy. Interviews and
observations were done to gather information about the city and cuisine, natural environment, food system, eating experience and habits, and streets in historic neighborhood. Elements contributing to tastescape are listed as categories that consist of tastescape (Figure 1.2). Through analyzing the relationship between each category, tastescape is defined by two parts: landscape and culture, and all the elements under these two parts form the tastescape of Chengdu.

The approach to conservation of Sichuan Cuisine is the concept of tastescape as a situated event on the streets in historic neighborhoods. Streets have been the sites for eating for a long time. Through researching the embodied eating experience and assessing food heritage, its conservation through tastescape in the historic neighborhoods in Chengdu is proposed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>About 210 BCE</th>
<th>• The beginning of Sichuan Cuisine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>580s - 1300s</td>
<td>• The high point of excellence of Sichuan Cuisine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1300s - 1860</td>
<td>• The depression of Sichuan Cuisine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>186-1906</td>
<td>• The beginning of modern Sichuan Cuisine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906-1937</td>
<td>• The first reinvention period of Sichuan Cuisine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938 till now</td>
<td>• The maturity of modern Sichuan Cuisine &amp; The second reinvention period of Sichuan Cuisine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1.1 Timeline of Sichuan Cuisine
Figure 1.2 Taxonomy
Figure 1.2 (cont.)
Figure 1.2 (cont.)
2.1 Geography

Chengdu, the capital city of Sichuan Province, is located in the southwest of China. Chengdu has been known as the “abundant land” due to its fertile soil, favorable climate and the famous Dujiangyan Irrigation System. (“Chengdu City” n.d.) The vast Chengdu Plain is located is at the western edge of Sichuan Basin. The vast middle plain of fertile soil is 40.8% of the entire city and has an elevation ranging from 450 meters to 720 meters (“Natural Resource” n.d.). There is the western mountainous area in Chengdu: Longmen Mountain in the northwest and Qionglai Mountains in the west. This area also includes Miao Jiling and Xiling Snow Mountain, whose average elevation exceeds 300 meters. Most of the western mountainous area is covered by forest. In the east of Chengdu is the hilly area stands Longquan Mountain, which has lower elevation and hilly land reaching the middle plain area (“Introduction to Chengdu” n.d.) (Figure 2.1). The rich terrain gives fertile and diverse farmland to the city.

2.2 Climate

Chengdu’s climate is monsoon-influenced humid subtropical with rainfall common in all four seasons, and concentrated in the warmer months (mostly in July and August). In
January, the average 24-hour daily temperature is 5.6 °C and little snow. While in July and August, the average 24-hour daily temperature is about 25 °C, which is cooler than most of the cities in China with similar geography. Chengdu is also known for the lowest annual bright sunshine totals in China, especially in winter months, when most of the days are overcast without rain (“Chengdu City” n.d.).

Chengdu has abundant water resource, with dozens of rivers including Minjiang River system and Tuojiang River system, and Qingyijiang River system is also close to the city (“Introduction to Chengdu” n.d.). The amount of precipitation is also huge; the average annual precipitation is 870.2 mm. The total amount of annual water resource is 304,720,000 m², including 31,580,000 m² underground water and 184,170,000 m² flowing by water. The main water resources of rivers come from rain, subsurface flow and snowmelt, which have great quality with little pollution (“Natural Resource” n.d.). The climate is warm, humid and does not have too much sunshine, which makes Chengdu an ideal area for food growing (Table 2.1).

2.3 Soil

The sedimentary soil in Chengdu contains abundant silt and clay, which is very suitable for cultivating. Chengdu has paddy soil, yellow clay soil, purple alluvial soil and purple soil. Especially, the purple colored soil contains a lot of calcium carbonate, phosphorous and
potassium, and is considered to be fertile soil. Purple Soil in China located in the southern area and mostly in Chengdu Plain (“Introduction to Chengdu” n.d.).

Owing to the favorable climate, terrain and fertile soil, Chengdu has been one of the major agricultural areas in China since ancient time. Chengdu is known as the “Country of Heaven”, which means the “Land of Abundance” (“Chengdu City” n.d.). The natural landscape of Chengdu is suitable for the cultivation of all the main ingredients of Sichuan Cuisine and is the key to its origin and development.

