

**The Spatial Formation and Transformation of Chinese  
Rural Clan Settlements:  
A Case Study of Furong and Cangpo Villages  
in Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, China**

Dissertation

zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades

Doktor-Ingenieur (Dr.-Ing.)

an der Fakultät Architektur

der

Bauhaus-Universität Weimar

vorgelegt von

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geboren am 06.04.1977 in Harbin

Weimar, 2012

Gutachter:

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation attempts to describe, analyze and evaluate how the settlement spaces of Chinese clans in rural areas were shaped by local clan lives in ancient times and transformed along with the transition of those clan organizations in modern China. In approaching this subject, two major questions are raised: what was the role of ancient Chinese rural clans in the spatial formation of their settlements and, nowadays, do they still play the same role as before?

To approach these answers, this dissertation sets out to draw on systematically interdisciplinary research from the perspectives of socio-culture and architecture-planning to have an overall understanding of a Chinese clan organization and clan settlement. Then, the basic characteristics of traditional Chinese clans and their importance to the Chinese people are discussed by tracing the history and evolution of Chinese clan organizations in the dissertation.

Two old villages, Furong and Cangpo in now Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, are selected for case study research. And the research reveals that it was the clans that took charge of planning and managing the various construction activities, especially those of communal buildings and facilities, within their own settlements, and the clan lives exerted a decisive impact on shaping the settlement spaces, branding the characteristics of the clan lives clearly and deeply on the spaces. Following that, in the dissertation is described the transformation process of traditional Chinese clans in modern and contemporary China. The clan lives in rural areas have been reshaped and this exerts a great impact on clan settlement spaces. It is shown in the case studies of Furong and Cangpo.

The major findings in this dissertation are as follows:

- a) An ancient Chinese clan was introverted and such a characteristic was faithfully reflected in the settlement space.
- b) The overall spatial layout of a Chinese clan settlement was usually the result of careful planning of the clan.
- c) The spatial structure of a clan settlement's residential area was the projection of the clan's internal structure.

- d) The hierarchy between the dead ancestors and living descendants resulted in a distinct hierarchy between the ancestral hall and the other buildings in the settlement.
- e) Nowadays, most of clan members are accustomed to following the principles formed by traditional clan lives in their construction activities.
- f) There are only communal but no public places or spaces in clan settlements.
- g) Clan settlement spaces have become much more extroverted than before.
- h) The settlements often seem vacant as a large number of young rural people leave their hometowns to seek employment in cities.
- i) The application of new building materials and new building techniques has brought great change to the original appearances of the settlements.
- j) Chinese government is trying to establish a comprehensive regulatory system to regulate the construction activities in rural settlements.

A clan organization can still exert a certain influence on shaping the settlement space now, but the influence is not as strong as in ancient times. Nevertheless, at present stage, it is very hard to definitely predict whether such an influence will be increasingly weakened in the future because the country's laws and codes have not really replaced those written and unwritten clan rules yet. The confrontation between the clan rules and laws has resulted in serious chaos in settlement construction and it will last until the confrontation come to an end.

## **Zusammenfassung**

Die vorliegende Arbeit beschreibt, analysiert und bewertet exemplarisch, wie sich die Siedlungsräume chinesischer Clans in ländlichen Gebieten durch das lokale Clanleben in der Antike geformt, und wie diese Räume sich mit dem Übergang der Clan-Organisationen zum modernen China gewandelt haben. In der Annäherung an dieses Thema werden zwei Hauptfragen aufgeworfen: Welche Rolle haben die alten ländlichen Clans in der räumlichen Gestaltung ihrer Siedlungen gespielt und, zweitens, konnten sie diese Rolle beibehalten oder hat sich diese geändert - und wenn ja, inwiefern?

Um ein umfassendes Verständnis von einer chinesischen Clan Siedlung zu bekommen und sich auf diese Weise den Antworten zu nähern, verwendet die vorliegende Arbeit einen systematischen interdisziplinären Ansatz, der soziale, kulturelle, städtebauliche und raumplanerische Perspektiven integriert. So werden in der Dissertation die grundlegenden Eigenschaften der traditionellen chinesischen Clans und ihre Bedeutung für das chinesische Volk in der Geschichte und Entwicklung der chinesischen Clan-Organisationen diskutiert.

Zwei alte Dörfer aus der Provinz Zhejiang, Furong und Cangpo (jetzt Teil von Wenzhou), wurden für die Forschung als Fallstudie ausgewählt. Die Forschung zeigt, dass die Clans für die Planung und für das Management der verschiedenen Baumaßnahmen in ihren jeweiligen Siedlungen verantwortlich waren, insbesondere für kommunale Gebäude und Einrichtungen. Das Clanleben hat einen entscheidenden Einfluss auf die Gestaltung der Dörfer, indem es sich klar und tief dem Siedlungsraum einprägt. Im Anschluss an die historische Rekonstruktion dieses Einflusses werden Persistenz und Transformation des traditionellen chinesischen Clans im modernen und zeitgenössischen China beschrieben. Das Clanleben in ländlichen Gebieten wird neu gestaltet und auch diese Restrukturierung übt einen großen Einfluss auf Funktion und Gestalt der ländlichen Siedlungsräume aus. Dies wird in den Fallstudien von Furong und Cangpo detailliert nachgewiesen.

Die wichtigsten Ergebnisse in dieser Arbeit sind folgende:

- a) Ein alter chinesischer Clan war sozial introvertiert (gemeinschaftsorientiert) und

dieses Merkmal wurde im Dorf unmittelbar als räumliche Introvertiertheit reflektiert.

- b) Die gesamte räumliche Anordnung einer chinesischen Clansiedlung war in der Regel das Ergebnis sorgfältiger Planung des Clans bzw. ihrer Organisationen.
- c) Die räumliche Struktur einer ländlichen Clansiedlung ist eine Projektion der internen Strukturen des Clans.
- d) Die Hierarchie zwischen den toten Vorfahren und den Nachkommen spiegelt sich in einer deutlichen Hierarchie zwischen dem Ahnensaal und den anderen Gebäuden in der Siedlung.
- e) Bis heute respektieren die meisten Dorfbewohner bei ihrer Bautätigkeit die Prinzipien, die von dem traditionellen Clanleben geformt wurden.
- f) Statt öffentlicher, urbaner Plätze oder Räume gibt es in den Clansiedlungen kommunale bzw. gemeinschaftsorientierte Plätze oder Räume.
- g) Die räumliche Struktur der Clansiedlungen entwickelte sich in der jüngeren Vergangenheit sehr viel extrovertierter als in früheren Zeiten.
- h) Da eine große Anzahl der jungen Landbevölkerung ihre Heimat verlässt, um eine Beschäftigung in der Stadt zu suchen, leiden die Siedlungen unter Leerständen und Schrumpfung.
- i) Die Anwendung neuer Baustoffe und neuer Techniken hat große, teilweise nachteilige Veränderungen im ursprünglichen Aussehen der Siedlungen bewirkt.
- j) Die chinesische Regierung hat daher versucht, ein umfassendes Regulierungssystem zu schaffen, um die Ergebnisse der Bautätigkeit in ländlichen Siedlungen zu verbessern.

Bis jetzt hat die Clan-Organisation immer noch einen gewissen Einfluss auf die Gestaltung der Siedlungsräume, aber der Einfluss ist nicht mehr so stark wie in alten Zeiten. Ob dieser Einfluss in Zukunft weiter geschwächt wird, ist im jetzigen Stadium noch schwer zu sagen, weil die Gesetze des Landes und die modernen Siedlungscodes noch nicht in der Lage sind, jene geschriebenen und ungeschriebenen Regeln des Clans zu ersetzen. Die Konfrontation zwischen den Clan-Regeln und den modernen Gesetzen hat zu einem ernsthaften Chaos im ländlichen Siedlungsbau geführt - und es wird gewiss noch andauern, bis die gegenwärtigen Auseinandersetzung zu Ende gehen.

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# **Introduction**

## **Research Background**

China has always been a nation large in population compared to other countries in the world (Lee/Wang 2001, 6). And the food supply of the whole country depended alone on self-sufficiency instead of foreign trade in ancient times<sup>1</sup>. (Fairbank 1995, 5) Agriculture was so essential to the survival of the country that the peasants were always the majority of the population. It appeared that most people did not live in cities but in rural settlements at that time<sup>2</sup>. Undergoing thousands of years' evolution, a unique and mature farming culture deeply rooted in China. This culture was prominently manifested in the patriarchal clan system which was popularly adopted in Chinese rural society.

The ancient Chinese rural society consisted of numerous clans<sup>3</sup>. The members of a clan were usually residentially concentrated in a certain region from generation to generation and a permanent settlement resulted. Strictly speaking, a rural settlement<sup>4</sup> was not a unit of government in the administrative structure, but a small autonomous region managed by local clan itself (Goode 1964, 62; Zhao, Xiuling 1998, 280). A complex patriarchal clan system was correspondingly established to regulate the operation mode of all aspects in those rural settlements, and gradually became an

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<sup>1</sup> In China, the ancient or traditional society is generally referred to the one before 1911 because the Xinhai Revolution in 1911 is known as the watershed between the old and new historical periods of China. The revolution led to the collapse of the Qing Dynasty, the last dynasty of China, and this was regarded as the end of old social system which had continued for more than two thousand years.

<sup>2</sup> According to the statistics by Cao Shuji, the urban population was 22.72 million, 7.4% of the total population in China, in 1776, and 26.85 million, 7.1% in 1893. The top four provinces which had the highest proportions of urban population were Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Shanxi, and Hubei, at 13.6, 12.5, 10.3, and 10.0% respectively in 1776, and Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Shanxi, and Hubei, at 14.2, 13.7, 9.3, and 8.5% respectively in 1893 (Cao 2001, 828-829).

<sup>3</sup> Clan also emerged as a mode of social organization in many other nations (Maine 2000, 137-140; Fustel de Coulanges 2008, 49-153). However, those people did not link their life with respective clan organizations so long, popularly, and firmly as Chinese did (Weber 1951, 86; Qian 2009, 2). Chinese clan will be discussed in detail in Chapter 1 and 2.

<sup>4</sup> In this dissertation, the term "rural settlement" just means a village.

integral part of the ancient Chinese rural society even though suffered many shocks in violent social transitions. Blood relationship was the bond that firmly united the members of a clan and strengthened their sense of identity and responsibility, and is the original point to understand the Chinese clan organizations and the patriarchal clan system.

The buildings and space in a traditional rural settlement were inevitably branded marks of the patriarchal clan system and relevant social relationships (Li, Xiaofeng 2005, 27). The clan organization generally played an important role in the settlement planning and consequent construction activities by virtue of its great authorities over the inhabitants. Since a residentially concentrated clan could develop independently and steadily for about tens of generations, hundreds of years, it would grow into a mature organic entity with a closely corresponding spatial structure of the settlement.

The traditional Chinese society and its social system have been undergoing a comprehensive reform which focuses on industrialization and urbanization since the establishment of the Republic of China in 1911 and the People's Republic of China in 1949, more particularly since the open policy was implemented in 1978. Many existing cities, such as Beijing or Shanghai, are urbanizing with striking speed (United Nations Centre for Human Settlements 1997, 78-80; Hodder 1996, 239), and meanwhile a great number of rural areas have already been transformed into modern cities. Statistics show that the total number of villages was reduced from 940,617 to 709,257 during the period 1985 to 2001, no more than 17 years, and 25,458 only in 2001 (about 70 a day, on average) (Li, Peilin 2004, 1). However, grain self-sufficiency is still the core of the country's agricultural policy (Jenkins 2004, 261; Centre for Co-operation with Non-members 1999, 17-18). Agriculture and rural population<sup>5</sup> are still playing a decisive role in the economy and society of contemporary China<sup>6</sup>. This

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<sup>5</sup> "Urban population refers to all people residing in cities and towns, while rural population refers to population other than urban population" (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2009).

<sup>6</sup> "China feeds 22 percent of the world's population on 7 percent of the world's agricultural area." (Haggett 2001, 2815)

A large rural population has been transformed into an urban population due to the speeding up of China's urbanization since 1978. The rural population was 503.19 million and accounted for 87.54% of the total in 1952, 790.14 million and 82.08% in 1978, and 721.35 million and 54.32% in 2008 (Department of Population and Employment Statistics of National Bureau of Statistics of China 2009).

determines that the industrialization and urbanization cannot be the only way left before those old rural settlements. The construction and development of rural areas were and are of great significance to China and important issues confronting the government.

A new rural development strategy focusing on the construction of the “new socialist countryside” was outlined in the No.1 Document<sup>7</sup> for 2006, “Several Opinions Concerning Promoting Construction of a New Socialist Countryside”, by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the State Council. Besides, to ensure the country’s food security, it is the main objectives to raise living standards of rural people and to reform the rural society. Speeding up the development of rural infrastructure, such as roads, electricity and water supply, water conservancy, communication, rural schools and clinics, and sanitation systems, is envisaged to achieve the first objective, and deepening institutional reforms, which will include setting up of rural self-governance mechanisms, and development of farmers’ autonomous organizations such as cooperative economic organizations and professional associations, the second objective (CPC Central Committee and the State Council; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development 2007, 72). The No.1 Documents for 2007-10 all continually emphasized the priority of promoting the construction of new socialist countryside. There is no doubt that there will be more policies devised for reforming Chinese rural society in the near future, not in order to urbanize the old rural settlements but to transform them into new ones. This will inevitably lead to conflict between the old social order based on the traditional patriarchal clan system and the new on cotemporary concepts. And the conflict will immediately reflect itself in reshaping the internal spatial structure of rural settlements.

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However, it is often considered to be actually about 900 million now by people or even the government. Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao ever said: “Among the 1.3 billion people, we have in this country about 900 million famers” in the press conference after the closing meeting of the Second Session of the 11th National People's Congress in Beijing on March 13, 2009.

<sup>7</sup> No.1 Document is the first policy directive of the year issued jointly by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council. It is an important keynote for the forthcoming year and gives policy suggestions for the National People's Congress (NPC). The documents for the seven consecutive years of 2004-10 focused on rural and agricultural issues (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development 2007, 71-72; 2009, 102, 128).

Old Chinese rural settlements actually have already been significantly changed under external shocks of contemporary technology and social value since 1911, the foundation of the Republic of China, especially since 1949, the foundation of the People's Republic of China. Brick was so cheap and easily obtained that in tens of years it popularly replaced wood which had been used for building for more than two thousand of years. This changed the appearance of new rural housing absolutely. Compared with this, new social system had much more far-reaching consequences in the lives of rural people. People do not depend upon blood relationship anymore which was the very cornerstone of the patriarchal clan system to determine social relations. Clan organizations consequently lose their original authority. A clan head could determine a building's construction in the past but this power is handed over to the county land bureau and planning bureau now.

New technologies are often easily accepted and adopted by people since their benefits are usually obvious and can be manifested quickly, but new social value and system cannot be so lucky. Although the patriarchal clan system had already been seriously disrupted during the various political campaigns launched by the CPC, it was latent in the interpersonal relationship and even became alive again from the early of 1980s (Jü 1996, 74-75). It is too early to say that the patriarchal clan system or ideas will be swept into the dustbin of history soon.

A large number of new houses are constructed with no planning, no professional design, and even no official approval in rural settlements now. In fact there are specific building codes dealing with almost every aspect of planning, design, and construction, and governing agencies to regulate construction activities. However, all of them do not work well in rural settlements because what behind the construction activities is usually the acquiescence or support of local residents who have close blood relationship with the people concerned. Does the patriarchal clan system or ideas still have great influence on shaping of the spatial structure of rural settlements? This is the very question which will be answered by this dissertation.

It is the main hypothesis of this research that the traditional clan organizations existing in China's old rural settlements have been seriously disrupted by strong shocks from the changing external economic, social, and political circumstances and lost their original, nearly absolute authority over the construction activities of local

residents, however, the patriarchal clan ideas latent in rural people's minds still play an important role in controlling those people's building behavior and shaping the internal spatial structure of the old rural settlements.

## **Research Objectives**

This thesis concerns itself with study on the characteristics of buildings and spaces in Chinese traditional rural clan settlements and the influence of the patriarchal clan system on buildings and spaces there before and now. It is necessary to list the research objectives here to make its framework clear. They are as follows:

- (a) To outline a profile of the typical traditional Chinese rural clan including its definition, concept, and internal organization in the context of the patriarchal clan system.
- (b) To review the development history (before 1911) of Chinese clan organizations and relevant patriarchal clan systems to summarize the main characteristics of traditional Chinese patriarchal clan and laws of its development.
- (c) To analyze the crucial impact of clan authority on construction activities in Chinese rural settlements in ancient times.
- (d) To review the death and life of rural clan organizations and patriarchal clan ideas during China's tremendous social transition (from 1911 until now) to demonstrate and evaluate their influence upon construction activities in contemporary Chinese rural settlements.

## **Methods**

Data utilized in this dissertation are from both primary and secondary sources.

The secondary sources include books, journals, dissertations, and official documents which were collected from libraries, Internet, institutions, and other channels. Specifically, they were mainly accessed through the University of Erfurt Library, the National Library of China, the Inter Library Loan (ILL) provided by the library of the Bauhaus University Weimar, and the digital libraries of <http://eng.cnki.net/grid2008/index.htm> and <http://www.ssreader.com/>.

An interdisciplinary approach is used for the selection of literatures closely relevant to this research from three major domains: the development history of the Chinese clan and the patriarchal clan system, their socio-cultural impacts on rural society, and the architecture-planning activities in traditional rural settlements. The viewpoints from these literatures are not conclusive for this research, but helpful for giving a profile of the Chinese clan organizations and understanding their crucial role played in the rural society.

The primary sources were obtained through the author's field surveys of two representative traditional Chinese rural settlements. The field surveys, as a popular form of empirical research, were carried out in 2007 and 2010. The author lived personally in the carefully selected rural settlements to observe local practical life at a close distance. A large number of pictures of constructions and spaces were taken to help verify the research findings and some interviews were conducted with local residents, government officials, and scholars who provided much important information for this thesis.

## Literature Review

Research on the traditional Chinese clan organizations and the patriarchal clan system started from the beginning of the twentieth century when China was undergoing a social revolution and there was a very sharp debate over the traditional Chinese culture and society. Edward Jenks (2009, 4) divided the development of human society into three stages: the savage, the patriarchal, and the military (political). Chinese translator Yan Fu (1981, IX-X) introduced this book into China in 1904 and equated then Chinese society with the "patriarchal society" which should be inevitably replaced by the "military (political) society" according to the theory of Jenks. Therefore, the patriarchal clan system was widely viewed as representative of backward civilization by Chinese scholars (Mizoguchi 1996, 29-30).

The critique of the Chinese traditional culture and system was one-sided for a long time. Both leftist and rightist scholars took a position of total repudiation toward the patriarchal clan system (Liu, Fangtong 2004, 254-256). Hu Shi (1998), one of the

representative figures of the rightists, strongly advocated Westernization. Those of the leftists, especially Marxists such as Li Dazhao (2006), Chen Duxiu (1993), and Qū Qiubai (1985) hit hard at the patriarchal clan system. Mao Zedong criticized: “These four authorities—political, clan, religious and masculine—are the embodiment of the whole feudal-patriarchal system and ideology, and are the four thick ropes binding the Chinese people, particularly the peasants.” (Mao 1965, Vol.1 44) The Chinese patriarchal clan system was firmly labeled as a production of corrupt and decayed culture by then people.