2.4 Agriculture History

Chengdu area had a long agricultural history. According to historic records, Sichuan region was the major agricultural area by 316 BCE Archeologists found paintings of cultivating fields and argillic modes of farming tools, also, millet remains have found from Zhanguo Period (about 400 BCE to 211 BCE) and carbonizing rice from Xihan Period (202 BCE to 8 BCE). Compared to other parts of in China, agricultural development had already developed well in Sichuan area (Zuozuomu 2005). Dujiangyan Irrigation System, which is listed as world heritage site by UNESCO, also contributes to the cultivation in Sichuan area.

Due to the advantageous natural environment and well-developed cultivating skills,
Sichuan Cuisine also originated very early. As one of the most ancient cuisine in China, Sichuan Cuisine originated before 211 BCE (Du and Zhang 2014). Due to the plentiful water resource and huge amount of precipitation, floods were a major issue. Back to third century BCE, there was an irrigation system built in Chengdu aiming at “flood control, irrigation, water transport, and general water consumption”. It was built around 256 BCE, and was renovated during Tang, Song, Yuan, and Ming Dynasty (“Mount Qingcheng and the Dujiangyan Irrigation System” n.d.). The Weir Works consist of three major structure: The Yuzui Bypass Dike (water split), the Feishayan Floodgate (flood spillway and sediment ejection), and the Baopingkou Diversion Passage (water introduction), which provide Chengdu city plenty and stable water supply (Cao 2013). The system is still running nowadays, and is irrigating 668,700 hectares of farmland (“Mount Qingcheng and the Dujiangyan Irrigation System,” n.d.).

2.5 Terroir
Sichuan Cuisine is famous for its unique spicy flavor. The unique taste of Sichuan cuisine comes from the unique ingredients that are cultivated in Chengdu where the local environment affects the products. According to Potteiger (2013), food and landscape are mutually constituted. The local environment, the climate, geography and geology of Chengdu make the ingredients unique.
“Terroir”, originally used by French winemakers to describe the different tastes of wines from different regions, is a French word to describe the unique relationship between taste and all environmental factors of a landscape – the taste of place. According to Trubek (2008), “places make unique tastes, and in turn such flavor characteristics and combinations give those places gastronomic renown.” (p.19) Sichuan Cuisine is the product of local agriculture and adapted to the natural landscape of Chengdu. The main ingredients have been cultivated in Chengdu area for a long period (Table 2.2): chili has been used since 1700s (Du and Zhang 2014), and pepper has been used since the beginning of the second millennium (“Li Shi” n.d.). The ingredients of Sichuan Cuisine have been imparted unique quality by the local environment of Chengdu, the place has been embodied into the taste of the food.

“The taste of place, like food and drink, may end up being a universal phenomenon with very localized stories, practices famed by particular cultural memories, meanings, and myths” (Trubek 2008, p.16) During the development of Sichuan Cuisine, a local, a national and even a worldwide food network was formed (Figure 2.2-2.4). New ingredients were brought into it: chili came from South America; garlic came from Middle Asia; pepper came from South Asia (“Li Shi” n.d.). The ingredients commonly considered as the major ingredients of Sichuan Cuisine originally are not local. But by cultivating, processing, and cooking locally, the Cuisine becomes the local flavor and the
unique taste of the place itself. It also represents the local history and culture. Even in different cities in Sichuan Province, it has different local taste. The taste of Sichuan Cuisine in Chengdu is influenced by the city’s landscape and culture. From the sources to be distributed and transported to local restaurants, then be prepared, served, and eventually consumed by consumers, food becomes the local heritage of Chengdu city.

2.6 Food Source & Land Use Change

Local food sources are always important. Local food differs by climates, soil and even populations and is usually defined by the “distance between production and consumption” (Peters, Bills, Wilkins, & Fick 2008, p.2). Local food is the major food source of Sichuan Cuisine. Sichuan Province as one of the major 13 agricultural regions, has plenty of local food sources. Chengdu Plain area has 70% of agricultural fields in Sichuan Province and 80% of agricultural products are coming from this area (Sichuan Pro vincial Agricultural Department 2014). In the past, agricultural fields were within the city, farmers would carry the products themselves or by carriage to the market and sell them to customers directly. Most of the agricultural fields in Chengdu are now outside of the inner city today. Food from farms is brought to nearby distribution centers and then transported to markets by truck or by train.

Although local food source is sufficient so far, problems have appeared. Chengdu city is
developing fast. Chengdu city has expanded from 115 km$^2$ at the end of 20$^{th}$ century to 498 km$^2$ in 2010. Within 10 years from 2000 to 2010, about 400 km$^2$ agricultural area has been urbanized (Wang et al. 2012) (Figure 2.5). The expansion of the city has threatened the local food source. Recently a strategy dealing with shrinking agricultural fields in Chengdu has been announced: permanent basic agricultural fields have been delimited and approved by Ministry of Land and Resources and Ministry of Agriculture in March 2016 (The Bureau of Land and Resources Chengdu 2016). The plan aims at conserving agricultural fields with high quality and limiting the city’s aggressive expansion (Ye 2016).

2.7 Authenticity

Food sources of Sichuan Cuisine not only come from local farms, but also come from other area in China and even from all over the world. Some major ingredients of Sichuan Cuisine came from other areas historically. Nowadays, pork, beef, mutton, and colza oil are all coming from North America, South America, Europe and Australia. There may be doubt on the authenticity of Sichuan Cuisine when food sources were and are coming from all over the world. How to keep the cuisine authentic? Garlic, chili, and pepper were brought into China since centuries and had been cultivated in Chengdu locally. These are no longer the garlic cultivated in Mid-Asia, chili cultivated in South America and pepper cultivated in South Asia, they have been already localized, became the products of
Chengdu’s own landscape and part of Chengdu’s terroir.

Throughout the development of Sichuan Cuisine, absorbing new materials and ingredients into the cuisine is the way it developed. It does have traditional ingredients inherited such as Ginger and Sichuan Pepper. Also many ingredients were replaced by others over time. Originally, cornel was used to give spicy flavor but instead chili is used; and sugar is used instead of honey to bring sweet flavor to the Cuisine. Also, traditional ingredients like mustard and Cao Guo (Amomum tsaoeki) are barely used in modern Sichuan Cuisine today (“Chuan Cai” 1999) (Table 2.3). All kinds of meat and colza oil coming from outside are not commonly seen in Chengdu today. The modern Sichuan Cuisine is still in its second reinvention period, and will be developing in the future. The Cuisine cannot and should not be frozen.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plant</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Growth Habit</th>
<th>Flavor</th>
<th>History Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chili</td>
<td>May-Oct</td>
<td>At an altitude of 500m-1200m, 600m-800m is the best.</td>
<td>Warm and humid environment, no high temperature and exposure.</td>
<td>Spicy</td>
<td>From 1700s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepper</td>
<td>Oct-April</td>
<td>Gentle slope, or place drains and soaks well.</td>
<td>Tropical and subtropical climate.</td>
<td>Pungent</td>
<td>From 1000s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sichuan Pepper</td>
<td>Aug-Oct</td>
<td>Sunny slope and semi-sunny lower slope.</td>
<td>Warm and humid environment, heliophilous.</td>
<td>Tingle</td>
<td>From 400s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Onion</td>
<td>Feb-Jul</td>
<td>No preference.</td>
<td>Cool environment, no waterlog and exposure.</td>
<td></td>
<td>From 600s B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ginger</td>
<td>April-May</td>
<td>Place drains and soaks well.</td>
<td>Warm environment, no exposure to strong sunlight</td>
<td></td>
<td>From 700s B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garlic</td>
<td>Sep-Oct</td>
<td>Place drains and soaks well.</td>
<td>Cool environment, intolerant of drought</td>
<td></td>
<td>From 200s B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>Apr-Jul</td>
<td>Grows better on paddy soil.</td>
<td>Hot and humid environment.</td>
<td></td>
<td>From 20th century B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jul-Oct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colza</td>
<td>Sep-Nov</td>
<td>No preference.</td>
<td>Not too hot, with sufficient sunlight.</td>
<td>Colza Oil</td>
<td>From 400 B.C.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1 Plants and climate
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredients</th>
<th>History use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chili</td>
<td>From 1700s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepper</td>
<td>From 1000s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sichuan Pepper</td>
<td>From 400s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Onion</td>
<td>From 600 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ginger</td>
<td>From 700 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garlic</td>
<td>From 200 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colza Oil</td>
<td>From 400 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>From 2000 B.C.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2 Historic use of ingredients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ancient common ingredients</th>
<th>Modern common ingredients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ginger</td>
<td>Ginger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sichuan Pepper</td>
<td>Sichuan Pepper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mustard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornel</td>
<td>Chili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amomum tsaoko</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honey</td>
<td>Sugar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.3 Use of ingredients in history
Figure 2.1 Terrain & agricultural fields of Chengdu
Figure 2.2 Global food source