Later than above people, some historians began the study of the history of the traditional Chinese patriarchal clan system. Lü Simian (1985) discussed several basic concepts of the system and its main content in different historical periods of development. Tao Xisheng (1934) analyzed the traditional marriage relationship, status of various members under the patriarchal clan system, and the development process of large family system from its formation to decline. Many other scholars published the results of their specialized studies on the patriarchal clan system in academic journals. Meanwhile, sociologists and anthropologists conducted empirical research on traditional Chinese rural settlements. One of the earliest scholars was American sociologist Daniel Harrison Kulp II (1925, xiv) who stressed that if someone wanted to really understand rural people's lives, he had better go deep into their settlements rather than depended on abstract data. His opinion was widely adopted by the others who engaged in the study of Han society (Zhou, Daming 2004). Two other scholars deserving to be mentioned here were Lin Yaohua and Fei Hsiao-tung. Lin (2000) analyzed the social functions of Chinese clan organizations, the interlocking structure between family and clan, and the kinship interaction in rural society. Fei (2008, XVII) “limits himself to the fundamental aspects of peasant life in China” to demonstrate “the exploitation of the soil, and the reproductive processes within the household and the family”.

During 1950-70s, the early years of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the patriarchal clan culture was regarded as decadent one opposed to socialism and completely negated by then Chinese political forces so that related research published in China often had a strong political orientation under irresistible pressure, particularly during the Cultural Revolution (1967-77). However, foreign scholars

obtained many significant findings. The most famous one was Freedman (1970) who explored the internal structure and functions of Chinese clan organization, and the relations between clans and between clan and country.

As the Chinese central government decided not to indulge in ideological struggle anymore from 1978, scholarly research on the traditional Chinese clan culture gradually became active again in China. Several important books on the development history of Chinese clan were published. Feng Erkang (2009, 20-24) divided the development of the Chinese patriarchal clan system into five stages: the typical patriarchal clan system before the Qin Dynasty, the patriarchal clan system of literati clan from the Qin to Tang Dynasties, of bureaucrat clan from the Song to Yuan Dynasties, of gentry clan from the Ming to Qing Dynasties, and contemporary variant. Many others focused on the patriarchal clan societies of various specific historical periods from the Shang to Qing Dynasties. Zhu Fenghan (2004), Li Qing (2005), Yan Aimin (2005), Xing Tie (2005), Chang Jianhua (2005), and Feng Erkang (2005) deeply analyzed, respectively, the internal organization and external functions of family/clan, relations among family, clan and country, and characteristics of the patriarchal clan system of each Chinese dynasty. Their research is very helpful for comprehension of the Chinese patriarchal clan culture, system and society.

Although the clan organizations nearly disappeared in rural areas because of the intense political campaigns during 1950-70s, they quietly and popularly revived since 1980s. This phenomenon attracts the attention of scholars and even the government. The scholars have done much to explain it and evaluate its current and potential impact on Chinese rural society. There are roughly two opposite views among them.

Some scholars considered the resurrection of the patriarchal clan ideas a dangerous restoration of backward thinking and a serious threat to the contemporary rural society and social system. Wang Huning (1991) carefully analyzed the reasons for the resurrection of clan activities and gave a conclusion that the clan organizations and patriarchal clan ideas would inevitably vanish, but this process would be very long. Xiao Tangbiao (2001 (9)) pointed out that the clan organizations rely on clan power, not law, to deal with interpersonal relationship and their negative impacts on the rural society were far greater than the positive. Lü Hongping (2001) also pointed out that the power of clan organizations often seriously interfered with the normal process of

village affairs, especially village election, and strict measures must be taken to curb the increasing clan forces. However, some other scholars to some extent held positive attitudes toward the rural clans. Qian Hang and Xie Weiyang (1995) thought that the rural clan organizations could give local people the sense of history, belonging, morality, and responsibility. Wang Ying (1996) and Wang Mingming (1997) described the interaction between family/clan and government to show the beneficial influence of the traditional patriarchal clan ideas on maintaining the rural social order. Actually clan activities are increasingly common in now China's rural areas and scholars have to accept that clan activities would exist for a long time. Those who believe that patriarchal clan ideas are obstacles to social development seem to have given up looking for a fast, effective way to simply get rid of them, but try to control and utilize them for rural governance.

Besides focusing on the Chinese patriarchal clans, many scholars, mostly architectural theorists, are more and more interested in studying Chinese rural settlements. What firstly attracted them were the remaining traditional buildings in those settlements. Long Qingzhong, Liu Dunzhen and Liu Zhiping conducted a lot of field studies during the 1930-40s. In the 1960s, attention was still mainly focused on the design and construction technology of those buildings as before. Afterwards, Liu Dunzhen (1980) comprehensively described the characteristics of the traditional residences in different rural areas.

It was during the 1980-90s that sociology was introduced into the field of architecture and planning. Chen Zhihua and Lou Qingxi led a number of colleagues from Tsinghua University to investigate tens of rural settlements in the Nanxi River basin, Zhejiang province in 1990-91. They analyzed not only the buildings but also the local society. Their subsequent studies explored the impact of the local existing patriarchal clan system and culture on the internal spatial structures of those settlements (Chen, Zhihua 2002). There are many similar studies done in other existing traditional rural areas. However, most of such studies are actually focused on exploring the architectural, historical, and cultural values of the old buildings or settlements in order to absorb the attention of local authorities to preserve and protect those buildings and settlements from being damaged by careless, irresponsible construction activities, or record the precious historical and cultural information

contained in those old buildings and settlements as much as possible before they disappear along with the large-scale construction in rural areas, facing the reality that numerous valuable traditional Chinese vernacular buildings and settlements have already been and seem to continue to be replaced by modern-style ones. As for local clan organizations, consequently, the scholars are mainly interested in their history rather than their present. There has been a lot of research carried out on what a crucial role the clan organizations played in the old-time rural settlement construction. But, little has been done to explore what kind of role they are playing in current rural construction activities, especially in the context of social transition of contemporary China. This dissertation is to do something for filling this gap.

Two typical Chinese clans are selected for case study in this dissertation and this dissertation not only explores their important role in building and maintaining their respective settlements in history, but also describes and evaluates their status and influence in current construction activities within their own settlements.

## **Objects Selected for Case Study**

The two traditional Chinese rural settlements, Cangpo and Furong, selected for case study, are in the middle reaches of the Nanxi River in Yongjia County, Wenzhou City, Zhejiang Province, China, and both under the administration of Yantou Town located in the middle north of the Yongjia County.

Furong Village covers an area of about 0.143 km<sup>2</sup> (not including the arable land) and there are 574 families in the settlement with a population of 3000. This settlement was originally built in the end of the Tang Dynasty about 1200 years ago, and most of the residents there have a common family name, Chen. Cangpo Village covers about 0.094 km<sup>2</sup> (not including the arable land) and there are 492 families with a population of 1968. It was established in the late of the Five Dynasties period about 1000 years ago, and most of the residents have a common family name, Li.

These settlements are selected as research objects in this dissertation firstly because they both established mature clan organizations based on the patriarchal clan system during their long history. Although the original clan organizations there

have been dismantled formally, the patriarchal clan relations left obvious marks on local social life and still have an important influence upon the local people's thinking and behavior.

Secondly, they both belong to Wenzhou City, of which the economy is the most vigorous in present-day China. It can be said that they suffered the shocks of modernization much stronger than other areas in China. The resurrection of patriarchal clan activities in these two settlements deserves more attention. Meanwhile, the social contradictions between the new social system and the old patriarchal clan ideas as well as the corresponding consequences reflected in the space are more prominent and easily to be observed.

Thirdly, as mentioned above, Chen Zhihua and Lou Qingxi have done many surveys in these regions and laid a solid foundation for further studies. And finally, these areas have already been out of original closed state because of vigorous economy. There is a convenient short-distance transport network helpful for field surveys.



# 1. Basic Concepts about Chinese Clan

## 1.1 Definitions of Chinese Clan, Patriarchal Clan System, and Rural Settlement

### 1.1.1 Chinese Clan

A Chinese clan (Chinese: 宗族; Pinyin: zong zu)<sup>8</sup> is a social group composed of patrilineal families, which are defined by the descent from a common ancestor and residentially concentrated under certain rules (Feng, Erkang 1994, 7-10). This is a contemporary definition. Chinese people in fact defined and discussed “clan” a long time ago.

Clan organizations were already popularly formed in China as early as Xia Dynasty (2070-1600 BC) (Li, Xueqin 2004, 379-380). However, the word “宗族” did not appear in literatures until the Spring and Autumn Period (772-481 BC), and the meaning of “宗族” was gradually fixed in the Qin (221-206 BC) and Han Dynasties (206 BC-220 AD) (Guo, Zhengkai 1993).

Ban Gu (32-92 AD) gave a classic definition to “宗族” in his book “Bai Hu Tong”: What is “宗”? “宗”, with an extended meaning of “respect”, refers to the apical ancestor who should be respected by the descendants. What is “族”? It refers to “assemblage”, i.e. the members of a descent group up to the great-great-grandfather and down to the great-great-grandson. ...These people abide by certain rules to get along well with

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<sup>8</sup> Maurice Freedman (1970) translated Chinese “宗族” into “lineage”, and this translation has been generally accepted by other scholars until now. However, the meanings of these two terms actually are not consistent with each other completely. “Lineage” is a concept created by social anthropologists who studied African examples to refer to the kin group based upon unilineal descent, either patrilineal or matrilineal (Nakane 1989, 37). Although “宗族” is also typical with unilineality, it cannot be matrilineal but only patrilineal. Additionally, “宗族” represents a Chinese specific social organization, not like “lineage” which represents a social model designed for analysis (Qian 2001, 52). Many scholars would rather use “clan” than “lineage” or “Chinese lineage” (Watson 1975) to translate “宗族” (Qian 2009, 9-11). In many literatures, “家族” (family; Pinyin: jia zu) is frequently used with the same meaning as “宗族”.

each other and thus could be called “族” (Chen, Li 1994, 393, 397). This definition has much information helpful to understanding Chinese clan: 1) the members of a clan share a common ancestor; 2) they should respect the common ancestor; 3) they should live together in peace and harmony; 4) there is a specific scope of kinship; and 5) there are some rules of organization<sup>9</sup>. (Qian 1995 (3))

### **1.1.2 Patriarchal Clan System**

Both the contemporary and ancient definitions stress the existence of rules in the Chinese patriarchal clan. This set of rules is named “宗族制度” (Pinyin: zong zu zhi du), translated into English “patriarchal clan system”. It generally refers to the norms including not only written regulations, but also various unwritten customs, manners, tradition, or anything else for maintenance and control of the clan social order (Cheng, Weirong 2008, 3).

A Chinese clan is more than a naturally formed group based on blood relationship. The blood relationship is only a prerequisite for the formation of a clan. The people's organizational activities under the patriarchal clan system are the decisive condition (Feng, Erkang 1997, 2-3). That is to say, it is the patriarchal clan system as well as related ideas that make a kinship group become a clan organization.

### **1.1.3 Rural Settlement**

The word “settlement” has a meaning of “a small village or community, usually in a rural area” (Davies/Jokiniemi 2008, 339) and is often used to translate the Chinese word “聚落” (Pinyin: jù luo) which appeared as early as the Han Dynasty. According to “Gou Xü Zhi” (Treatise on Rivers and Canals) of “Book of Han” (finished in 111 AD), if a place is safe and thus several families build houses to live there, it can be seen as a “聚” (Ban 1962, 1692). In “Wu Di Ben Ji” (Annals of the five emperors) of “Shiji” (Records of the Grand Historian)<sup>10</sup>, there is a description which can be literally translated into English as follows: The area where people settled for one year became

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<sup>9</sup> In Ban Gu's definition, it was not mentioned whether the clans were patriarchal or not because it went without saying that the clans were patriarchal at that time.

<sup>10</sup> Shiji, written from 109 BC to 91 BC, is the first systematic Chinese history book.

a “聚”, for two years a “邑” (Pinyin: yi; English: town), and for three years a “都” (Pinyin: du; English: city) (Sima 1959, 34). The years mentioned above are not the actual time required, but describe the difference in scale among “聚”, “邑”, and “都”. “聚” refers to a residential area smaller than a town. “Guang Ya” (a Chinese dictionary compiled in the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century) defines “落” as a rural residential area (Wang, Niansun 1983, 51). Then “聚落” is a rural residential area smaller than a town and has nearly the same meaning with the word “村落” (Pinyin: cun luo; English: village) which appeared later than the former in Chinese language.

“Settlement” is also a general term for all kinds of human residential areas such as villages, towns, and cities (Chen, Yong/Chen 2002), and even includes social activities and relations in them. A settlement is not only a spatial unit but also a complex of politics, economy, culture, etc (Yü, Ying/Lu 1996).

In this dissertation, “rural settlement” is used in accordance with the original meaning of Chinese “聚落” and the “settlement” has the same meaning with “rural settlement” when it is used for convenience.

It is one of the important characteristics of the Chinese clan that the members of a clan are always residentially concentrated in their own settlement from generation to generation. A Chinese clan is a perfect integration of blood and geographical relations (Feng, Erkang 1996, 7-8; Mai 2001) which is also a key feature to distinguish a clan from a big family (Wang, Shuobai/Chen 2004). This will be discussed deeply in Chapter 2.

## **1.2 Basic Elements of Traditional Chinese Clan under the Patriarchal Clan System**

As an organized group, a traditional Chinese clan had a mature patriarchal clan system which ensured the maintenance of its internal order. This was reflected in the establishment of various management positions, organizations, rules, etc.

### **1.2.1 Clan Head**

A clan usually had one leader generally known as “clan head”(族长, Pinyin: zu zhang), sometimes as zong zhang (宗长), zong zheng (宗正), or zu zheng (族正). Since there were usually too many affairs to be dealt with by the clan head alone in a large clan, a small group composed of zu fu (族副), zong li (宗理), zong xiang (宗相), and ping shi (评事) would be constituted to assist the clan head (Fei, Chengkang 2002, 73).

The management right of a clan was mainly concentrated in the clan head who exercised authority on behalf of the departed ancestors as follows:

1) The clan head took charge of the ancestral hall and presided at sacrificial activities. 2) He handled all kinds of internal affairs of the clan, for example, management of the clan's common property, mediation of disputes among the clan members, and even signature of contracts as a notary or arbitrator (Cheng, Weirong 2008, 34-35). 3) He was responsible for preaching the clan rules to the clan members and exhorting them to abide by the rules. 4) He was also responsible for enforcing the rules. He could intervene in any misbehavior and gather people in the ancestral hall to execute punishments on those who violated the rules. He actually had jurisdiction within the clan (ibid; Qü, Tongzu 2003, 24-25). And 5) he was fully authorized to represent the whole clan to deal with other clans as well as the local government.

A clan head was elected by the clan members (in fact usually by respected elders of the clan). Since he had to face heavy workloads, his abilities and reputation were more important than his generational position or age. Once becoming a clan head, the person could hold this position for his life unless he was generally considered incompetent.

### **1.2.2 Fang and Fang Head**

In Chinese, “Fang” (房) had a meaning of “branch” and was used as a specific concept of clan. “The several branches of a Chinese clan of any size are designated individually as Fang. ...Fang has no definite boundary and the term refers to any large or small branch of a Tsu (clan) at any particular point of time. At the time of the division

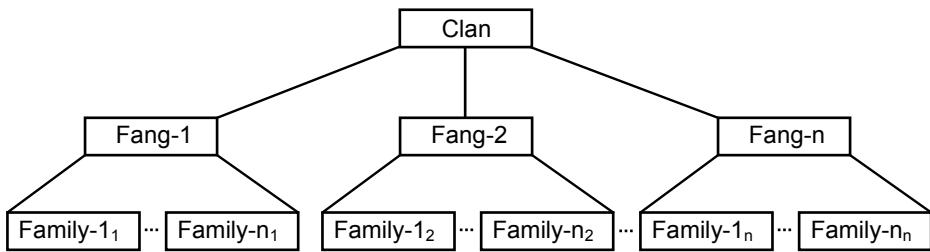


Figure 1-1: The Structure of a Traditional Chinese Clan

of the family, three sons, each with their wives and unmarried children, may be referred to as three Fang. On the other hand, a branch of a clan including several generations of departed ancestors and several generations of living may also be referred to as a Fang with reference to the entire clan.” (Hsu 1963, 63, 65)

Family division could simplify the relationships among sons to resolve the conflict accumulated during their long-time living under the same roof (Qian 2009, 48). When sons of a Fang grew up, they could separate into new Fangs through another family division. However, “Fang” more usually refers to a branch of a clan including several generations as a category between “clan” and “family” especially in this dissertation (Fig. 1-1). If a Fang was large enough, it could separate from the clan and became a new clan elsewhere. A clan could develop into several ones in this way.

Each Fang had a leader called “房长” (Fang head; Pinyin: fang zhang) or “房头” (fang tou) who was always the most respected elder of the Fang and responsible for dealing with the daily affairs of his Fang. Although the clan head was of higher status than the Fang heads, he had to depend on them since they even had the right to impeach him. In a large clan, the clan head usually had just the nominal absolute authority, while the Fang heads had the actual power (*ibid.* 51).

### 1.2.3 Family and Family Head

Family was the smallest social unit in ancient China as John K. Fairbank (1983, 21) ever commented: “The Chinese family has been a microcosm, the state in miniature. The family, not the individual, was formerly the social unit and the responsible element in the political life of its locality”. Family members “possess common property, keep a common budget and co-operate together to pursue a common living through division of labor. It is also in this group that children are born

and brought up and material objects, knowledge, and social positions are inherited". (Fei, Hsiao-tung 2008, 27)

The scale of an ancient Chinese family was very flexible. Many families expanded to a very large scale in history, for example, there was a person named Qiu Chengxun whose family had developed for nineteen generations without any division (Tuo Tuo 1977, 13400). Such families signified the highly stable relations among their members and were ideal models in the ancient Chinese family culture. However, most of families were nuclear and stem ones at that time. The size of a family was "maintained by the balance of the opposing forces working for integration on the one hand and for disintegration on the other." (Fei, Hsiao-tung 2008, 28) There were many reasons for the former. A Chinese family "emphasizes the inter-dependence of parents and children. It gives security to the old who are no longer able to work. It tends to ensure social continuity and co-operation among the members." (ibid) It was the most important that families usually did not have enough property to be equally distributed among sons. Chinese people in fact inclined to divide their large families into small ones as long as conditions permit (Wang, Huning 1991, 22). Large families would easily develop into clans each of which might have a population of several thousands. What constituted a clan were mainly nuclear and stem families rather than extended ones (Qian 2009, 44).

A family had a family head (家长; Pinyin: jia zhang) who made final decisions on his family affairs. Only when there was something he could not deal with, could the clan or Fang head intervene. The family head was always the oldest person in the family and women could not act as it in theory<sup>11</sup>. Therefore, the father would be the family head in a nuclear family and the grandfather in a stem one. All other family members, such as wife, sons, daughters<sup>12</sup> etc, should obey the words of the family head. He could dominate them for all his life (Qü, Tongzu 2003, 6).