Figure 2.3 Regional food source

22
Figure 2.4 Local food source and transportation network

Figure 2.5 Land use change in Chengdu
NASA 2003
Food as a part of our daily life, is indeed definitely the product of landscape. Climate and terrain of a place make the taste different. Yet, it is also the cultural heritage of different regions, nations, and groups of people. According to Di Giovine and Brulotte (2014), the culinary heritage “varies from place to place, group to group, time to time,” (p.1) it is relevant to both landscape and culture. Especially when it all comes together in the consumption of food, eating is not only about the food itself, but also where to eat, how to eat, when to eat, whom to eat with. Landscape is “at once both structured perception and situated event, a way of perceiving action in place” (Hays & Maschka 2014, p.16). Landscape is created in eating food. Eating is a situated event, and is the tastescape of Chengdu.

3.1 Identity

Belasco (2014) has developed the meaning of terroir into broader meaning: “regard for one’s native landscape, reciprocity between food producers and consumers, and an overall sense of responsibility for the consequence of one’s own behavior.” (p.39) Terroir is not only a landscape-related term, but also a cultural and social concept. According to Mintz and Du Bois (2002), food is relevant to ethnic identity, social organization and rituals. Food is never only about landscape. Di Giovine and Brulotte (2014) consider
culinary heritage is both an individual heritage, and a group heritage on “local, regional, national, and international scales.” (p.2) Mintz and Du Bois (2002, p.109) also agree that “food serves both to solidify group membership and to set groups apart.” Once people understand that cuisine has geographical and historical associations with identity, it enhances their sense of identity. Chengdu residents love their food, they feel proud of it and they bind with each other through it, especially when they are living in other part of China or living abroad.

3.2 Social Event

Eating is a hunger urge, but also a social urge. People always share and eat food together, for gathering, celebrations, business. It is an instrument for people to socialize with each other, this is what makes eating for human a “symbol of our humanity” (Fox 2003, p.1). Eating is the medium of socializing in China (Ma 2011). In the history of traditional Chinese festivals, most were associated with food. In the Lantern Festival, people go out on the streets to join the lantern show, solve puzzles and eat rice dumplings. In the Cold Food Festival, cooking is prohibited and people usually remember ancestors, plant trees, take excursions with family and friends, and eat cold food only. In Dragon Boat Festival, people watch the dragon boat race and eat traditional Chinese rice-pudding to remember Qu Yuan who was a very famous poet and diplomat in 3400 BCE (Gao 2004). Festivals are always important social events in China and always associated with certain kinds of
food. Food becomes the container of memories, meanings and myths. People will also eat together for gathering with friends and families, celebrations, weddings, and business (Figure 3.1-3.4). In China, eating together is a way to communicate with others (Zhao and Zhang 2014). In history, the emperor usually ate with his men to praise their accomplishments (Pei 2008).

3.3 Theater
Eating food usually comes with another experience. The traditional Chinese opera is one of them. The origin of traditional Chinese opera is from religious sacrifice, and then developed into two kind of performance: Guyou performance (musical drama or comedy) and Wushu performance (for sacrifice). Especially, Guyou performance has been performed for the royal family for 800 years, which has laid the foundation for mature Chinese opera in Song Dynasty (960 CE – 1279 CE) (Deng 2002).

Sichuan opera has a long folk history since Song Dynasty (960 CE – 1279 CE), and is widely considered to have been formed in Qing Dynasty (1636 – 1912). Traditional Sichuan opera has more than 2,000 plays. There are five types of singing of Sichuan opera, four of which originally were brought from other areas by immigrants and localized in Sichuan. Among Sichuan opera, there are famous shows such as Bian Lian (face-changing), Ding Deng (carry candle lamp), and Tu Huo (spit fire) (Deng 2002).
Traditional Chinese theater usually is performed outdoors (Figure 3.5). Theater started because of stylized performance. Originally people would perform in the field without stage in agricultural period to celebrate harvest. Then the theater developed into three forms: square-based and courtyard-based outdoor theaters, and hall-based indoor theater. Most of the theaters would be open on three sides and audience would surround the stage.

During Ming Dynasty (1368 CE–1644), operas developed to a high degree, and so did the theater. Originally Golan theater (stage surrounded by carved balustrade) was the dominant style. This kind of theater gradually disappeared. In-temple theater and private theater increased. There was also a new theater style formed: restaurant theater. People would drink and eat in restaurant while watching performance. Also, temporary theater was commonly seen, usually for celebrations and other events (Xue 2009). After Ming and Qing Dynasty, the stage usually left only one side for audience to watch performance, and space became similar to modern theater (Deng 2002) (Figure 3.6).

3.4 Cooking & Eating Traditions

Eating habits such as when to eat, in what order to eat, what kind of utensils to use, are different from place to place. Fingers was no longer used for eating, meal time changed with the evolution of society, and certain cuisines have specific eating order. The eating habits are the reflection of the society. In the ancient period of human’s evolution, people eat raw food and use fingers as the tools. In 1023 CE, the earliest illustration of people
eating with forks appeared (Rudofsky 1980). With time, eating habits changed and new rules appeared about when to eat and how to eat (Fox, 2003). This is also true of the Sichuan Cuisine. Chopsticks as one kind of typical utensil in China have been in use for 4000 years. Though when exactly did it appear and who made it are unknown, but according to historians, the invention of chopsticks is due to the development of primitive agriculture and the ability to cook hot food (Wen n.d.).

Furniture and utensils are made with various materials such as stone, wood, and metal. Bamboo is widely used in Sichuan as it is the major producing area. Bamboo is also considered as very important in the culture of Sichuan because it represents integrity. In Sanxingdui archeological site in 1986, findings show that bamboo was used for buildings. (Wen n.d.) Bamboo is also used for furniture such as chair and table (Feng 2008). Also, bamboo utensils are considered to be more suitable for Sichuan Cuisine (Zhou 2008).

Pixain Douban is an essential sauce of Sichuan Cuisine. Its flavor has close relationship with the natural environment. The climate, soil, water and producing technique are the main factors influencing the taste. Its traditional producing process including exposure, soak, boil, and grind, and wooden tools are used to make Pixian Douban. The process takes about one to one and half years. It was listed in 2008 as the national intangible heritage as traditional technique (“List of Intangible Heritage” n.d.).
According to Wertz (n.d.), Chinese cuisine has special features like desserts (except some fresh fruits and sweet porridge and soup) and cold beverages are not often served. In Chengdu, there is a special meal called “Jiu Da Wan (nice dishes)” held for celebrations. There must be nine dishes served in specific order: Gan pan cai (candy, melon seeds, cigarette, and fried peanut), cold dish, stir fried dish, Xiang Wan (steamed egg and pork mix), Dun Zi (fried cake), Bang (pork shoulder), Shao Bai (steamed pork), chicken, soup (“Si Chuan Ren” n.d.).

3.5 Eating Experience

From the sources to be distributed and transported to local restaurants, then be prepared, served, and eventually eaten, food is a significant part of Chengdu’s culture, especially when it all comes together in the consumption of food. In the older neighborhoods in Chengdu, the unique food-based neighborhood structure has a long history. Streets as the major public spaces in the entire neighborhood have concentrated most of the restaurants, where traditional food is prepared, sold, and eaten. The street is the site for eating. Moreover, the street is not only the site for food; it is also the social place for the whole neighborhood. People gather with family, make friends and discuss business while eating. In the neighborhood, this street is the place where residents gather together and build their social network within the neighborhood. Sichuan Cuisine is the valuable cultural heritage of Chengdu, the food itself is indeed important. However, eating food is never
only about food itself. Street as the site for eating needs to be considered as part of the culinary heritage in Chengdu’s old neighborhoods.