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<sup>11</sup> Female family heads were not uncommon in real life. As the male family head died before his sons grew up, the female elder would be the successor. Even if she transferred this position to the son when he grew up, her words still played a decisive role in the family affairs since the filial piety and obedience were emphasized in Chinese family morality.

<sup>12</sup> When a daughter got married, she became a member of her husband's family and should obey the family head of her new family.

The right of a family head was mainly reflected in the five aspects: 1) He presided over the family sacrificial rites. 2) He organized the family production and managed all of the family property. There were strong economic links connecting the family members before family division. Even if someone worked outside, what he earned should be sent back to his family (Lin 2000, 76). 3) He made decisions on the offspring's marriage. His wills were the decisive condition to determine who his sons or daughters should marry. 4) He could execute punishments on the family members who acted against him (Shi 1999, 90-95). And 5) He dealt with other families and Fang on behalf of the whole family.

#### **1.2.4 Genealogy Book**

A genealogy book was known by a variety names in Chinese such as “族谱”(zu pu), “宗谱”(zong pu), “家谱”(jia pu), “家乘”(jia cheng), “世谱”(shi pu) or “谱”(pu). “Zu pu” of them is the most common in the remaining tens of thousands of genealogy books (Qian 2009, 121). The genealogy book of a clan was the same as the history book of a country. Its main functions were as follows:

1) The genealogy book recorded the origin and the whole line of the descent from the apical ancestor of the clan. It was used to prevent the confusion of blood relationships and generational positions among the clan members which might easily happen in old clans. Therefore, the table of the descent occupied the main part of a genealogy book and was the most basic evidence to determine the clan member's identity. Only the names of the male clan members could be recorded in the genealogy book. If someone seriously violated the clan rules, he would be driven out of the clan and his name would be deleted from the genealogy book (Fei, Chengkang 2002, 83). 2) It recorded the clan property in detail and would be the most authoritative evidence useful in the resolution of property disputes with other clans. 3) It recorded the outstanding achievements of the ancestors. Such records showed the glory of the clan in order to enhance the sense of honor of the descendants, and meanwhile could inspire them to strive continuously (Cheng, Weirong 2008, 131-133). And 4) the clan rules would be written in the genealogy book to be followed from generation to generation.

All Chinese clans placed a great deal of importance on the revision and preservation of their genealogy books. If some clans had enough human and financial resources to re-edit their genealogy books every twenty or thirty years, would they do in order to add new content (mainly the information on the new generations) into them. Many clans took advantage of the revision activities to strengthen the sense of belonging of their clan members to their own clans and thus enhanced their cohesion (Deng 1991). The funds needed for the revision would be apportioned among all the families or withdrawn from the clan property. A specialized group composed of the gentry and literati would be temporally established to take charge of the revision work. Once this work was finished, the new version of the genealogy book would be carefully preserved by the clan head.

A genealogy book materialized the blood relationships of all members of the clan and united these people together, both the living descendants and departed ancestors, into a solid whole. According to the geographical distribution, the remaining genealogy books mainly concentrate in now Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Anhui Provinces (Taga 1960, 63).

### 1.2.5 Ancestral Hall of Clan and Branch Ancestral Hall

“祠堂” (ancestral hall; Pinyin: ci tang), also known as “祠庙” (ci miao), “祠室” (ci shi), “家庙” (jia miao) (Wang, Qijun 1996), originally referred to a group of stately buildings in a clan where the clan members worshiped and offered sacrifices to their common ancestors. However, it had gradually become a symbol of the clan.

The ancestral hall of a clan was actually the temple of the clan where the spirit tablets of the clan's ancestors were placed (Feng, Erkang 2009, 80). That is to say, it was a building to accommodate the souls of these ancestors, and therefore of extreme importance to the clan. Some regular sacrificial activities were held in the ancestral hall. All the male clan members would assemble there on the occasion and be led by the clan head to perform ceremonies<sup>13</sup>. At other times, the ancestral hall was used as the meeting-house where the people jointly discussed the clan issues, or as the court where disputes within the clan would be resolved. If someone violated the

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<sup>13</sup> Females could not attend such activities. The ancestral hall was completely a world of the male clan members during the sacrificial activities (Deng 1991).

clan rules, the clan head would punish him publicly in the ancestral hall, warning the others at the same time. Additionally, it was often used for sorts of other ceremonies or entertainments, such as weddings, adult ceremonies, theatrical performances and so on. In short, the ancestral hall was a multi-functional communal<sup>14</sup> building. It was the religious, social, political, and economic center, the “collective representation” (Lin 2000, 28) of the clan.

A Fang often constructed its own “分祠” (branch ancestral hall; Pinyin: fen ci), also named “支祠” (Pinyin: zhi ci) and independently handled its internal issues in the branch ancestral hall. Each branch ancestral hall had a name and the names of the branch ancestral halls in a clan were always different from each other to indicate their respective specific characteristics or own expectations (Cheng, Weirong 2008, 41). A branch ancestral hall was just the collective representation of the Fang to which it belonged.

### 1.2.6 Clan Rules

Almost every Chinese clan had a set of rules and regulations to regulate the behavior of its members and maintain its internal stability. These rules, often known as “族规” (clan rules; Pinyin: zu gui), were written thoroughly in its genealogy books. They played an important role in the clan.

The enactment of the clan rules generally followed three principles: 1) the clan rules should be in accordance with national laws. The clan rules always required the clan members to comply with the laws and fulfill their obligations. This was one of the prerequisites for a clan to survive and develop under the administration of the government. 2) They should be also in accordance with “li” (礼; etiquette) which was an important theme emphasized in Confucian ethics. 3) They laid particular emphasis on moral instruction. Many provisions were in fact merely moral exhortation (Fei, Chengkang 2002, 28-30).

The rules of a clan were only applied within the scope of the clan itself, focusing not only on clan issues but also on family affairs. The clan issues referred to: 1) the establishment of internal order and the appointment of related administrators such as

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<sup>14</sup> The term “communal” refers to “shared or used by all the members of a clan” in this dissertation. It is different from “public” which means “for the use of people in general”.

the clan or Fang head; 2) the use of the clan property; 3) the revision of the genealogy books; 4) the enactment of regulations on all kinds of the clan activities; and 5) the punishment of those violating the clan rules. And the family affairs refer to: 1) the maintenance of the stable family order; 2) the self-improvement in behavior or morals of the individuals; 3) the professions that the family members were engaged in; 4) the marriage of the family members; and 5) other else such as adoption, funeral and so on.

Many rules were enacted through the discussion by the clan, Fang heads, and other respected elders of the clan. When an elder who was of high status in the clan was dying, he would often tell his offspring how to maintain the continuation of the family or the clan. The offspring must abide by his last words which would gradually be transformed into the family or the clan rules. When the clan needed to establish some new organizations, special rules would be drawn up to manage them. The revision of genealogy books was a good opportunity to sort the fragmented rules together.

The rules enacted by the ancestors were hardly to be abolished. If some of them were obviously unable to meet the needs of reality, the descendants would add new clauses to make up the deficiency in the old ones. By virtue of such constant revision, the clan rules were not static but could well keep up with the times (Fei, Chengkang 2002, 49-55). The clan rules played an important role in the construction and maintenance of the ancient Chinese social order. They were not laws, but in fact functioned as the indispensable supplements to the laws.

### 1.2.7 Clan Property

The cost of various clan activities, such as the construction of the ancestral hall, the revision of the genealogy books, holding ceremonies and so on, was often from the clan property. Since land was generally regarded as the most secure and reliable property in ancient China, most of the clan property was farmland known as “族田” (clan land; Pinyin: zu tian)<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> Besides farmland and money, the clan property included various natural resources and infrastructure necessary for the clan to survive, such as water, forests, dams, ponds, graveyards and so on (Deng 1991).

The profit obtained from the clan land ensured the smooth operation of the clan. The clan land could be roughly divided into three types: “祭田” (sacrificial land; Pinyin: ji tian), “义田” (charitable land; Pinyin: yi tian), and “学田” (school land; Pinyin: xue tian). The income from the sacrificial land was generally used for the construction and maintenance of the ancestral hall and related sacrificial activities; that from the charitable land for the relief of the poor, orphans, widows, the elderly who had no lineal offspring, etc; that from the school land for the finance of the clan school or the education of the clan members.

The clan land often came from the donation of the clan members. When someone achieved big success in his life, for example, becoming a senior government official or having accumulated a great fortune, he would donate land or money to the clan. Many clans drew up specific provisions to encourage such magnanimous acts and it was the highest reward to record these people and their donation deeds into the genealogy books. The clan land could also come from somebody's inheritance. At the time of family division, the parents usually kept a part of land for themselves and the land would be vested in the clan after their death. Additionally, the clan land might be purchased from other nearby clans.

The clan made strict rules to manage the clan property. The staff composed usually of one manager, several accountants and supervisors, were responsible for the related affairs. All accounts must be recorded in the account books in detail and checked periodically. Although the clan property was the common property of all the clan members, it was actually controlled by the head of the clan and hardly supervised by ordinary clan members (Cheng, Weirong 2008, 65).

It had been proved that the more clan property a clan owned, the more frequently the clan activities would be held in the clan and the more prosperous the clan became (Deng 1991). The common clan property laid a solid economic foundation for the maintenance of the clan. The clans which owned large amounts of clan land as their clan property were mainly distributed in south China, especially in Jiangsu, Anhui, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong, and Jiangxi Provinces (Feng, Erkang 2009, 250).



## **2. Evolution of the Clans and the Patriarchal Clan System in Ancient China**

The evolution of Chinese clans is mainly reflected in the transition of the patriarchal clan ideas, the leadership and the internal structure of a clan, and the identity of clan members. Accordingly, the Chinese clans can be divided into five historical types: 1) the aristocrat clan before the Qin Dynasty (221-207 BC); 2) the literati clan (士族; Pinyin: shi zu) from the Qin to the Tang Dynasty (618-907); 3) the bureaucrat clan in the Song Dynasty (960-1279); 4) the clan of the gentry and the rich between the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing Dynasties (1644-1912); and 5) the contemporary variant (Feng, Erkang 2009, 19-24).

### **2.1 The Aristocrat Clans**

#### **2.1.1 The Clans before the Zhou Dynasty**

Clans existed widely in ancient China as early as the Xia Dynasty (2070-1600 BC) and the country of that time was just established based on them (Li, Xueqin 2004, 379-380). However, current archaeological findings cannot reveal more details on the clans in the Xia Dynasty yet.

The existing oracle bone scripts, bronze inscriptions and classic texts show that a clan, its clan head, and its residential area shared a common name in the Shang Dynasty (1600-1046 BC) (Zhu, Fenghan 2004, 39). The clan head obviously had an honorable status and acted as the representative of his whole clan at that time. He governed all of the other clan members, controlled the clan economy and military, and most importantly, presided over rites to offer sacrifices to the ancestors of the clan (Feng, Erkang 1996, 10-11).

The ancestors were believed by Chinese people to possess special abilities to protect their descendants from disasters and give them happiness and good fortune.

However, the willing of the ancestors to bless their descendants depended on whether they could get enough satisfactory sacrifices. Therefore, all clans attached great importance to the sacrificial rites and each of them had its own ancestral temple used for such activities. The ancestral temple was usually in the center of the clan's territory (Feng, Erkang 2009, 81). It was not a place only for holding sacrificial rites, but also for dealing with clan affairs. In fact the clan head usually based his decisions on praying for the enlightenment of the ancestors (ibid. 82). The ancestral temple was the precursor of the later ancestral hall.

Although the organization of clans was greatly improved in the Shang Dynasty, it is still unknown whether there was a perfected patriarchal clan system at that time. Things of the Zhou Dynasty are much clearer.

### **2.1.2 The Rise of the Typical Patriarchal Clan System**

The people of the Zhou Dynasty (1045-256 BC) began to believe in the concept of the Mandate of Heaven, according to which the king was appointed by and derived power from Heaven. Therefore, all the land should belong to the king and all the people should be his subjects. A strict hierarchy from “王” (king; Pinyin: wang), “诸侯” (vassal; Pinyin: zhu hou), “卿” (senior official; Pinyin: qing), “士” (literati; Pinyin: shi) to common people, from high to low, was established. Meanwhile, the Zhou Dynasty implemented the fengjian system<sup>16</sup> (封建制; the system of enfeoffment) to allocate the land and the subjects (the common people) to the aristocrats (vassals, senior officials, and literati).

The Zhou Dynasty was a patriarchal clan society which consisted of the clans of the king, aristocrats, and common people. The first two kinds of clans held all power in their hands and established a well-developed patriarchal clan system. Compared with

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<sup>16</sup> The king of the Zhou Dynasty enfeoffed vassals. The people living on the enfeoffed land were completely under the rule of the vassals. Therefore, the country was composed of many vassal states in which the vassals enfeoffed their own senior officials in the same way. So did senior officials to the literati. The aristocrats at each level must pay a certain tribute to their superiors annually. This system is named the “fengjian” system. “封建制” is also often translated into the feudal system. However, this has been questioned by many scholars who think that the Chinese fengjian system is essentially different from the feudal system of Europe.

them, the clans of common people were loosely organized and of little importance (Feng, Erkang 1996, 13; Li, Wenzhi/Jiang 2000, 6-7). Therefore, this period can be called the era of aristocrat clans.

It is the core content of the Zhou patriarchal clan system to distinguish between “da zong” (大宗; the great descent-line) and “xiao zong” (小宗; the lesser descent-line) and to regulate their respective rights and obligations (Yü, Ying 2001, 64). Da zong is a single line of descent beginning from the eldest son of the clan’s apical ancestor and descending from the eldest son to his eldest son down through generations. The heir to this line will inherit the whole wealth, power, and social position of the previous generations and is titled “zong zi” (宗子; the descent-line heir). Xiao zong refers to the descent lines of the younger son(s) and the heirs to xiao zong are all under the rule of zong zi (Zheng, Zhenman 2001, 6; Bernhardt 2002, 21-22).

According to the Zhou patriarchal clan system, the king should be the heir of da zong and hence zong zi of the king’s clan. The king’s brothers belonged to xiao zong and would be conferred vassals by the king. There was also a difference between da zong and xiao zong in the vassal’s descent line. The vassal’s first-born son should succeed to the title to continually rule the fief as zong zi of the vassal’s clan and his brothers, belonging to xiao zong, would be conferred senior officials by him. Similarly, the senior official’s first-born son should succeed to the title and act as zong zi of the senior official’s clan to confer the literati on his brothers. Therefore, the vassals, senior officials, and literati all had a double identity. On the one hand they were heirs to da zong of their own clans, and on the other hand, they and their clan members all belonged to xiao zong of the clans of their superiors.

It could be seen that the patriarchal clan system was integrated with the fengjian system in the Zhou Dynasty<sup>17</sup>. The aristocrats at each level were the rulers of their respective fiefs as well as zong zi of their own clans. At the same time they obeyed their superiors due to not only the fengjian system, but also the patriarchal system. Each position receives a double protection (Shi 1999, 30-31).

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<sup>17</sup> At the foundation of the Zhou Dynasty, there were 71 vassals enfeoffed by the king and 55 of them belonged to the king’s clan, accounting for more than 2/3 of the total number. Although the king ruled the vassals of other clans only through the fengjian system, these vassals dominated their subordinates and subjects by means of the systems in their own states. Therefore, it could be said that the integration of the fengjian system and the patriarchal clan system was successfully achieved and implemented in the Zhou Dynasty (Feng, Erkang 1996, 14).

The patriarchal clan system became a good domination instrument of the king in the Zhou Dynasty. Natural differences among the people's generational positions in a kinship group were converted into the hierarchy of their social status and meanwhile, people of different social status could be banded together by virtue of sharing a common descent (Zhang, Jian 2004). Therefore, a clan was not only a kinship group but also a political one. The patriarchal clan system of the Zhou Dynasty was considered as an ideal model by later emperors, hence the name the "typical patriarchal clan system", and the Zhou Dynasty also the era of typical patriarchal clan system.

A strict hierarchy of the construction of buildings, especially the ancestral temples, was established according to the hierarchy of the people's social and generational status in the Zhou Dynasty. For example, in regards to the quantity of ancestral temples: 1) the Son of Heaven could construct seven ancestral temples—kao miao (考庙) for departed father, wang kao miao (王考庙) for departed grandfather, huang kao miao (皇考庙) for great-grandfather, xian kao miao (显考庙) for great-great-grandfather, zu kao miao (祖考庙) for the first ancestor, and two tiao miao (祧庙) for ancestors between the great-great-grandfather and the first ancestor; 2) a vassal five temples—kao miao, wang kao miao, huang kao miao, xian kao miao, and zu kao miao; 3) a senior official three temples—kao miao, wang kao miao, and huang kao miao; 4) a high-level literatus two temples—kao miao, and wang kao miao; 5) a middle-level literatus only one—kao miao; and 6) the other people no one (Qian 2009, 160).

### 2.1.3 The Decline of the Typical Patriarchal Clan System

China experienced a dramatic transition from the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC) to the Warring States Period (476-221 BC)<sup>18</sup>. During the long Western Zhou Dynasty (1045-771 BC) prior to the Spring and Autumn Period, many low-ranking aristocratic clans became increasingly strong but many high-ranking ones increasingly weak. The latter's political status thus was challenged by the former even

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<sup>18</sup> The Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period are also known collectively as the Eastern Zhou Dynasty.

though the former actually belonged to xiao zong of the latter. Arrogation and usurpation happened so often that the original patriarchal clan system could not be sustained any longer during the Spring and Autumn Period. The Warring States Period, as its name suggests, was an era of war among the king, vassals, and their subordinates. Since numerous clans were destroyed in intense wars<sup>19</sup>, the patriarchal clan system existed in name only.

In this process, the aristocrats competed with each other to reform the original political system in their fiefs in order to strengthen their own power and began to appoint subordinate administrators according to the people's talent and ability more than their lineage. In the Warring States Period, clan states adopted the system of prefectures and counties (郡县制; Pinyin: jūn xiān zhì) to replace the previous fengjian system. The system of prefectures and counties referred to the central government of a clan state establishing two levels of local governments, the prefecture and county, and directly appointing or dismissing local administrators. The local power was thus concentrated in the central government from the hands of local clans, and from then on, it was hardly for the local aristocratic clans to possess the same great political, economic, and military power as before. Zong zi of clans also lost their hereditary status and the absolute power over xiao zong which thus separated themselves from da zong.

Furthermore, the production capacity of individual families was greatly increased because of the extensive application of iron tools in agriculture. Small families could carry out agricultural production independently without depending on the clan as much as in previous times (Feng, Erkang 2009, 90-92). In short, the typical patriarchal clan system and related ideas were seriously disrupted and weakened from the late of the Spring and Autumn to the Warring States Period.

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<sup>19</sup> There were thousands of large and small clan states in the early Zhou Dynasty, and still more than two hundreds ones at the beginning of the Spring and Autumn Period. But by the late, the vast majority of them had disappeared, and only a dozen major ones were left which were eventually unified by the Qin kingdom at the end of the Warring States Period (Zhao, Pei 2004, 46-47).