The scale, different space types and the architectural style of street create unique eating experience. All the historical streets have a very human scale, the ratio between the height of buildings and the width of streets is usually between 1:1 to 2:1. The streets also have different kind of spaces for eating: indoor, outdoor (along the street, on the roof, in the garden), and in-between space (under the roof, in the courtyard). Also the roofs, the doors, the screens, the decors have significantly unique pattern inherited from historic Sichuan buildings (Figure 3.7-3.10). Certain colors are preferred as shown in color wheel diagram (Figure 3.11). All these unique and specific elements combined together will create special eating environment. Eating experience is a combination of food, the environment, and other social activities. Tastescape is an event situated on the street. Chinese people also have the tradition to combine eating with other activities. People do business while eating, talk with friends while eating, celebrate festivals while eating, and even watch performance while eating. On these old streets in Chengdu, festival celebrations happened monthly, seasonally and annually. And various kinds of shows and performance such as Sichuan Opera, Face Magic Show, and Gongfu Tea Show are presented every day. But most of them are private shows, not accessible to public.
Figure 3.1 Wen Hui Tu [An outdoor banquet in Song Dynasty].
Figure 3.2 Lu, Z. (n.d.). Yuan Ye Yan Ji Tu [Banquet to celebrate Lantern Festival].

Figure 3.3 Shang Yuan Cai Deng Tu. [Lantern show in Lantern Festival, Ming Dynasty]
Figure 3.4 Shi Er Yue Ling [Dragon boat racing in Dragon Boat Festival].
Figure 3.5 Wang & Yang (1700 CE). Chinese theater in painting “Kang Xi Nan Xun Tu”
Xue 2009

Figure 3.6 Chinese theater in Tianjin
Xue 2009
Figure 3.7 The scale of streets

Figure 3.8 Doors

Figure 3.9 Roofs

Figure 3.10 Screens
Figure 3.11 Dominant colors wheel
Color wheel from Takeshi Ugajin n.d.
4.1 History of Street in China

Street formed spontaneously after buildings, and became the public space between them. (Ding 2012) The traditional public space in China is street, and is different from the traditional western public space – city square (Deng 2006). Cities appeared early back in Shang Dynasty (1600 BCE – 1046 BCE) and in Zhou Dynasty (1046 BCE – 256 BCE), streets began to take shape (Ding 2012). Cities developed quickly during Sui and Tang Dynasty. During this period formed the Li-Fang Unit System (里坊制), which is an axisymmetric urban structure dividing the whole city into square spaces by streets was formed. Fang (坊) was residential area enclosed by walls. Commercial activities could only happen on certain streets within certain area called Shi (市) during daytime due to security need (most of the cities were military fortresses). The capital city of Tang Dynasty – Chang’An (Figure 4.1) represented the cities structured under the Li-Fang Unit System: there were 11 north-south streets and 14 east-west streets that divided the city into more than 100 Shi areas (Liu, Zhou & Chen 2007).

In Song Dynasty, cities functionally turned into business and entertainment centers instead of military fortresses, and the urban structure also changed. There were no more
walls surrounding residential area and no limitations of time and location for commercial activities. There were also no apparent divisions in residential areas and commercial areas, all kinds of stores and restaurants were on the streets, they became commercial spaces and night markets appeared. Instead of Li-Fang Unit System, urban structure turned in to more flexible form – Jie-Xiang (Street-Alley) System (街巷制) (Hao 2015) (Figure 4.2).

Chengdu has also been through a similar evolution process. In 1700s, natural disaster influenced the entire country, regime changed and domestic war happened. Cities in China had suffered huge damage, including Chengdu. The reconstruction of Chengdu after the war, this is also the reason why most of the streets in Chengdu was rebuilt in Qing Dynasty (1636 – 1912). The commercial space in Chengdu used to be near or surrounding temples, while after the reconstruction, it was located mostly on several main streets (Kai 2011, Kai 2009).

4.2 Streets in Chengdu

Street plays an important role in urban life. As the major space for public life, it is the site for trading and gathering. The street generates social and economic space (Halbwachs 1980). According to Urry (2002), “in almost all situations different senses are inter-connected with each other to produce a sensed environment of people and objects distributed across time and space.” (p.146) Eating is an activity not only about taste, but the
combination of all senses of our bodies. The streetscape in the historic neighborhoods is the environmental setting of Sichuan Cuisine in history. The food culture of Chengdu can be promoted by embodied experience from eating in combination with cultural performance.

In Chengdu, several historic commercial streets exist even today (Figure 4.3). Most of them are located within neighborhoods and are the central public space. The streets shape social life but are also shaped by people’s behavior. Especially, the marketing and consuming activities in food system impacts streetscape in Chengdu. Catering is the dominant business on streets, and this kind of food-based neighborhood structure has a long history in the city. Most of the restaurants in the whole neighborhood are located in one street, which is usually in the center of the neighborhood area. Food is prepared, sold, and eaten here. The street is not only the site for food; it is also the social place for the whole neighborhood.

According to Potteiger (2013), food system is the “organization of multiple processes and transformations of food into several primary sectors that cohere around the practices of producing, processing, distributing, marketing, consuming, and disposing of food.” (p.264) Moreover, according to Pothukuchi and Kaufman (as cited in Potteiger 2013, p. 264), “food systems are embedded as constituent parts of other systems of landscapes and
infrastructure, including land use, transportation, housing, water, sanitation, energy, and ecological system…” “food and landscape systems take place and shapes individual spaces… food system sectors also structure more extensive spatial relationships across multiple scales, from the home to the larger patterns of city and countryside” (Potteiger 2013, p.264). Food could also influence the spatial features of all scales of spaces. On the other hand, the built environment as the setting of food will also influence how, when and where food is eaten.

These historic streets mostly are located in the inner city of Chengdu that used to be the oldest district. There are mainly restaurants and retail stores on these streets and catering business is still the dominant activity. Besides Sichuan Cuisine restaurants, restaurants selling other type of cuisine also have appeared in the streets (Figure 4.4). The number of restaurants selling Sichuan Cuisine is decreasing. Some streets like Kuanzhai Street still have residential buildings left, while other streets have totally become commercial streets. Kuanzhai Street and Jinli Street also have theaters on the streets. All these streets are still the central public spaces for the neighborhoods, however, due to the expansion and development of Chengdu city, neighborhoods are shrinking and streets are losing connection with them. Also, many streets lack conservation and management, and have lost their original features (Figure 4.5). Kuanzhai Street is the most well-preserved street and still has many historic buildings left (Figure 4.6-4.7). The architectural features such
as roofs, screens, and patterns are well preserved, Jinli Street is also well-preserved, and belongs to Temple of Marquis historic site. While streets like Jixiang Street (Figure 4.8-4.9), Paotongshu Street (Figure 4.10-4.11) and Xiaotong Street are poorly preserved and do not have many old buildings left. They also have lost most of the architectural features. Originally, buildings were all made of natural materials like wood and stone.
Figure 4.1 Capital city of Tang Dynasty - Chang’an
Figure 4.2 Bianliang-capital city of Song Dynasty

Figure 4.3 Location of Streets
Figure 4.4 Building types on streets
Figure 4.5 Degree of preservation
Figure 4.6-4.7 Kuanzhai Street
n.d. 2012

Figure 4.8-4.9 Jixiang Street

Figure 4.10-4.11 Paotongshu Street
CHAPTER 5
TASTESCAPE

The design study focuses on the streets of historic neighborhoods in the inner city of Chengdu. From the source of food to its consumption, through case studies, I study the relationship between food, landscape and culture, and how eating food, watching shows and performances, and participating in festivals, in different kinds of spaces - indoor, outdoor and in between - and in different times, together become the tastescape of Chengdu.

5.1 Jinli Street

Jinli Street has been an ancient commercial street since 200 BCE and became nationally famous during the Three Kingdoms period (220 BCE – 228 BCE). The name of the street was from the former name of Chengdu. It is the one of the oldest streets in the history of Chengdu and located next to the Temple of Marquis, which is a historic site including ancestral halls, gardens and burial mound and now is a prominent national museum (Wang 2007) (Figure 5.1). The street is about half kilometer long with Qing style buildings along both sides (Figure 5.2-5.3). In October 2004, Jinli Street opened to public after renovation and immediately became one of the most popular streets in China. There are many restaurants and bars selling traditional Sichuan Cuisine, other types of cuisines
and snacks. (“Jinli Street” n.d.) Also, festivals happen here, such as the “Big Temple Fair” during Spring Festival period (“Jinli” n.d.). Jinli Street attracts numerous visitors from all over China and the world.