## 2.2 The Literati Clans

### 2.2.1 The Reconstruction of Clans and the Patriarchal Clan System

The Chinese society had entered into a new era since the foundation of the Qin Dynasty (221-207 BC). The new dynasty adopted centralization which needed to continue to weaken the political power of the local clans to strengthen and consolidate the central governance (Tian 1996, 6; Zhao, Pei 2004, 53). Then there was no doubt that the typical patriarchal clan system would never return, but the previous interpersonal relationships were not fundamentally changed yet. Besides the unchangeable blood relationships, most of the individual families were still residentially concentrated just as in the past, living and farming on their former land, even though each of them had gained more independence than ever before.

The clans and patriarchal clan ideas did not disappear either. Those of high-ranking aristocrats suffered a heavy blow during the Warring States Period. Nevertheless, many bureaucrats produced by the new political system, businessmen, and landlords, all of whom might originally belong to the middle and low ranking aristocrats, or even common people, developed their clans in local areas (Qian 2009, 111). Although zong zi could not dominate their clans anymore, they still enjoyed respected status for presiding over sacrificial activities in the clans. Most importantly, the emperor still had to depend on the patriarchal clan ideas to legalize the succession of their heirs to the throne (Zhang, Jian 2004).

It was in the Han Dynasty (202 BC - 220 AD), not in the short-lived Qin Dynasty (221-207 BC) that the clan and patriarchal clan system were reconstructed and developed. The families in the Han Dynasty were mainly nuclear families, each of which consisted of a married couple and their children and usually had 4-5 people (Xü, Zhuoyun 1982, 539; Du 1992, 793). But the viability of such a family was very fragile in the face of big social and economic risks. It was proper for a family to have 12-13 people among whom there should be 7-8 labor under the technical conditions of that time (Yan, Aimin 2005, 294). Therefore, nuclear families of the same descent came together again under the banner of the clan and depended on the collective strength of the clan to resist all kinds of risks. The clans gradually became a medium between

the individual families and the society (country) and began to play an increasing role in rural areas where the power of the central government could hardly extend to (Feng, Erkang 2009, 387; Zhao, Pei 2004, 276).

Since the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220) was established on the support from some large landlord clans, the emperor subsequently adopted policies to encourage the development of clans (Feng, Erkang 2009, 108) and the patriarchal clan ideas were also highly valued by the Confucian scholars (Zhang, Jian 2004).

### 2.2.2 The Rise of the Literati Clans

The literati were originally the lowest-ranking aristocrats in the pre-Qin era. As a result of social transition many vassals and senior officials declined and many common people were promoted to literati. This made the literati class able to expand rapidly. Under the political system of the Han Dynasty, the government officials were mainly selected from the literati according to their knowledge and reputation. The reputation referred to that not only of the individual but also of the family<sup>20</sup>. The latter actually was more important<sup>21</sup>. That is to say, people from literati families had more opportunity than those of other origins to be appointed as government officials. Even all coming from literati families, they would be appointed to different ranks of positions because of the difference in the reputation of their families.

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<sup>20</sup> In ancient China, a family usually engaged in the same career from generation to generation and so did literati families. People of the literati families studied knowledge all day long without doing any manual work and this was the special family tradition (门风 or 家风; Pinyin: men feng or jia feng) of the literati families which distinguished themselves from those engaging in other occupations (Chen, Yinke 1997, 69-71).

<sup>21</sup> Mark Edward Lewis ever gave a detailed description of this. "Access to office relied on a system of recommendations, and as a result it tended to be more a function of family wealth and prestige than of ability. Writing in the late first century A.D., the scholar Wang Chong complained that people honored wealth and office rather than moral or intellectual attainments, and that wealthy families secured office for generations by recommending one another, while poor scholars were passed over. Hundreds of biographies preserved in the histories confirm that actual cases of upward social mobility were extremely rare, while important families were able to produce high officeholders for six or seven generations. Over time, as the prestige of scholarly attainments increased and as more and more would-be scholars competed with one another for a fixed number of positions, the chances for any given individual—especially one without family influence—fell even further." (2009, 28-29)

The nine-rank system (九品中正制; Pinyin: jiu pin zhong zheng zhi) was put into practice in the Wei (220-265), Jin (266-420), and Southern and Northern Dynasties (420-589). This system categorized the literati into nine grades according to their respective reputation and nominated them for nine ranks of official positions, rank one the highest and rank nine the lowest. Big literati clans were the main beneficiary of this system. They occupied the vast majority of official positions by virtue of their overwhelming prestige and such prestige could also guarantee that their descendants would succeed to these positions throughout all generations.

Only when the members of a clan continuously served as the officials of and above rank five for at least three generations could the clan be identified as a literati one. And once a clan became a literati one, all of its members including the future descendants were qualified to enjoy the privileges that a literati clan should have (Feng, Erkang 1996, 22). There was a strict hierarchy among literati clans, being directly reflected in the initial positions to which the members of different ranks of literati clans would be appointed when they entered into the political arena, that is, a person from a high-ranking literati clan would serve as a high-ranking official at the beginning of his political life. With the implement of the nine-rank system, the literati clans gradually became the most powerful political force in China's society.

From the Han Dynasty, the patriarchal clan ideas began to differ from those of the Zhou Dynasty. The Zhou patriarchal clan system focused on the relations between da zong and xiao zong, i.e. between the eldest son and his younger brothers. Such relations were even more important than those between father and son at that time, in other words, a person should first obey zong zi's words instead of his father's. With the collapse of the old system, the close relations between da zong and xiao zong were broken. It made the brothers of a family often regard each other as strangers, but the importance of the relations between father and sons was increasingly emphasized by the newly developed patriarchal clan system (Yan, Aimin 2005, 315).

Genealogy books also received a great development from the Han Dynasty. They in fact already appeared in the pre-Qin period, mainly recording the descent of king or vassal (Li, Qing 2005, 222-223). The Han government began to designate someone to serve as zong zheng (宗正) specialized in recording the descent of the imperial clan members and compiling the genealogy books of the imperial clan. The Wei, Jin,

Southern and Northern Dynasties were the golden age of the government-compiled genealogy books. As mentioned above, the government officials were mostly selected from the literati clans and all of the members of a literati clan could enjoy certain political privileges in the society. Many people thus faked their origins in order to squeeze into the literati clans. To prevent this, the government had to compile the genealogy books for the literati clans and strictly regulate and supervise their own compilation activities<sup>22</sup>. At the same time the government strictly forbade the marriages between the families of different ranks in order to ensure the purity of the literati clans. The basis for a well-matched marriage was just the genealogy books of both sides (Feng, Erkang 2009, 128-132). Since the functions of the genealogy books were of obviously political character in this period, most of genealogy books were compiled for the literati clans instead of for those of the common people (Li, Qing 2005, 226-229).

The Chinese society mainly consisted of the imperial, literati, and common people clans in the Southern and Northern Dynasties (Feng, Erkang 1994, 406). Among them the literati ones nearly monopolized the country's political power and their influence spread throughout the country. They were the most important force for the emperors to rely on, and on the other hand, they also seriously threatened the authority of these emperors (Feng, Erkang 2005, 42).

### **2.2.3 The Decline of the Literati Clans**

The literati clans eventually became the focus of social conflicts. They contended for domination over the central government with the imperial clan, and meanwhile suppressed the rights of common people to serve or to obtain promotion in the government (Feng, Erkang 1996, 22-23). The emperors of the Sui (581-618) and Tang (618-907) Dynasties all attempted to weaken the influence of the literati clans in order to consolidate their own power.

In the Sui and Tang Dynasties, the birth of the imperial examination system (科举制; Pinyin: ke jü zhi) successfully broke the political monopoly of the literati clans.

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<sup>22</sup> The genealogy books compiled by the literati clans themselves could not be used until obtaining official recognition (Li, Qing 2005, 227).

According to the new system, people who passed the imperial examinations organized by the central government would be able to serve in the government and even become a high-ranking official regardless of their origins. Then the right of selecting officials returned to the hands of the central government (Liu, Haifeng/Li 2006, 57-58).

Since anyone (restricted to men only) could attend the examinations no matter whether he came from a literati family or not, the prestige of the literati clans lost its practical value. Common people then began to study knowledge, which was monopolized by literati in the past, in order to become an official some day. The imperial examination system was the main method to select officials in the Tang Dynasty and this ended the era of the literati clans.

## 2.3 The Bureaucrat Clans

### 2.3.1 The New Transition of the Patriarchal Clan System

China sank into civil war again in the late Tang Dynasty and numerous people became destitute and homeless. This made the clans suffer serious damage in all parts of the country (Song/Zhao 2003). The social unrest continued for nearly one hundred years and was ended with the foundation of the Song Dynasty (960-1279). As the social situation was tending towards stability, scholars, mainly the Confucians, began the attempt to reform previous patriarchal clan ideas in order to rebuild the post-war social order (Li, Wenzhi/Jiang 2000, 19). Zhang Zai (张载; 1020-1077) and Zhu Xi (朱熹; 1130-1200) were the most famous among them and their theories had a quite significant and far-reaching impact on the later development of Chinese clans.

Zhang Zai, a Neo-Confucian scholar in the Northern Song dynasty, emphasized the significance of the patriarchal clan system in his article “Zong Fa” (宗法): “In order to unify people’s thinking, to unite clan members, to retain traditions, and to prevent people from forgetting their origins, it is essential to clarify their descent and establish a patriarchal clan system; otherwise people cannot know what they are.” (1985, 258-259) He also attempted to connect the patriarchal clan order with politics. In

another article “Xi Ming” (西铭) he wrote that all people were Heaven’s children and thus should regard the emperor (Son of Heaven) as their zong zi (ibid. 62). Additionally, he stressed the importance of the bureaucrats who should be relied on to safeguard the patriarchal clan order (ibid. 259-260; Feng, Erkang 2009, 164-165).

Zhu Xi, another famous Neo-Confucian scholar in the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279), focused particularly on filial piety (孝; Pinyin: xiao) and integrated it into political relationships. He thought that the relationships between the emperor and his subjects were the same as those between a father and his sons (Li, Wenzhi/Jiang 2000, 20, 34). He also elaborated on the necessity of the construction of ancestral halls in his book “Zhu Zi Jia Li” (朱子家礼; The Family Rituals of Zhu Xi) and believed that the construction of ancestral halls was very important to satisfaction of people’s desire to commemorate and repay their ancestors, and furthermore the people should be allowed to offer sacrifices to their apical ancestor (this was restricted by the government at that time). Besides these he encouraged people to donate property to their own clans for sacrificial activities (Zhu, Xi 2002, 875-876).

Zhang Zai and Zhu Xi provided a theoretical basis for the reform of clan and patriarchal clan system. And the new patriarchal clan ideas were slowly filtering into people's minds under the push of Song Confucians (Li, Wenzhi/Jiang 2000, 44).

### 2.3.2 The Rise of the Bureaucrat Clans

The government positions were no longer monopolized by the fixed social groups in the Song Dynasty. People had to take part in the imperial examinations, relying on their knowledge rather than origins, to enter the political arena. Most of them were originally from the low social class. And such officials, especially the high-ranking ones, played a leading role in the construction of clans (Song/Zhao 2003). Inspired by the Confucians, they began to put the theories into practice. Then the clans of that time were just represented by those of the high-ranking bureaucrats.

The bureaucrats, with the landlords, gentry, and literati, took a series of measures to rebuild clan organizations. These measures, including the construction of ancestral halls, the compilation of genealogy books, the establishment of clan property, and so on, were popularly adopted not only in the Song Dynasty, but also in the following dynasties.

- Construction of Ancestral Halls

According to the Song laws, the families of government officials could build family temples dedicated to their four generations of ancestors including the departed father (祢; Pinyin: mi), grandfather (祖; Pinyin: zu), great-grandfather (曾; Pinyin: zeng), and great-great-grandfather (高; Pinyin: gao). However, common people did not have permission to build any family temples. Every family could only place a tablet of departed father in the bedroom (Feng, Erkang 2009, 21). This was not conducive for the common people to hold large-scale sacrificial rites. If a plebeian family could also build a family temple to make sacrifice to their great-great-grandfather, all of the descendants of the great-great-grandfather would have an opportunity to be united together through the sacrificial activities. Since they were just allowed to make sacrifice to the father in the bedroom, only the sons could keep in close touch with each other. This had been a great obstacle to the development of the clans.

Then the Confucians, such as Zhang Zai and Zhu Xi, provided some solutions to it. Adopting the solutions, bureaucrats began to build ancestral halls for their respective clans. Since the ancestral hall of a clan was not a private family temple, it was not legally binding and then people could offer sacrifice to ancestors in remote generations, even the apical one. Although the construction of ancestral halls was still largely confined to the bureaucrat clans at that time, their practice paved the way for the popularization of ancestral halls.

- Compilation of Genealogy Books

As the government no longer relied upon genealogy books to select officials, it stopped compiling them. Clans then began to do such work by themselves. The genealogy books compiled by different clans usually had no uniform pattern in early times. This situation continued until Ouyang Xiu (1007-1072) and Su Xün (1009-1066), two famous officials of the Song Dynasty, compiled their own “Ou Yang Shi Pu Tu” (欧阳氏谱图; Ouyang's Genealogy Book) and “Su Shi Zu Pu” (苏氏族谱; Su's Genealogy Book), respectively. These two genealogy books later became the models of the genealogy books of clans (Feng, Erkang 2009, 21).

- Establishment of Clan Property

As a clan was a combination of nuclear families, then the destinies of the clan and the families were closely bound up. If a family in the clan was of high social status (some members serving as officials in the government) and possessed great wealth, the whole clan would be benefitted. But the family property was usually divided by sons in the manner of an equal distribution, and this would easily result in the originally huge property being reduced to almost nothing after several generations. Moreover, the imperial examination system made it impossible that a government position could be inherited within a family and passed along from generation to generation. The destiny of a family thus was uncertain and would adversely affect the stable development of the clan (Inoue 2008, 22).

To solve this problem, another Song famous official Fan Zhongyan (989-1052) made a bold attempt to set up common property in his clan. He donated more than ten hectares of land as clan land and distributed the income from the land to other clan members to meet their basic living expenses (Fan, Zhongyan 2007, 1159). His attempt proved to be successful and was popularized from then on. The clan property could provide financial security for the clan's survival and development (Cheng, Weirong 2008, 55). When individual families faced financial crises, the clan would have the ability to help them, otherwise, if some clan members were forced by poverty to commit crime, the clan's social prestige and status would be seriously damaged.

Part of clan property would be used to establish a clan school where the clan members could learn necessary knowledge for passing the imperial examinations. When someone became a government official, he would usually do something for his clan in return, and if a clan could continuously bring up its descendants to become government officials, the clan would to some extent successfully achieved the continuation of its political power and the heredity of its social status (Inoue 2008, 25-26, 227).

- Election of the Clan Head

The mode of the internal management in a clan also underwent dramatic changes during the Song Dynasty. The position of the clan head would be filled by the person elected by the clan members instead of being inherited by the senior descendant of the senior Fang. The latter sometimes still had the title of zong zi but was only responsible for presiding over sacrificial activities without any real power. As for the clan head, he focused his management on the mutual aid among the clan members and keeping their relationships in harmony.

The China's capital was moved from Bianliang (now Kaifeng, Henan Province) to Lin'an (now Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province) in the Song Dynasty because of the war with Mongols. The Chinese political, economic, and cultural center subsequently moved from the Central Plains to the South where was relatively safe at that time. This made Chinese clan organizations mainly situated in the South. According to the statistics of the distribution of the Song and Yuan ancestral halls, the provinces, having the largest number of clans, were Jiangxi, Anhui, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, and Fujian, respectively<sup>23</sup> (Feng, Erkang 2009, 220). The government of that time adopted a laissez-faire attitude to the establishment of clans (*ibid.* 221).

### 2.3.3 The Clans in the Yuan Dynasty

The Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), established by Mongols, implemented the Song patriarchal clan system much more widely. More clans constructed ancestral halls for paying the debt of gratitude to their ancestors who were believed to have blessed the clans. They also wished to unite the clan members and strengthen their cohesion through such construction activities. The more clans had their own clan property and the more clan schools were thus established. The compilation of genealogy books and other clan activities were all significantly increased. The clan organizations, reformed by the Song Confucians and bureaucrats, were popularized to a fairly high degree in the Yuan Dynasty (*ibid.* 164, 173-174, 192-195, and 202-209).

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<sup>23</sup> The order of Anhui and Zhejiang should be reversed according to the statistics of genealogy books by Japanese scholar Kenji Morita (1979).

## 2.4 The Clans of the Gentry and the Rich

The clan organizations were more widely established in common people during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) Dynasties and so the number of bureaucrat clans was reduced in proportion. It was the local elites, such as the gentry and the rich, who were in charge of the affairs in most clans. They became the representatives of the clans of that period.

Most of the gentry had passed the imperial examinations (Li, Shizhong 2006, 2-3). However, they had no official positions because of retirement, temporarily leaving original positions in order to return home to mourn for departed parents<sup>24</sup>, or there being no vacancies in the government. Chang Chung-li (2002, 122) ever estimated that there were about 1.1 million gentry in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and 2.56 per 1000 Chinese people according to China's total population, over 430 million (Cao 2001, 704), at that time. The gentry apparently did not account for a large proportion of the total population, but they scattered all over the country and took charge of rural clan affairs as an important political force in local society (Feng, Erkang 1996, 41-43).

Although the gentry were not officials, their identity was quite different from the common people. Compared with the officials, the gentry had no privileges, but they had a lot of prestige and influence upon the common people. They often acted as the spokesmen on behalf of their clans before the local authorities. On the other hand, they were familiar with the government, therefore, could better understand the official policies and communicate the policies to the clan members. That is to say, both the clans and authorities had to rely on the gentry and this made them always be elected as clan heads (Yü, Ying 2001, 65). However, there were not always such figures in every clan, and then the positions of clan heads were also usually filled by other local elites such as wealthy businessmen or landlords. And the period of the Ming and Qing Dynasties thus is known as the era of the clans of the gentry and the rich (Feng, Erkang 2009, 22; Song/Zhao 2003).

The main content of the patriarchal clan system of this period focused on the compilation of genealogy books, the management and usage of clan property, the

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<sup>24</sup> Mourning for a departed parent was called “ding you” (丁忧) and its period was usually for three years.

construction of ancestral halls, and the enactment of clan rules, each of which was comprehensively perfected during that time.

#### **2.4.1 The Compilation of Genealogy Books and the Establishment of Clan Schools**

The compilation of genealogy books was an ordinary phenomenon then. The clan members should provide the clan with the detail information of their families, such as each member's birth, death, marriage, the number of children etc. Even if having moved to other areas, they should keep in touch with the clan as closely as possible.

As for the clan property, it played an increasingly important role in maintaining the stable development of the clan. As mentioned previously, besides to organize various clan activities as well as to aid the poor clan members, one major use of the clan property was to establish schools in the clans. Ancient Chinese governments, including those of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, did not establish schools in local areas. Then the clan schools not only offered learning opportunities to the children who wished to take part in imperial examinations to become government officials, but also helped clan members raise their cultural level. Zhejiang Province was the one which had the most clan schools from the Ming Dynasty (Feng, Erkang 2009, 23).

#### **2.4.2 The Construction of Ancestral Halls**

Both the Ming government and literati strongly advocated "The Family Rituals of Zhu Xi" in which the importance of the construction of ancestral halls was particularly emphasized. It was a top priority for every clan to construct an ancestral hall as more and more people accepted the views in this book, especially after the Ming government reformed the ritual system in 1536 to allow all people to worship their apical ancestors.

When the ancestral hall had been constructed, the clan members had a fixed place where they could jointly make sacrifice to their common ancestors. And sacrificial activities could be held regularly and frequently in the clan. Such activities linked the lives of the clan members with ancestor worship, greatly enhancing the people's sense of belonging.

During the sacrificial activities, the clan members had to comply with a strict organizational hierarchy which based itself on the people's generational positions. This hierarchy was also the one which the clan wished its members to comply with in daily interactions. So, the people's sense of hierarchy was strengthened and made firm through the sacrificial activities. And people would pursue it consciously in daily life.

As time passed, the clan members naturally associated the ancestral hall with the sacrificial activities held there and all the meaning behind those activities, furthermore, could perceive the existence of the clan. The ancestral hall thus gradually became the symbol of the clan: if there was an ancestral hall, there must be a clan at the same time.

#### **2.4.3 The Enactment of Clan Rules**

The clan rules were quite perfect and mature after the Ming Dynasty. It was noted that there was a trend towards more severe punishment of those who violated the clan rules and even the death penalty was one option in many clans (Fei, Chengkang 2002, 18-19). In fact, the death penalty had already been used in some clans by the Ming Dynasty. The sexually promiscuous women would be sentenced to death by their clans and the clans would ask them to commit suicide. But from the Ming Dynasty, those who lacked filial piety to the elderly, stole or robbed other people's property, or even became monks might be put to death by their clans. Moreover, there were some new methods of execution much crueler than ever before, for example, burying them alive or sinking them in deep pools (*ibid.* 20-22).

The clans often wished that the local authorities could recognize their clan rules and thus they could be perfectly justifiable to implement them. The authorities were usually willing to acknowledge the legitimacy of these rules because the clan rules actually acted as a suitable complement to the national laws (Feng, Erkang 2009, 400; Chang, Jianhua 2005, 344). For instance, the rules of almost every clan often required the clan members to pay taxes on time, or not to get involved in any suspicious political activities in that once some of them were against the rule of the emperors, they would bring disaster upon the clan (Fei, Chengkang 2002, 22, 200-201).

A rural settlement (a village) was at the lowest level of administration from the Song Dynasty, named baojia (保甲) or lijia (里甲) under the administration of the county. However, such a settlement was also often a place where a clan was residentially concentrated in. Then the administrator of a baojia or lijia was usually filled by the clan head (Yü, Ying 2001, 72).

The political power of the ancient central governments never really extended to the rural areas. This resulted in the clan organizations exercising a great degree of autonomy in their settlements (Xie, Jianshe 2003). During the Qing Dynasty, a Chinese clan developed into an important social group in the rural society, maintaining the rural social order. And even the central government had to rely on the clans to control the rural people and maintain its rule (Ye, Juanli 2000). This situation continued until the end of the Qing Dynasty.

## 2.5 Characteristics of Ancient Chinese Clans

### 2.5.1 From the Aristocratic to the Plebeian

In the long development of Chinese clans from the Zhou to Qing Dynasties, it went through a process of plebification, in which the Chinese society dominated by the aristocrat clans was transformed into one dominated by the plebeian clans.

The Zhou Dynasty was the golden age of aristocrat clans. The whole country not only was ruled by the aristocrat clans, but also adopted the internal structure of a clan as the national administrative structure. Although the clans of common people had already existed, they had no power and status, and thus their development proceeded rather slowly. The leadership of the Chinese society was transferred to the literati clans in the Wei, Jin, and Southern and Northern Dynasties. The literati clans of that time originated from the Zhou literati clans, but were different from them. The former was not like the latter which had some degree of blood relationships with the emperor's clan. Some of them actually came from original plebeian clans. This was the first transformation of ancient Chinese clans, from the aristocratic to the plebeian.

However, there was still a strict hierarchy between the literati and the plebeian clans which were nearly two different worlds independent of each other at that time. The existence of the former to a great extent restrained the development of the latter and this was very similar to the situation in the Zhou Dynasty. Then Chinese clans underwent their second transformation between the Song and Yuan Dynasties during which the leadership of the Chinese society was transferred to the bureaucrat clans. Different from the literati clans, most of the bureaucrat ones were mainly composed of the common people. The social hierarchy between the bureaucrat clans and those of the common people had almost disappeared. Moreover, the existence of the former cleared away all obstacles in the road to development for the latter which subsequently received its full popularization and became the mainstay of the Chinese society in the Ming and Qing Dynasties.

Although the clan organizations were eventually popularly established by common people, the overall political power of Chinese clans was gradually weakened in their whole development process. Each of the transformations of Chinese clans was accompanied by a victory of the power of the central government over that of the clans. The Zhou Dynasty was the most prosperous period of the clan power, but it was ended by the establishment of political centralization. Then the central government began to expand its power from the capital to counties. Even though the literati clans successfully acquired overwhelming power, they were ultimately defeated by the central government by means of the imperial examination system. The central government substantially expanded its power to counties then. And the clan power was no longer a serious challenge to the central government in the Ming and Qing period. It seemed to be proved by this process that the power of clan organizations could not be strong enough to be relied upon to maintain a long-standing distribution of political and economic power in China. That is to say, if social relations became increasingly complex, the administrative system based on blood relationships would be inevitably and ruthlessly abolished.

The ancient Chinese rulers always attempted to establish and maintain a powerful central government and then unhesitatingly attacked and weakened the clan's political forces. However, the power of the Chinese central government had never been successfully expanded at the grass-roots level of rural areas. The China's

population had exceeded 400 million in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, but “the whole civil bureaucracy totaled on the statute books only about 20,000 civil officials plus about 7,000 military” (Fairbank 1995, 12). It was hardly possible for the government to rely on so few officials to control every corner of the empire. This offered great survival and development space for clan organizations which thus became the practical ruling power in rural society. Under such circumstances, the imperial government utilized the clan organizations as its supplementary power and relied on them to achieve governance over rural areas. The clans exercised a great degree of autonomy in their own settlements, but their autonomy had never been officially recognized by national laws. It was actually no more than under the acquiescence of the government.

Generally speaking, the ancient Chinese central government and the clan organizations maintained a delicate balance between each other. The country’s bureaucracy, army, and laws preserved the social order at the macro-level and so did the clans at the micro-level (Zhang, Zhongqiu 2004). Both of the sides tried to play their respective roles well and to avoid challenging each other’s authority or interests. If some clans destroyed the balance, say, excessively expanding their own power or evading corvee or tax, the government would not hesitate to take measures to punish them. Similarly, if the government hurt clan’s interests, such as excessively increasing taxes, the clans would revolt against the government. The stability and unity between the government and clans were thus tacitly maintained in a dynamic equilibrium.

### **2.5.2 The Value of Ancient Chinese Clan**

“If a particular way of grouping has lasted for many generations and centuries, without significant changes and even resisting them, we have to assume that the human beings concerned must find certain satisfactions or fulfillments which they have not found in other modes of grouping.” (Hsu 1963, 138)

- The Sentimental Value of Ancient Chinese Clans

Who am I? Where am I from and where are my roots? People of various races and cultures in the world might all ever ask themselves similar questions and have their respective answers to them. The ancient Chinese people's answers were that they were descendants of their ancestors, they came from their ancestors, and the ancestors were their roots. Sharing a common apical ancestor made the descendants come together and unite firmly to form a clan. The blood relationship among them would be gradually sublimated into some deep feelings for the clan during their long residentially concentrated lives. The deep feelings included the sense of security and belonging to the clan (Liu, Shikui 1996) and then the clan members could willingly maintain and comply with the clan order.

When the clan members went to attend the clan's sacrificial rites, each of them wanted to show not only respect to the ancestors of the clan, but also his identity as a member of the clan. Otherwise, if someone lost this identity, he would lose his roots as well as his sense of security and belonging. And this would be rather difficult for him to accept. When a leaf was hanging from the branch, it would live, but if fell, it would die. Thus all the clan members gathered tightly under the banner of their common ancestors.

Ancient Chinese people always traced their ancestors as far back as possible. This reflected a profound, fervent, and persistent sense of history deeply rooted in Chinese people's minds. Moreover, the farther a clan could trace its ancestors back, the more historical and sacred the clan was (Qian 1995 (3)). Then ancient Chinese governments usually strictly limited the respective numbers of generations of ancestors that people of different status could make sacrifice to, to distinguish the hierarchy among these people.

In everyday life, the clan members took the teachings of their ancestors as the supreme command and reverently complied with them. And meanwhile, the ancestral hall made the originally intangible psychological feelings concrete and become a real force. It not only fostered the sense of honor and identity of the clan members, but also symbolized the clan's source of value (Qian 2009, 168-169).

- The Utility Value of Ancient Chinese Clans

Besides the sentimental value, ancient Chinese clans also had a high utility value.

Under ancient production conditions, it was hard for Chinese people who were mostly engaged in agricultural production to survive only by virtue of individual ability, so the family had a special significance to them (Liu, Shikui 1996). The family was not only a group in which the members lived together, but also the one in which they worked together. The members in a family cooperated with each other to ensure sufficient labor for agricultural production, and at the same time to give security to the ones who were not able to work. However, the viability of an individual family was still quite limited and it was necessary for an individual family to cooperate with others in a broader context, especially in the face of large-scale disasters. Blood relationship was a good ready-made tie for the families which shared common ancestors. It was natural for them to come together and form a clan organization. The most important utility value of the clan was to unite the clan members and ensure their respective survival and development in the mysterious and dangerous nature by virtue of collective strength.

In fact, individual families faced risks from both the natural and the human worlds. And the survival pressures caused by the latter were often more intense than those caused by the former because natural disasters could not happen to a family every day after all, but social competition always followed like a shadow. A family having one adult labor might be able to survive, but if it had to compete with another which had two or more adult labor, the family would be at a big disadvantage and even unable to maintain its stable life. So even though individual families could respectively survive in the contest with nature, it was still necessary for them to unite together in their contests with other families or clans.

It seemed possible that the individual families could join with others of different descents in forming an alliance to strengthen their competitiveness. But compared with such alliances, the clans, particularly the large ones, had an obvious advantage, that is, families within each clan were bound by blood relationship which made the families more united and cooperative with each other than those within the alliance.

The large literati clans of the Wei, Jin, and Southern and Northern Dynasties gave a good example. A large clan could possess more resources than individual families. With the aid of the patriarchal clan system, it could effectively manage and distribute the resources within itself, and compete in its entirety with individual families or small clans. Individual families and small clans had no competitiveness to speak of before large clans so that a large number of them went bankrupt and had to seek refuge with large clans (Zhang, Jian 2004). And that is why many people attempted to forge their origins in order to infiltrate into literati clans.

In view of the great utility value of the clan, the individuals and families within a clan would all make full use of the value. An ancient Chinese usually appeared in society as a member of a certain clan rather than an individual (Feng, Erkang 2009, 28). If he got involved in a dispute with others, he would request his clan to help him. On the other hand, the clan was also actively to promote its own utility value and it was the most important way to enhance and maintain its own political status. That was exactly what the literati clans did. They made every effort to obtain political resources, and unscrupulously distribute them within themselves to ensure the enjoyment and maintenance of monopoly power for all generations. So did the clans from the Song Dynasty. When someone passed the imperial examinations, becoming a government official, he would be actively to seek benefits for his own clan as well as to consolidate the social status of his clan. By virtue of huge utility value, the clan organizations and the related patriarchal clan ideas had already rooted themselves deeply into the Chinese society (*ibid.*).

Since the blood relationship was a natural tie for the members of a descent group, each of them automatically became a member from the date of his birth and would keep this identity in his lifetime. The blood relationship could be easily transformed into a relationship of interests unless there were some external forces applied to prevent this kind of transformation. The external forces could refer to a new social relationship, or a new modality of interest distribution. Although there was a very strong cohesion within a clan, making the clan members comply with patriarchal clan order to live, it was not impossible to break this cohesion. As mentioned previously, the clan power was constantly weakened by the central government in the clan's development process. So the clan's utility value, in fact, became increasingly

devaluated. It can be seen that the utility value of the clan was not irreplaceable, and the dependence on the clan was not the only way to seek interests, either. When the Song government implemented the imperial examination system, providing a better way for individual families to seek survival and glory, the individual families rapidly abandoned the original clan social order to embrace the new system. Actually, only because no dynasties in China's history ever successfully expanded their power to the grass-roots level of society, could clans exist and reflect their utility value there for such a long time.

It needs to be mentioned that there was not only cooperation, but also competition among families or Fangs within a clan. Therefore, an ancient Chinese clan, on the one hand, resisted external natural and social risks for internal individual families in the absence of governmental authority in grass-roots areas, and on the other hand, controlled the internal competitions within an acceptable range.

### 2.5.3 Ancient Chinese Clan: A World of Relatives

The members of a clan believed that they were descended from a common ancestor, so they usually thought of themselves as relatives. The ancient Chinese society was in fact a world of relatives with a complex kinship network.

- Interpersonal Relationships within a Clan

Ancient Chinese people used wu fu (五服; five mourning grades) system to determine the degree of kinship. "Fu" could be simply defined as a suit of mourning apparel that someone would put on when one of his relatives died. Fu was divided into five grades: zhan shuai (斩衰), qi shuai (齐衰), da gong (大功), xiao gong (小功), and si ma (缌麻), thus collectively called wu (five) fu. The wu fu system was first recorded in "Yi Li" (仪礼; Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial)<sup>25</sup>. The Tang government drew up a new one based on "Yi li". And later dynasties regarded the Zhou and Tang wu fu system as models which were constantly revised to be adapted to the times (Inoue 2008, 1-2).

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<sup>25</sup> Yi Li was a Chinese classical text about etiquettes and rites of the Shang and Zhou Dynasties. The main part of this book had been lost and the existing seventeen chapters were compiled during the Han Dynasty.

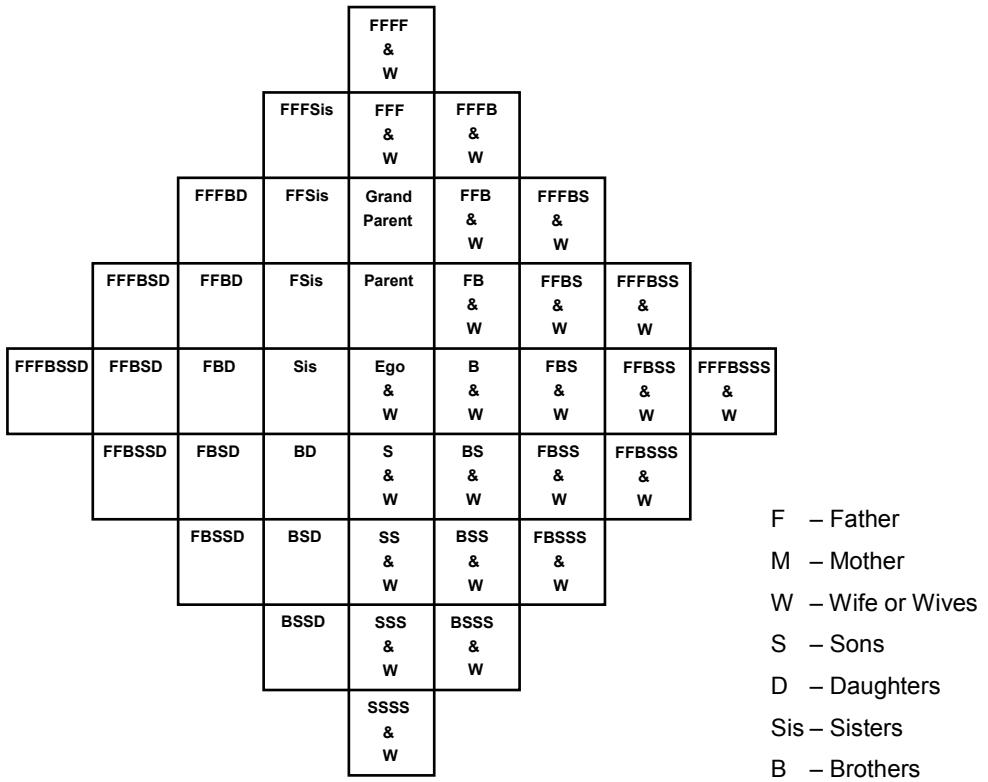


Figure 2-1: Wu Fu Relationship

(Modified from Hsu 1963, 64, Diagram I)

Under the wu fu system, the scope of everyone's relatives included those from his great-great-grandfather down to his great-great-grandson<sup>26</sup>. Specifically, "those who are (were) within the wu fu relationship of an individual (designated here as ego) are (were): his lineal descendants to son's son's son's son and their spouses; his brothers and their agnatic descendants to the third descending generation and their spouses; his father's brothers and their agnatic descendants to the second descending generation as well as their spouses; his father's father's brother and their agnatic descendants to the first descending generation as well as their spouses; his father's father's father's brothers and their agnatic descendants to ego's own generation as well as their spouses; and the sisters (but not their husbands and children) of all of the men included." (Hsu 1963, 63) (Fig. 2-1) Therefore, the relatives of each person, that is, his kinship network was composed of nine generations which were collectively called "jiu zu" (九族). According to the wu fu system, "the closer the relationship as measured by patrilineal kinship linearity, the greater are (were) ego's

<sup>26</sup> To a person's life expectancy, these two endpoints were the limits for him to possibly fulfill his mourning obligations.

mourning obligations, which are (were) expressed by lengths of mourning and other symbols." (ibid) The people within the scope of wu fu were all the ego's close relatives, but a clan might have developed for many generations and plenty of clan members would have been outside of the wu fu scope, and they theoretically could no longer be considered as the ego's relatives, only sharing the common descent with him.

There were many kin terms in Chinese. These terms were not meaningless, but of practical values as Friedrich Engels (2004, 46) ever said: "The terms father, child, brother and sister are no mere honorific titles, but carry with them absolutely definite and very serious mutual obligations, the totality of which forms an essential part of the social constitution of these peoples." In the clan, the kinship network was an integration of blood and social relationships and determined each member's identity, not only the generational, but also the social.

When someone needed help, those who had closer relationships with him in descent had more responsibility to help him. Similarly, when other people asked for his help, he would often first determine the distance of descent between the people concerned and him before deciding whether to help or how much help he should give. This model of interpersonal relationships naturally had a hierarchy, derived from the difference in descent and integrated into social relations. This kind of hierarchy was well theorized and rationalized by the Confucian doctrine.