Jinli Street is a well-preserved site with potential to develop, represent traditions of streetscape and culinary heritage, and attract more tourists. The scale of the street is compact and accessible. It includes various kinds of spaces: indoor spaces, small open squares, gardens, linear spaces along the streets, roofs, and courtyards. Buildings have well defined features of historic Sichuan style (Figure 5.4-5.5). However, even though activities happen on the street, few are programmed. Eating and all other different kinds of experience of festival celebrations, shows, and other performances are still not well combined, organized and managed. The study aims to design events combined with eating. Two sites are chosen, one is the square in the northern end of the street to design an event for Lantern Festival, the other one is the square in front of the theater for Dragon Boat Festival (Figure 5.6).

5.2 Lantern Festival

Lantern Festival is celebrated every year on the 15th day of Zheng Yue (January) in lunar calendar. It started 2000 years ago. At that time, Buddhism was the major religion. Buddhists would hold ceremony on January 15 every year, lighting lanterns to show their
respects to the Buddha. At first, the ceremony would only be held by the royal family, gradually, this became a festival all would celebrate. On this day, people would watch the lantern show on the street, eat rice dumplings, solve puzzles, and perform lion dance and dragon dance. It was also one of the only chances for young ladies to go out on the street, meet and talk with people especially young men freely (Harbert & Wei 2015).

In my proposal, during the festival period, more food carts and outdoor furniture will be added. Installations such as lantern walls will give a strong festival atmosphere. There will be indoor eating spaces in front of the restaurants along the street and also along the waterbody, indoor eating spaces in the restaurants and courtyards and gardens within the restaurants to eat in. There will be rice dumplings served and also areas for visitors to make the rice dumplings themselves. There will also be solving lantern show and puzzle games to win food in the central space of the square where all visitors can engage. Exhibitions and seminars will be held to introduce visitors the history of the festival. The pavilion in the end of the square will become a temporary theater. While eating, there will be lantern themed performance (Figure 5.7-5.8).

5.3 Dragon Boat Festival

Dragon Boat Festival is celebrated on the fifth day of fifth month every lunar year. It is the festival to celebrate a famous poet and ideologist called Qu Yuan who drowned
himself in the river after his country was defeated by another country called Qin. People rowed their boats and tried to find him in the river, which became the origin of the dragon boat race today. To remember him, people throw rice pudding into the river every year wishing the fishes would eat that instead of his body, which is the reason people eat rice pudding on this day (Gao 2004).

In my proposal, during this festival, more food carts and furniture will be provided to accommodate more visitors. There will be various eating spaces along the street, along the water, and open air corridor. Rice pudding will be served to visitors. Since the waterbody is not large enough to hold a dragon boat race, there will be installation such as dragon lanterns or boat sculpture in the water to create the feeling of the race. And operas about Qu Yuan will be performed in the old theater. Temporary stage will be built to extend the performing area into open air, and tables and chairs for audience will surround the stage. Actors will move around easily and also have the access to perform out of the stage within the audience (Figure 5.9-5.10).

5.4 Conclusion

Sichuan Cuisine is valuable cultural heritage of Chengdu. An appropriate way to conserve the culinary heritage is through designing tastescape on the street. Chengdu streets represent the history of cuisine, linking food source, distribution, processing,
preparation, and serving. Enhancing eating experience on the street is conserving the
cuisine itself. Also, the combination of eating and other activities such as festivals,
performance and games in different kinds of spaces at different times, represents food
culture presented on the street. Tastescape is a cultural landscape designed as a situated
event on the street, and a way to conserve the culinary heritage of Chengdu.
Figure 5.1 Jinli Street and Temple of Marquis

Figure 5.2-5.3 Jinli Street
Figure 5.4 Building types on Jinli Street
Figure 5.5 Degree of preservation of Jinli Street
Figure 5.6 Event design on Jinli Street
Figure 5.7-5.8 Event design – Lantern Festival
Figure 5.9-5.10 Event design – Dragon Boat Festival
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