Confucianism did not agree that people should be equal to each other because Confucians thought that the differences among people were inevitable and then stressed that a hierarchy should be established to correspond to the inevitable differences<sup>27</sup> (Qü, Tongzu 2003, 292). The differences were mainly reflected in the fact that people had different capacities, some intelligent but some not. This would determine each individual's status in society. The differences were also reflected in gender, age, and especially generational position. Every member in a clan had a

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<sup>27</sup> In the face of the reality of human society, the Confucians acknowledged the existence of differences among people and emphasized the necessity of hierarchy, but they were not preaching the law of the jungle. On the contrary, the basic teachings of Confucianism, such as on "ren" (仁; benevolence), "yi" (义; righteousness), "li" (礼; propriety), "zhi" (智; wisdom), and "xin" (信; faith), were to reconcile these differences. In other words, Confucianism on the one hand revealed the inherent differences among people, and on the other hand, taught people how to live in harmony.

certain genealogical distance between himself and the apical ancestor. It was determined by his birth and unchangeable forever. The differences in genealogical distance would determine each individual's status in the clan, that is, the closer a clan member was to the apical ancestor in descent, the higher status he had in the clan and the more respect he deserved. Therefore, the Confucians respectively enacted various behavioral norms, collectively called "li", for each social class. Everyone should comply with proper li in accordance with his own status and if all the people could do so, an ideal society would be realized (*ibid.* 294-300).

The ancient Chinese patriarchal clan system was established mainly based on Confucianism. It drew hierarchical distinctions between the young and the elderly, the lineal and the collateral in the clan, and attempted to put every member in a proper position within the clan. Specifically, the young clan members should always respect and obey the elderly ones. If a conflict broke out between a young and an elderly person, the young would usually be blamed and punished first even though he had no faults at all. The rights and benefits of lineal relatives, especially of close ones, should have priority over those of collateral relatives to be guaranteed and protected. Ancient Chinese clans generally stressed such hierarchy in the relationships of their members.

- Unwritten Rules within a Clan

The norms existing in the clan could be divided into two types, the written and the unwritten ones. The former referred to various family disciplines and clan rules, and the latter were customs, traditions, conventions, and taboos tacitly accepted and complied with by clan members. These unwritten clan rules were formed on the basis of clan members' daily lives and passed down from generation to generation (Zhang, Peiguo 2002).

Although the unwritten clan rules were invisible, each clan member would touch them when he was a littler child, and be gradually familiar with and mastered them during his long life in the clan. In this process, the clan members converted the unwritten clan rules into their intrinsic criteria of ethics and codes of conduct, and would consciously or unconsciously pass them down to the next generation (Wang, Huning 1991, 25).

The maintenance of clan order in fact mainly relied on the unwritten clan rules rather than the written ones which usually acted as the last line of defense of the clan order. As the unwritten clan rules were usually based on people's tacit understanding, their practical implementation was inevitably full of flexibility, often changed under different circumstances. For example, if someone violated some rules, he might escape punishment as long as he could get enough support from relatives. As the clan was a world of relatives, it was the rule of the rules to gain support from relatives as much as possible.

The clan rules usually only applied to the members within the clan. Although all kinds of clan norms were in accordance with the principles of Confucianism, they were still quite different from each other due to the diverse actual situations of clans.

- Property Boundaries of a Clan, a Fang, or a Family

The property boundaries of a clan were usually very definite. If two clans shared a common forest, the ownership of each tree near the boundary would be determined carefully by the two clans. The clan members would generally be generous and lenient, but on the other hand, they often haggled over every ounce in the interests of the clan without any compromise and prepared to resolutely safeguard them even resort to force, and even just for several trees.

There were also property boundaries respectively among Fangs, families, and even sons in a family, but their degrees of definition reduced in turn. The members of a family often lived under the same roof for interdependence and cooperation, so it was difficult to clearly divide the fruits of their labor and their property boundaries were generally indefinite at all. As for individual families, they had a mutual relationship with each other, but each one had its own independently private property whose boundaries were more definite than those of the personal property. Fang was almost a complete group, and the boundaries among Fangs were much more definite. If some families intended to sell their real estate, they must select buyers first in their own Fang. Only if there were no buyers in their own Fang or the buyers bid too low could they consider those of the other Fangs.

It could be seen that the degrees of definition of the property boundaries among individuals, families, Fangs, or clans were inverse of the degrees of interdependence among them, and related to their ability to survive alone. As adult sons thought they already had enough capacity to support themselves, they would decide to leave their parents to establish respective independent families. Otherwise they had to continue to share common property. And the reason why a clan had definite property boundaries was that the clan to a large extent had been able to achieve self-sufficiency.

It is hardly possible to precisely determine the degrees of definition of those boundaries because the boundaries themselves were of great flexibility. Some individuals, families, or Fangs had definite property boundaries but some others might not. Some property boundaries were not definite in the past but maybe on the contrary now. However, this flexibility did not lead to chaos in the property relations within a clan because everybody was a master to perceive and control it. There would always inevitably be some conflicts over property among people no matter how definite the boundaries were. Anger and resentment resulting from serious conflicts would be lodged in the memory of the involved persons, families, Fangs, or clans, and be easily passed down from one generation to another. Being long residentially concentrated in a clan always could make the abstract memory be projected onto concrete objects and thus kept clear. And this would be most likely to trigger new conflicts and further deepen the grievances of those concerned. In short, the complex interest relationships within a clan would eventually been integrated into the blood of the clan members and firmly solidified in the clan.

- The Integration of Blood and Geographical Relations

A clan usually began when its apical ancestor decided to settle his family in somewhere<sup>28</sup>. The original family would gradually expand by virtue of continuous procreation over several generations. During this process sons inherited the land from their father and continued living and farming there. Besides the blood relationship,

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<sup>28</sup> Each clan usually had a beautiful myth about its establishment mainly narrating the arduous struggles and great achievements of the apical ancestor. It strengthened the sense of honor of the descendants and became an important part of their spiritual support (Wang, Huning 1991, 73-74).

they were bound together by the land which was a necessary condition for an extended family to develop into a clan. Each clan had definite geographical boundaries to delimit its territory. This territory was a physical shell of the clan and the geographical relations were projection of the blood (Wang, Huning 1991, 74).

Since there were no convenient transportation networks in ancient China, rural settlements in fact were separated from each other (*ibid.* 30-34), or, in other words, enclosed respectively in their own territory, just like isolated islands in the ocean. Such closed and isolated environment was the perfect breeding ground for the birth of a clan. Moreover, the means of livelihood provided by the ancient Chinese society were very limited. Even though people wanted to get rid of the shackles of blood relationship, they still could not leave the land on which they relied for existence. Under the dual constraints of the blood and geographical relations, the families with a common descent had to be residentially concentrated in their settlement from generation to generation, and formed a circulatory system of self-supply and self-consumption within themselves. This kind of self-sufficiency made clan members have a strong characteristic of introversion and close themselves in their settlement, their small independent kingdom.

## **2.6 Ancient Chinese Clan Settlements**

Ancient Chinese rural settlements can be called “clan settlements” because almost each of them was established by one or several clans and the clans would be residentially concentrated in their respective settlements from generation to generation, even for centuries, making the spatial fabric and pattern of each settlement branded deep marks of the clan life.

### **2.6.1 Settlement Site Selection**

At the beginning of establishing settlements, the ancestors of the clans were usually very prudent to select the settlement sites even though it was still hard for them to plan the internal spatial structures of the settlements in detail. The basic principles of site selection were to meet the needs of self-sufficiency in agricultural



Figure 2-2: A Village in Western Hunan Province Illustrating a Settlement Site within the Bend of a Stream    Source: Fan, Wei 1992, 43

production, not only for then population, but also for the future it would perhaps get a great increase. They usually established their settlements at the places where there were large tracts of arable land, and importantly, were close to water (Feng, Erkang 2005, 32 (6)). They thus had to pay particular attention to flood prevention and for this reason, settlements near rivers were usually located at the sediment-depositing side of river bends and at proper elevations (Fig. 2-2). In fact, before those ancestors decided to permanently settle down somewhere, they would make comprehensive evaluations of local environmental quality by virtue of not only their practical experience, but also feng shui knowledge.

“Feng shui” (风水; literal meaning: wind-water), also known as “kan yü” (堪舆), has been defined by Herbert Chatley (1917, 175) as “the art of adapting the residences of the living and the dead so as to cooperate and harmonise with the local currents of the cosmic breath”. The concepts of feng shui originated a very long time ago and relevant descriptions first emerged in many ancient books, such as the Book of Songs (诗经; Pinyin: Shi Jing), Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial (仪礼; Pinyin: Yi Li), Rites of Zhou (周礼; Pinyin: Zhou Li), and Classic of Filial Piety (孝经; Pinyin: Xiao

Jing). The theories of feng shui were considerably developed during the Zhou Dynasty, but official records began from the Han Dynasty. The systematic and comprehensive theories of feng shui emerged no later than the Six Dynasties (220-589) (Guo, Zhongduan 1998, 277).

The feng shui knowledge could be used for selecting the sites of buildings, such as palaces, dwelling houses, and even tombs, or of settlements such as villages, towns, and cities before construction. It could also be used to evaluate the environmental quality of existing buildings or settlements. In its practical application, all sorts of factors related to the object, including terrain, water, sunshine, wind, surrounding landscape, and local social customs, should be taken into account (Shang 1998, 26).

The feng shui knowledge was actually based on the people's long-term careful observation of nature as well as their life experiences, and the relevant theories fully embodied the traditional Chinese conceptions of the universe, environment and aesthetics (*ibid*). Ancient Chinese people believed that their fate was closely related with the natural environments they lived in. "If houses of the living and tombs of the dead were not properly adjusted, evil effects of most serious character would injure the inhabitants of the houses and the descendants of those whose bodies lay in the tombs, while conversely good siting would favour their wealth, health and happiness." (Needham/Wang 1956, 359) Chinese people wished a feng shui master not only to forecast their fates through analyzing and evaluating the feng shui qualities of their current respective residential environments, but also to guide them to change the ominous feng shui features into auspicious ones. For example, at the beginning of the construction of a rural settlement, the clan would usually employ a feng shui master to offer guidance on settlement planning, help them to achieve their specific aspirations for safety, wealth and success in the future. This made the feng shui knowledge always adulterated with a lot of metaphysical ingredients and regarded by Joseph Needham as a Chinese divination "depending on the earth" (*ibid*)<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> Scholars have developed two diametrically opposite attitudes towards feng shui knowledge, putting the application of feng shui in an awkward position in contemporary China. Many scholars consider feng shui as a pseudo-science filled with self-contradictory and preposterous concepts, despite the fact that it contains some essential elements for developing scientific thinking (Needham/Wang 1956,

After having settled in some place, each clan would often stress the superiority of its settlement location to the descendants. The location was the result of deliberation of the ancestors who attempted to find an ideal environment for the survival and development of descendants, and to the descendants, their ancestors could not make mistakes. By means of emphasis on the superiority of settlement location, the clan could further preach the reasons for its prosperity or the possibility to the clan members, which was an important method to enhance the people's sense of pride and to unite them together tightly. In the Nanxi River area, the geographical conditions of the settlements were often particularly praised in the prefaces of local clans' genealogy books (Chen, Zhihua 2002, 70).

## 2.6.2 General Spatial Structure of an Ancient Chinese Clan Settlement

An ancient Chinese clan settlement had a very distinct spatial structure corresponding to the social structure of the clan. A clan usually consisted of several Fangs, each of which consisted of many nuclear or extended families. The members of a family usually lived together in a compound, named "family-compound" in this dissertation. Most of families of a Fang were also residentially concentrated and their family-compounds composed a community, named "Fang-community" in this dissertation. A clan settlement consisted of several such Fang-communities, each of which consisted of many family-compounds in the meantime (Fig. 2-3). An ancestral hall, as the symbol of a clan, would be constructed at the most prominent position in the settlement.

A Fang-community was similar to a clan settlement in spatial structure. The families living in a Fang-community had more close blood relationships with each other than with those in the other Fangs, and thus to a certain extent formed a closed

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346; He, Xiaoxin/Luo 1995, 4), but many other ones think it is scientific even though they also admit that it was always integrated with superstition in ancient times (Cheng, Jianjun/Kong 2005, 181-186; Yu, Haomin/Zhu 1994, 234-245). There have been no formal and systematic education courses on feng shui in Chinese universities and colleges yet. Some people learn the feng shui knowledge from their elders, some from experienced masters and some from ancient books just by themselves. A feng shui master is engaged by clients to improve the feng shui qualities of their residential environments. If his suggestions often seem to produce desired results, he will be a god to those clients. Otherwise he would be denounced as a charlatan.

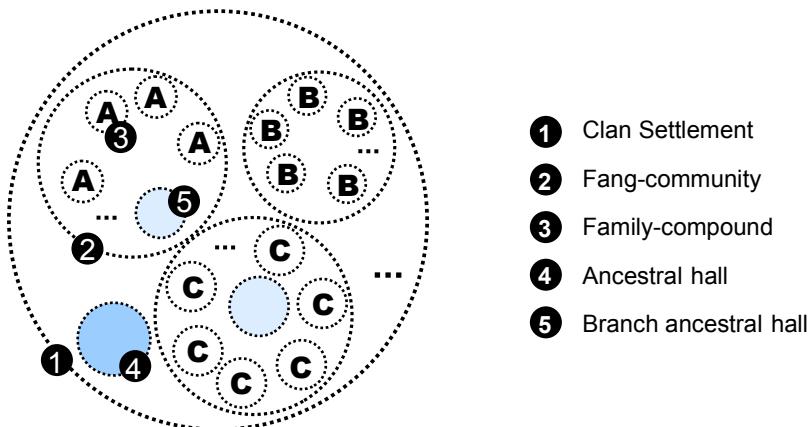


Figure 2-3: The Spatial Structure of a Traditional Chinese Clan Settlement

community with a branch ancestral hall as their symbol, just like a small intact cell in the settlement body. When the Fangs accumulated a certain amount of common property, they would first jointly build the ancestral hall of the entire clan, and afterwards decided whether to build their own branch ancestral halls according to their respective conditions.

Although the Fangs were subordinate to the clan, they in fact developed independently without too many restrictions from the latter. It was difficult to avoid imbalance among the Fangs, in population or economic strength (Li, Xiaofeng 2005, 28-29), and therefore, not all of them could afford construction of the branch ancestral halls for themselves. Moreover, the development of a Fang itself was uneven, either. One initially flourishing might eventually decline. This made the spatial development of the settlement have no definite and specific direction and always dynamical and uneven.

Clan settlements always showed a variety of general plans although they had the similar spatial structure of “settlement, Fang-community, family-compound”, corresponding to the clan social structure of “clan, Fang, family”. It could largely result from the great difference in topographic conditions of these settlements. After all, the people’s ability to remake nature was still very limited at that time, and moreover, there were no specific uniform patterns on settlement planning that could be followed by them. So the settlements generally suited themselves perfectly to the local topographic conditions.

### 2.6.3 Ancestral Hall

The layout of an ancestral hall was nearly no different from an ordinary dwelling house. In fact, the layouts of most types of ancient Chinese buildings, such as palaces, temples, or mausoleums were based on a common prototype, and these different types of buildings could all be looked upon as dwelling houses, i.e. a palace was the house of the emperor, a temple the house of god, and a mausoleum the house of dead person. So an ancestral hall was exactly the house of the dead ancestors, precisely, of the dead ancestors' souls.

There was a complicated and strict hierarchy of ancient Chinese buildings, corresponding to the status hierarchy of the building owners. The rank of each Chinese traditional building could be roughly recognized from the number of jian (间) and the width of the central jian (当心间 ; Pinyin: dang xin jian). “Chinese traditional architecture regards the space marked by adjacent frame supports as a jian, the basic area unit in a building.”(Steinhardt 1984, 13) (Fig. 2-4) Individual dwelling houses of common people were usually three jian wide, and temples or palaces were generally more than five jian wide. Even with the same three jian wide, the building with the wider central jian was always of the greater volume<sup>30</sup>. The building’s volume was an important indicator of its rank. The greater one was always of higher rank because only people of higher status could afford to purchase larger timbers and construct bigger buildings<sup>31</sup>. A jointly funded ancestral hall was always the largest and most magnificent building in the settlement.

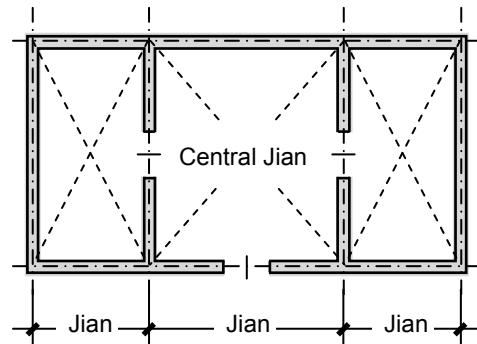
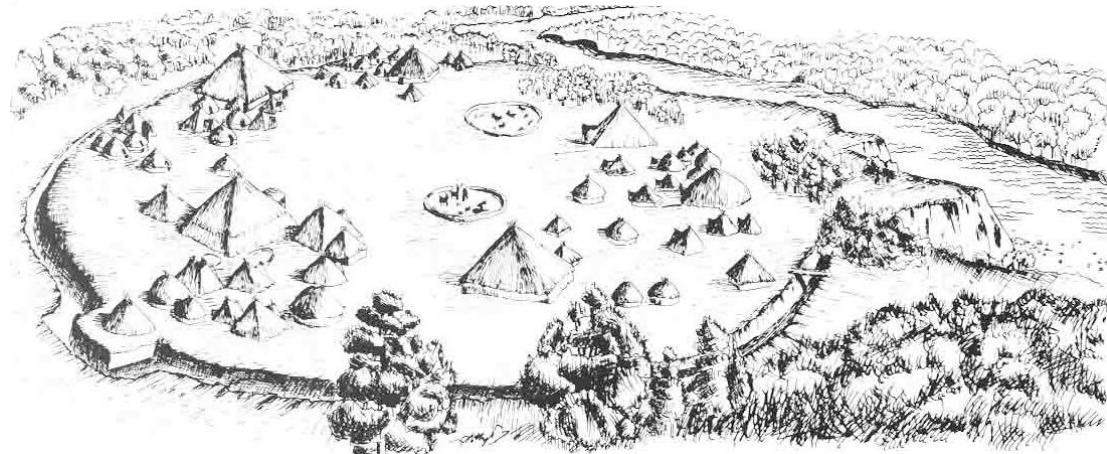


Figure 2-4: Jian and Central Jian

<sup>30</sup> A module system was used in ancient Chinese architectural design to maintain an appropriate proportion among the various parts of a building. Although the width of the central jian was not the basic module, it to a large extent determined the widths of other jian and the heights of the columns.

<sup>31</sup> Ancient Chinese buildings were mostly constructed of wood, and so the building volume depended upon the size of timbers. The larger timbers were always more expensive.

The ancestral hall, as the most important building in a settlement, was generally located in the central part of the settlement or near the settlement entrance. The first kind of arrangement could be traced back to six thousand years ago. The site of a primitive clan settlement, named Jiang Zhai (姜寨), was excavated in now Xi'an (Fig. 2-5). According to the archaeological research and restoration, the residential area of Jiang Zhai covered over 20,000m<sup>2</sup> and there was a square located in the center part shared by all the residents. The square was surrounded by more than one hundred of buildings which were divided into five groups, belonging to five clans respectively. The most important building in each group was named “large house” and clustered by twenty to thirty small or medium-sized houses which were the dwellings of the clan members. The large house belonged to the clan leader and was the religious and political center of the clan. In another settlement site, named Ban Po (半坡), the residential area was over 30,000 m<sup>2</sup> and consisted of 46 buildings including a large house (Fig. 2-6). There were two clans living there and one was much larger than the other. Only the larger one owned a large house located in the central part of the residential area and dominating the square space.



Source: www.sach.gov.cn/Portals/0/13 陕西临潼姜寨村落复原图.Jpg

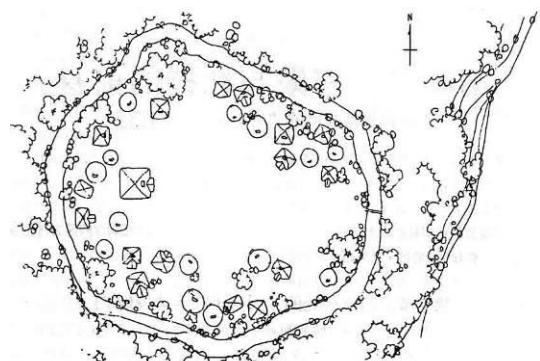


Figure 2-5 (top):  
The Restoration of Jiang Zhai

Figure 2-6 (bottom):  
The Restoration of Ban Po

Source: Hou/Li 2002, 4

As time went on, clan members did not so collectively work in the square as in primitive society anymore. Previous open square space thus lost its existence value and could hardly be found in settlements. However, the ancestral hall replaced the large house and still occupied the central part in many clan settlements, playing the similar role of the large house as a religious and political center. The courtyard of the ancestral hall to a certain extent had the similar function of the square to assemble people, but only for some clan activities held on seldom specific days. So, the courtyard more often existed as an auxiliary part of the ancestral hall.

The most important building being located in the central part of a region was reflected not only in primitive settlements, but also in later carefully planned cities, especially in capitals, for example, Beijing City of the Ming and Qing Dynasties (Fig. 2-7). “Centre”(中; Pinyin: zhong) did not belong to any certain directions and thus had a profound meaning in traditional Chinese philosophy. If everything had both negative and positive aspects, like yin(阴) and yang(阳), the centre was just between them to be an absolute harmony, the most perfect and ideal state that Chinese people longed to reach (Xü, Keqian 1999, 102-110; Wu 2003, 29). This concept was integrated into traditional China’s wu xing (五行; Five Elements) (Table 2-1), which gave a strong ideological color to the central

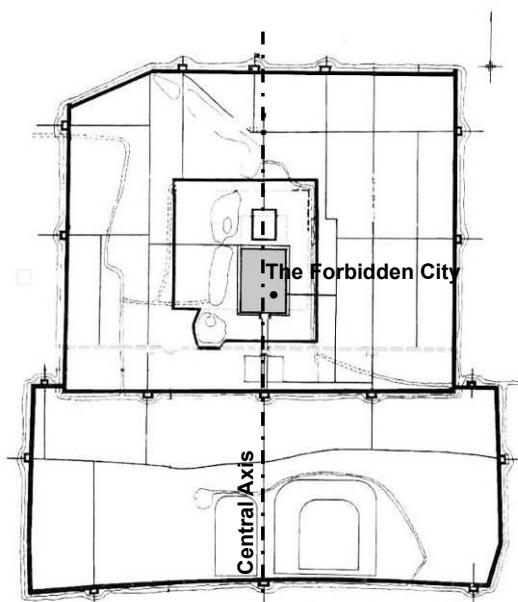


Figure 2-7: Plan of Beijing City of the Ming

and Qing Dynasties

Source:[http://image4.club.sohu.com/lz\\_images/data/up](http://image4.club.sohu.com/lz_images/data/up)

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Table 2-1: Five Elements Correspondences

Five Elements	Wood	Fire	Earth	Metal	Water
Five Directions	East	South	Center	West	North
Five Seasons	Spring	Summer	Late Summer	Autumn	Winter
Five Colors	Green	Red	Yellow	White	Black
Five Planets	Jupiter	Mars	Saturn	Venus	Mercury

position and made it sacred in a region. It was natural that ancestral halls, the shrines of clans, were usually located in the central positions of the settlements.

Since the ancestral hall was the dwelling house belonging to the departed ancestors, the clan members had better not go to the ancestral hall casually in normal times so as not to disturb their honorable ancestors, except for holding sacrificial activities there to show their respect on specific days. Therefore, although the ancestral hall occupied the most important place in the settlement, it in fact was not closely linked to the daily lives of the clan members at all.

The ancestral hall was also usually constructed close to the settlement entrance rather than being hidden in the centre. It could more naturally make the ancestral hall a landmark easily seen by people in the settlement. Dressed in gorgeous clothes, nobody is still willing to stay in the darkness. That is, as standing near the settlement entrance where there were higher pedestrian flows, the ancestral hall could more fully display itself in front of the people and become a spatial focus by virtue of its large volume. Additionally, since the ancestral hall was dedicated to the dead people, some clans were worried about it bringing adverse effects to the living people who resided nearby, and for this reason, it seemed a good solution to construct the ancestral hall near the settlement entrance, properly separating it from the residential area.

The ancestral hall was a place not only to offer sacrifices to the ancestors, but also to organize entertainment activities. A kind of local drama named “Yongjia miscellaneous drama” (永嘉杂剧; Pinyin: yong jia za jü) was popular in the Nanxi area as early as the late Northern Song Dynasty (Liu, Peilin 1998, 26). Xü Wei (1521-1593) (1989, 15) ever mentioned that in the early development stage of the Yongjia miscellaneous drama, it had few specific tunes or rhythms and merely came from the spontaneous singing of the people in streets. But it was so widely loved in the local areas that the clans there usually invited people to their settlements to perform the dramas on festivals. Watching drama performance became an important part of life for these settlement residents.

In the eyes of many local government officials, the content of these dramas was very indecent and seriously detrimental to morals, so they often prohibited people from holding and watching such performances. However, the Yongjia miscellaneous drama had already rooted itself deeply among the local people. Lu Rong (1436-1494)

ever said that many Yongjia people learnt to perform the dramas. Some of them were children of decent families, but they did have no compunction about their conduct<sup>32</sup> (1985, 124). In order to cope with the officials, people found an ingenious excuse for their performing and watching the dramas. They claimed that the drama performances were dedicated to ancestors and gods. Local authorities accepted this excuse, actually mainly because the prohibition proved of little avail, and reached a compromise with the people who subsequently could dedicate drama performances to the ancestors or gods, but the content of the dramas must be elegant (Chen, Zhihua 2002, 150). It was uncertain whether the drama content became elegant enough, but stages were thus constructed in ancestral halls which were consequently used as entertainment centers in the clan settlements.

All the Fangs within a clan would seek to establish their own branch ancestral halls. As a result, there might be several branch ancestral halls in a settlement. Since an ancestral hall was the symbol of the clan or Fang, its construction quality was directly related to the dignity of the clan or Fang. Both clan and Fang would make every effort to build their ancestral halls as magnificent as possible (*ibid.* 146-147). And the larger and richer a clan or Fang was, the higher the construction quality of the ancestral hall would be (Deng 1991).

#### **2.6.4 Basic Characteristics of Ancient Chinese Clan Settlements**

China is a country with a vast territory and the geographical conditions vary widely from place to place. Different climates, topographies, and materials available for building houses made ancient Chinese people in different rural areas have developed varied styles of vernacular architecture and varied patterns of building arrangement. Nevertheless, the ancient Chinese people shared a common culture, i.e. the patriarchal clan culture, resulting in some common characteristics shared by clan settlements throughout the country.

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<sup>32</sup> The performers had very low social status in ancient Chinese society. They were considered the same as the prostitutes engaged in the morally corrupt career.

- High Degree of Organization in Settlement Construction

An ancient Chinese clan was a kin group with a high degree of organization. The clan members had to submit to unified leadership and management of the clan for their common interests and purposes. This significantly reduced the obstacles preventing the clan from formulating and implementing settlement planning. And moreover, necessary human and material resources could be mobilized and coordinated by the clan for capital construction projects which usually could not be carried out by individuals. Consequently, a relatively high degree of organization was shown in the overall construction of the clan settlement.

For example, it was essential for the clans in south China to build comprehensive ditch systems in their respective settlements because there was always a lot of rain in summer. If some residents had conflicts with each other in determining ditch locations, they would find solutions to resolve their conflicts soon, usually under the mediation and coordination of the clan, to ensure that the whole construction of the settlement's ditch system would not be adversely affected by them.

- Building Settlements into Enclosed Fortresses

An ancient Chinese clan developed itself into a tightly organized group because, as mentioned in Chapter 2.5.3, not only the clan members were bonded by blood ties, but also they kept being residentially concentrated in their territory for generations. As farming in their own land had let the clan members achieve self-sufficiency, they were not interested in the outside world which usually carried more risks than benefits in their eyes. So, it could be seen that ancient Chinese clans generally enclosed their own settlements with walls, only opening some gates for villagers passing through to go to their fields.

This seemed to be due to the necessity of defending clan members against animals, bandits, or even other clans, especially as local governments never successfully extended their administrative power to grassroots society and assumed full responsibility for maintaining security and order there. However, besides the rural settlements, ancient Chinese cities were also enclosed within walls, respectively, even though they did not face the same security threats as those rural settlements. It

is very difficult to evaluate the effects of these city walls in protecting residents in war times. The wall “seems to have evolved into an independent form that has gained autonomy from its content, i.e. security and control.” (Hassenpflug 2010, 52) Walls could provide residents with the necessary sense of security in ordinary times. And moreover, just like house walls, settlement walls could directly and definitely determine a region and distinguish between interior and exterior, making the internal and external residents different in their respective identities.

- Hierarchy Embodied within Buildings

Chinese scholar Hou Youbin ever pointed out that the hierarchy of consumption among people strictly corresponded to the hierarchy of their social statuses in ancient China. It was reflected in not only settlement planning but also detail design of single building. He further expounded that the hierarchy of ancient Chinese buildings lay in four respects: 1) location; 2) number; 3) quality and 4) pattern (Hou 1997, 163-169).

The Taihe Dian (太和殿, Hall of Supreme Harmony) (Fig. 2-8) is a good example. It is the most magnificent hall where important ceremonies, such as the enthroning of a new emperor and the promulgation of imperial edicts, were held, in the Forbidden City, Beijing. And “it was the symbol of imperial power” (Institute of the History of Natural Sciences 1986, 138). The hall is located in the central position of the main courtyard of the Forbidden City (Fig. 2-9), with a width of 11 jian. It established an unbroken record in ancient China. Its roof was covered with glorious golden glazed

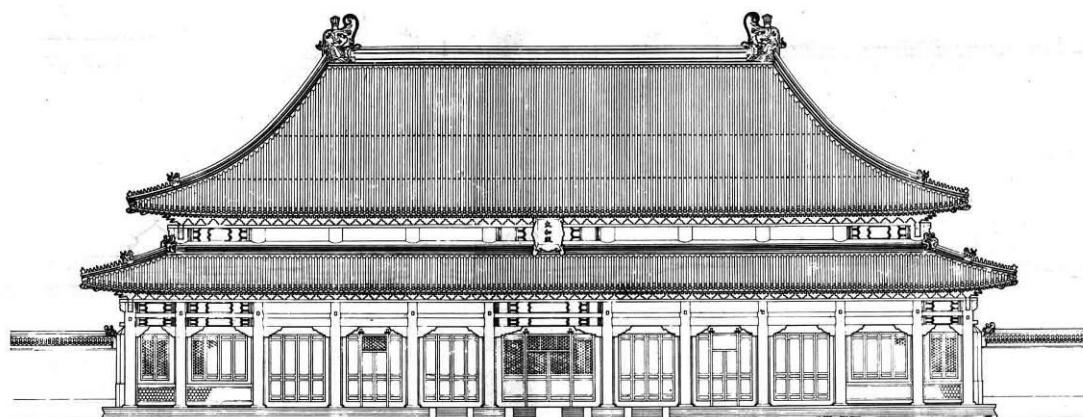
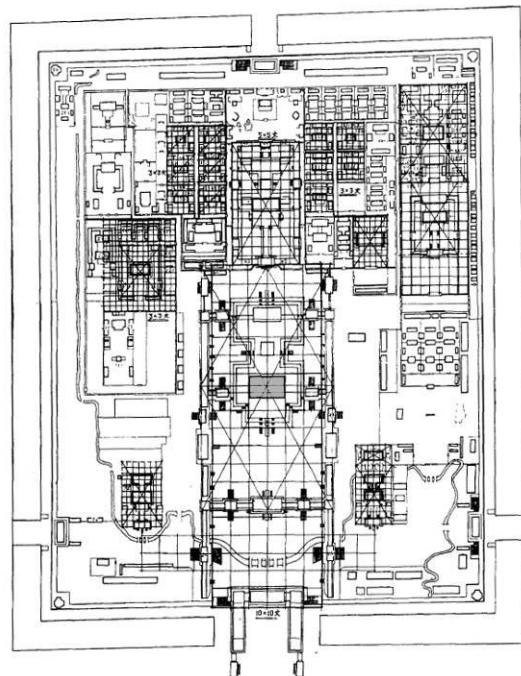


Figure 2-8: Elevation of the Taihe Dian      Source: Liu, Dunzhen 1980, 289

tiles which were of superb technical quality and exclusively used for imperial dwellings. And many of its construction components were decorated with dragon patterns which could also never be seen on the buildings of both imperial officials and folks. Between the buildings of imperial officials and folks there was a strict hierarchy in the same way.

Rural people shared roughly the same economic or social status. Their hierarchy was not as obvious as that in cities and in fact based more on their patriarchal clan relationships than on their political relations. This was physically reflected in the construction of ancestral halls in clan settlements. As discussed comprehensively in the last chapter, a clan's ancestral hall was always located in the most prominent position in the settlement and the clan would build it as magnificent as they could.

Above characteristics were rather perfectly embodied in Tulou (土楼) (Fig. 2-10), an unique type of rural clan settlement in mountainous areas in southwestern Fujian Province, China. Fujian Tulou seemed "first to have appeared in the Song and Yuan Dynasties (11th-13th centuries) and developed from the 14th and 16th centuries (Early and Middle Ming Dynasty), reaching their peak between the 17th century and the first half of the 20th century (the Late Ming and Qing Dynasties and the Republic of China period)." (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1113>) Each Tulou is usually occupied by one clan of several generations (Huang, Hanmin 2009, 116-117). Tulous were built under an extreme condition that there was a severe lack of land used for housing in the mountainous areas (ibid. 297; Huang, Hanmin 2002). However, this made the high degree of organization as well as the features of introversion and hierarchy easier to be perceived from the Fujian Tulou than other patterns of Chinese rural clan settlements.



Source: Fu 2001, 30

Figure 2-9: The Taihe Dian Located in the Central Part of the Main Courtyard of the Forbidden City

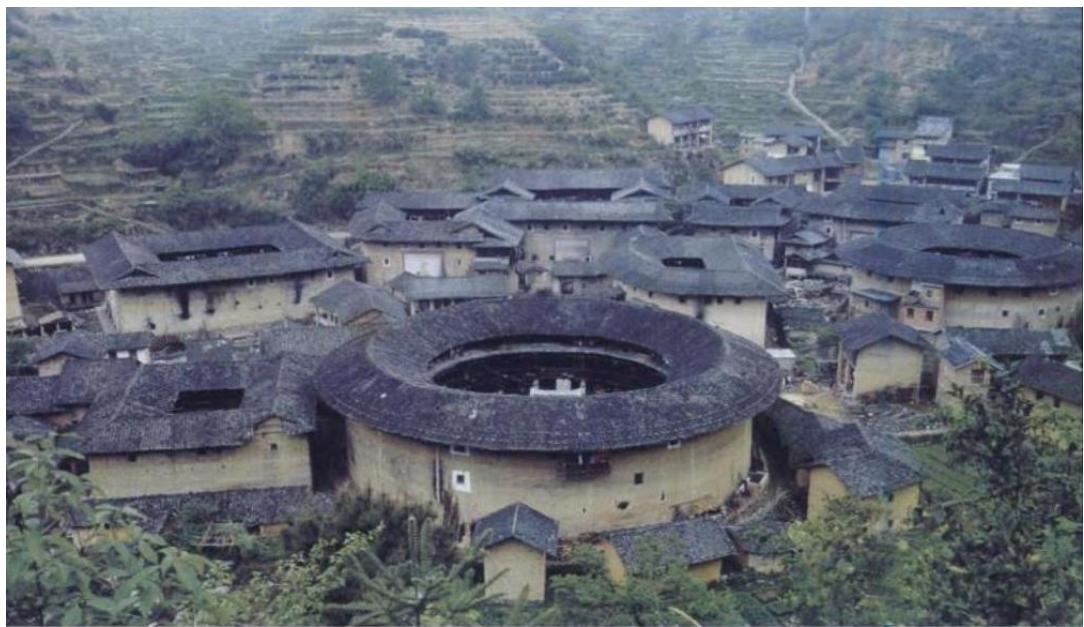


Figure 2-10: A Bird's-eye View of the Tulous Source: Lou 2001, 167

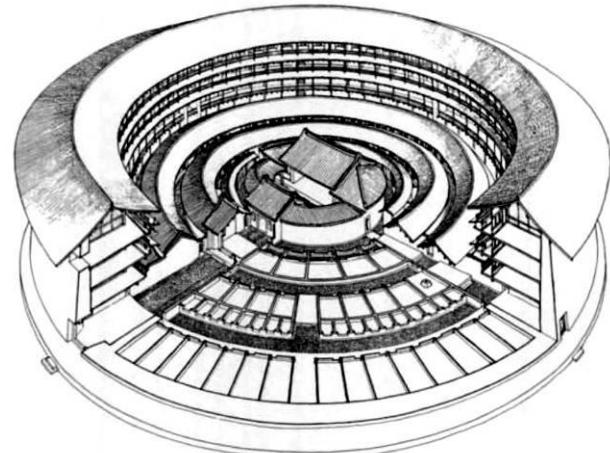


Figure 2-11:  
A Sectional Perspective of the Chengqi Lou  
Source: Liu, Dunzhen, 1980, 325

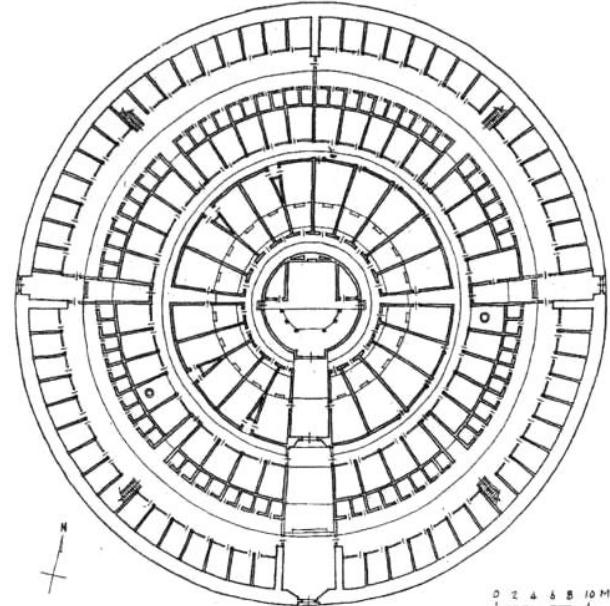


Figure 2-12:  
Ground Plan of the Chengqi Lou  
Source: ibid. 324

A Tulou is usually rectangular or circular in plan. There are more than 3700 Tulous still existing and over 1100 of them are circular (Huang, Hanmin 2009, 35, 37) of which the Chengqi Lou (承启楼) is the most representative (Fig. 2-10). The Chengqi Lou, known as “the king of Tulou”, is located in Gaobei Village, Gaotou Town. It was founded by Jiang jicheng (江集成). Its construction began in 1709 and was finished three years later.

The cylinder-shaped Chengqi Lou, 62.6 meters in diameter, consists of three concentric rings of buildings (Fig. 2-11~12). The outermost ring is four stories high, with 67 rooms on each floor. The ground-floor rooms are used as kitchens except for three ones as entrance halls, the rooms on the first floor are used for storing grain, and those on the second and third floors are living quarters and bedrooms. A small family could own a vertical set of rooms from the ground floor to the top floor (Fig. 2-13), while a larger one would own two or three vertical sets. The middle ring is two stories high, with 34 rooms used as guests rooms on each floor.

The inner ring is only one story high, with 20 rooms used as studies. The ancestral hall of the Jiang's clan (Fig. 2-14) is located in the center of the entire Tulou, the most prominent position diametrically opposite the main entrance. There are more than 300 rooms in total, but only one main and two side entrances in the whole settlement /compound (ibid. 121, 124; Lou 2001, 167, 169).

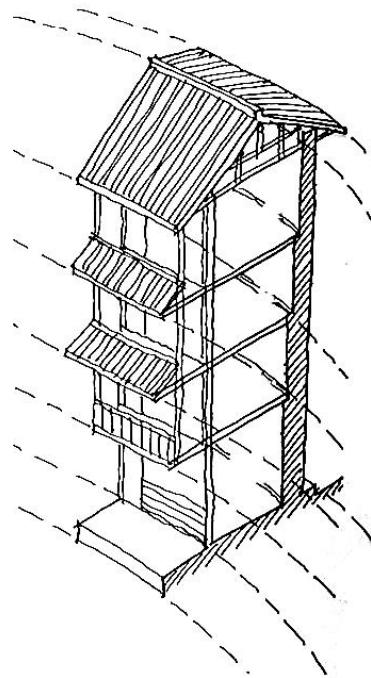


Figure 2-13: A Family's Vertical Set of Rooms  
Source: Huang, Hanmin 2009, 268

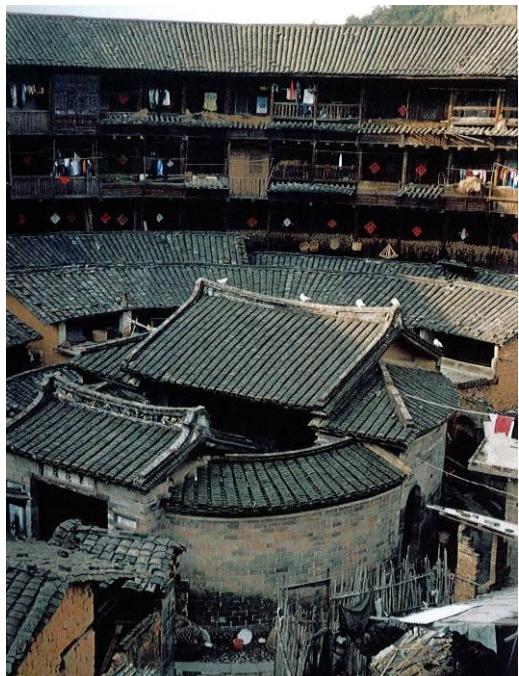


Figure 2-14: A Close-up of the Ancestral Hall  
Source: Huang, Hanmin 2009, 38

The Jiang's descendants have been residentially concentrated in the Chengqi Lou for about fifteen generations from the completion of its construction until now. There were more than 80 families, over 800 people, living in the Chengqi Lou at its heyday (Huang, Hanmin 2009, 124-125). The Chengqi Lou just seemed like a carefully designed and well-organized residential machine where the members of the Jiang's clan led relatively independent and self-sufficient lives in their rooms equally arranged but facing the central ancestral hall all the time.

## Summary

In accordance with the transition of the patriarchal clan ideas, the leadership and the internal structure of a clan, and the social identity of clan members, the evolution of Chinese clan is divided into five historical stages: the aristocrat clans before the Qin Dynasty (221-207 BC), the literati clans from the Qin to the Tang Dynasty (618-907), the bureaucrat clans during the Song Dynasty (960-1279), the clans of the gentry and the rich from the Ming (1368-1644) to Qing Dynasty (1644-1912), and the mutated clans from the Republic of China (1911-1949) until now.

The Chinese clans experienced a big change from a kind of organization mainly consisting of aristocrats to another one mainly of folks. Meanwhile, the power of the clans was increasingly restricted and weakened by the central government. In this perspective, the clan organizations had already severely declined in ancient China. However, they developed into well-organized social groups with ancestral halls, genealogy books, clan rules, and clan land as basic elements during the Ming and Qing Dynasties. They were widely established in then grassroots society and became an important force essential for the government to maintain the local order. In this perspective, it can be said that the clans achieved great prosperity in ancient China.

This chapter outlines the history and evolution of ancient Chinese clan organizations, and discusses their basic characteristics and importance to Chinese people. Furthermore, the general features of ancient Chinese clan settlements are described as follows:

Firstly, a relatively high degree of organization was shown in the construction of clan settlement. Secondly, clan settlement space was usually enclosed tightly with walls, only with some gates for residents passing through. Thirdly, the spatial structure of a clan settlement corresponded to the clan's internal social structure. And finally, there was a clear hierarchy between the clan's ancestral hall and other buildings in clan settlement space.

### 3. Ancient Clan Settlements in the Nanxi River Basin, Yongjia County: A Case Study on Furong and Cangpo Villages

#### 3.1 Geographical and Historical Background

##### 3.1.1 Geography of the Nanxi River and Yongjia County

The Nanxi River (楠溪江) is the second largest tributary of the Ou River (瓯江) which is the longest river in southern Zhejiang Province (Fig. 3-1). It originates in the west of the Luoyang Ridge (罗垟岭), Xixia Town (溪下乡), northwest of Yongjia County (永嘉县). The part above Xikou (溪口) is the upper reaches of the Nanxi River, called

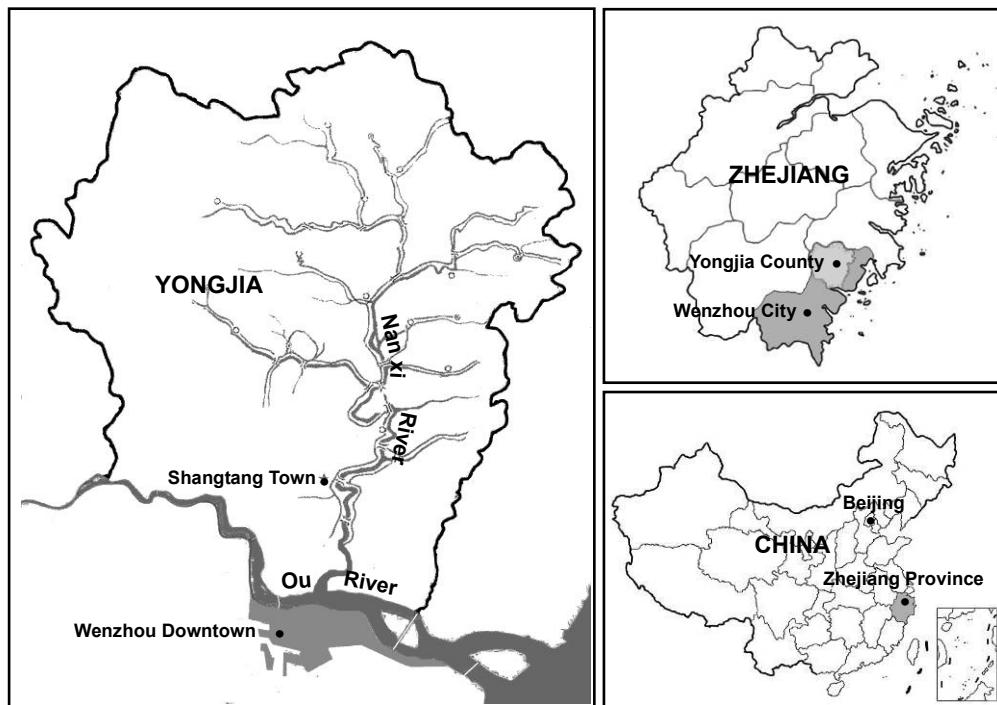


Figure 3-1: General Map of Yongjia County, Wenzhou City, Zhejiang Province

Pictures modified from: <http://www.chinamaps.org/china/china-blank-map-large.html>

<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b8/ZhejiangMap.png>

[http://www.0577job.net/bm/maps/images/jy\\_s2.jpg](http://www.0577job.net/bm/maps/images/jy_s2.jpg)

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Dayuanxi (大源溪) flowing from northwest to southeast; between Xikou and Shatou (沙头) is the middle reaches, flowing north to south, called Da'nanxi (大楠溪), and the following part is the lower reaches. The Nanxi River is 145km long and its main stream is about 139.92km, the average slope 7.14 %. The total drainage area of the Nanxi River is about 2436km<sup>2</sup>, mainly in now Yongjia County.

The Nanxi River basin is in a closed geographical environment, surrounded by mountains and the Ou River. It is in the subtropical monsoon climate zone where rain is plentiful. The mean annual precipitation is 1718.3mm, with large inter-annual rainfall variability. The rainfall generally reduces from north to south and the distribution of rainfall during the year is uneven, the rainfall in April to July accounted for more than 70% of the total.

The natural conditions in the lower and middle reaches of the Nanxi River are excellent. The mountains there are gently rolling, but high enough to block cold north wind in winter and to keep adequate rainfall in summer. The stream valleys are wide, providing sufficient water for both agricultural production and convenient transportation. And the basins between mountains and steams are broad and flat, and the land is quite fertile. All of these make the area very suitable for settlement (Chen, Zhihua 2004, 5).

The natural conditions in the upper reaches are not as good as those in the lower and middle. The stream valleys are narrow and full of rapid currents, which are not conducive to transportation. The mountains are so steep that there is little land available for cultivation—the local people had to grow rice on difficultly reclaimed terraces in ancient times. It was not easy for the local people to make a living and most of the clans were poor, reflected in their less carefully planned settlements and crudely constructed buildings. The Nanxi civilization actually first began in the lower reaches and gradually extended towards the upper (ibid. 3-4).

Most of the drainage area of the Nanxi River basin (about 2223 km<sup>2</sup>, 91.3% of the total) is under the jurisdiction of Yongjia County, Wenzhou. Yongjia County is located at 120°19'-120°59'east longitude and 27°58'-28°36'north latitude, in the north of Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province. It is in the lower reaches of the Ou River, facing Wenzhou downtown across the river. The county area is about 2698.2km<sup>2</sup>, in which the mountain area is 2308.5 km<sup>2</sup>, the plain area 277.0 km<sup>2</sup>, and the water area 112.7

km<sup>2</sup>. The county has 0.36 million mu<sup>33</sup> of cultivated land and 2.92 million mu of forest, the forest coverage rate reaching 69.2%. The mean annual temperature of Yongjia County is 18.2°C. The mean annual precipitation is 1702.2mm with 175.4 precipitation days. The mean annual sunshine and frost-free period are respectively 1820.2 hours and 280 days. Yongjia County has jurisdiction over 12 towns, 26 townships, and 906 administrative villages now, with a total population of 886,300. Its county seat is Shangtang Town (上塘镇).

### 3.1.2 The Early History of Yongjia County

There had already been many people settling in the Nanxi River basin as early as the Neolithic Age (Hu, Nianwang 2005, 4). The region of now Wenzhou and Taizhou was called “Ou” (瓯) in the Xia, Shang, and Zhou Dynasties. And Ou belonged to Yue Kingdom during the Spring and Autumn Period. Due to far from the Central Plains cultures, a distinctive Ouyue culture formed in this region, but less advanced than those in the Central Plains at that time. This region in succession belonged to Chu and Qin Kingdom during the Warring States period and was incorporated into a number of different administrative regions after China entered into the imperial age.

Yongjia County was established in 323 and the name “Yongjia” began to be used from then on. “Yongjia” meant the “long and beautiful water” (Ye, Dabing 1982, 4). The territory of then Yongjia County roughly corresponded to now Wenzhou city, but still a wild area sparsely populated at that time. Due to the outbreak of war in the Central Plains in the late Western Jin Dynasty, a large number of aristocrats, officials, and common people moved to the southeast and established a new regime, the East Jin Dynasty. They brought the more advanced Central Plains culture to this region, and thus the original Ouyue culture was merged into the China’s orthodox culture (Cai 1998, 23).

Wang Xizhi(王羲之), Sun Chuo(孙绰), Xie Lingyun(谢灵运), and Yan Yanzhi(颜延之) successively took up the post of Prefect of Yongjia County. They played a significant role in promoting the local culture, especially Xie Lingyun. Xie Lingyun,

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<sup>33</sup> Mu(亩) is “a traditional Chinese unit of area, especially in farming; 1mu is equivalent to 1/15 hectare, about 667 square meters” (Li, Dong 2008, 180).

whose clan was one of the most powerful four clans in the country, was known as the originator of Chinese landscape poetry and the discoverer of Yongjia landscape. He held the post of Prefect of Yongjia in the spring of 422. In fact, he was demoted to this position because Yongjia was not a developed region at all. He spent a lot of time touring the county and wrote many verses to describe and praise the landscapes of Yongjia (Shen 1974, 1753-1754; McGreal 1996, 63). These verses quickly made Yongjia famous for its natural scenery. A lot of literati were thus attracted by its reputation and also left many verses after enjoying the beautiful scenes, which enriched the cultural atmosphere of this region (Wang, Guotai/Zheng 1993, 652). Additionally, Xie Lingyun actively gave lectures there and contributed substantially to the Yongjia's cultural development.

People extended their settlement area from the lower to the middle reaches of the Nanxi River in the Sui and Tang Dynasties. During the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms Period, large-scale war broke out again in the Central Plains where the ancient China's political center was, but the South was relatively peace and experienced a steady social and economic development.

“Farming” and “studying” became the main themes of rural life along with the popular implementation of the imperial examination system from the Tang and Song Dynasties (Xü, Yangjie 1995, 177). “Farming” referred to agricultural production and “studying” participating in the imperial examinations to become government officials. The former was the basic content of then rural life and the latter the goal. Therefore, the rural society of that time was also known as farming-studying society (耕读社会) and the clan settlements in the Nanxi River basin could be typical examples of this.

According to statistics, the jinshi (进士)<sup>34</sup> from Yongjia County reached a total of 604 from the Tang to the Qing Dynasty. Among them, there were 513 in the Song Dynasty and 464 in the Southern Song Dynasty (Zhao, Yingli/Han 2006). This could

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<sup>34</sup> “Basically, the examination system consisted of tests at three distinct levels: the district examinations, the provincial examinations, and the metropolitan examinations. The examinations were of increasing difficulty, and each required the candidate to have passed the preceding level. ...metropolitan examinations were held in order to identify those scholars who would be suitable for higher posts in the government. Only 1 of 20 or 30 candidates at this level could hope to become a chin-shih (进士, Pinyin: jin shi; English: Presented Scholar).” (Reagan 2000, 113-114)

reflect the prosperity of the local culture and education there. However, it was also obvious that the peak time was only in the Southern Song Dynasty.

The Song Dynasty was one of the most prosperous eras of economy and culture in China's history, but its military strength was relatively rather weak. The empire was frequently harassed by the northern Khitans and Jurchens. Even an emperor of the Northern Song Dynasty was captured in a war with them in 1127, which directly led to the destruction of the Dynasty. The emperor's successor Zhao Gou had to escape to the South and arrived in Wenzhou in 1130 after going through many hardships. Although the emperor did not stay too long in Wenzhou, many members of his entourage stayed there from then on and soon became prominent figures in the local area by virtue of their original high political, economic and cultural status. They not only stimulated the development of the Yongjia's economy and culture, but also laid a good foundation for the success of the Yongjia people in politics.

Zhao Gou made Lin'an (now Hangzhou, very close to Wenzhou) the capital of the new founded Southern Song Dynasty in 1132, and the China's political center thus shifted from the Central Plains to the South. At the same time, a large number of northern people migrated south and many of them, including cultural and educational elites, came to settle in the Nanxi River basin, which resulted in the rapid development of the local culture. The clans of Yongjia County began to actively promote education within their settlements. Many people there thus passed the imperial examinations and obtained posts in the government, made the political status of their clans improved quickly. These officials usually returned to their clans after retirement, changing from bureaucrats back to scholars. They not only spread the latest knowledge and information to the Nanxi River basin, but also attached great importance to the development of their own clans, especially to the education (Zhao, Yingli/Han 2006). They provided education for the children of the clan members, hoping them attend the imperial examinations and become officials some day to maintain the existing political achievements and social status of their clans. The clans of Yongjia County usually drew up specific clan rules in the genealogy books to encourage the children to study, and moreover, spent vast sums of money on hiring good teachers from other areas. Therefore, many famous scholars came to teach there.

Social wealth, labor, and technology were also brought to the South besides the culture during the large-scale southward migration of people. Then the economic center of the country moved from the Yellow River basin to the Yangtze River basin. It was in the Southern Song Dynasty that Wenzhou became an international trading port with specific agencies established to manage foreign trade (Cai 1998, 43-51). As a county under the jurisdiction of Wenzhou Prefecture, Yongjia achieved rapid development in handicraft industry and commerce.

The prosperity of both the culture and economy deeply influenced Yongjia people's thinking which was fully reflected in the academic viewpoints of the "Yongjia School".

### **3.1.3 The Yongjia School**

The Yongjia School was an important school of Confucian thought during the Song Dynasty. It was so named because it formed mainly in the Yongjia area, now Wenzhou, and many of its representatives came from there. It was one of the most important three Confucian schools at that time.

The Yongjia School began to take shape in the mid-Northern Song Dynasty (Cai 1998, 54). Wang Kaizu (王开祖) (about 1035-1068), a native of Yongjia County, was one of the originators of the Yongjia School. He took the jinshi degree in 1053, but did not stay in the government too long and then returned to Yongjia County to give lectures and instruct students. His ideas were so warmly welcomed that his students often reached hundreds. Afterwards the Yongjia School was gradually established by Zheng Boxiong (郑伯熊) (1124-1181), Chen Fuliang (陈傅良) (1137-1203), and Xu Yi (徐谊) (1144-1208) etc during the Southern Song Dynasty (Zhou, Mengjiang 2005, 17-31).

The Yongjia School objected to the views of traditional Confucianism which encouraged people to cherish righteousness without consideration of benefits from it, that is, the doctrines of righteousness counted for nothing if they could not bring practical benefits to the people. The scholars of the Yongjia School emphasized the consistency of profit and righteousness. They advocated that seeking of profit could well coordinate the pursuit of righteousness and the former should not be inhibited by

the latter. They also objected to the traditional policy which laid much more stress on the agriculture than on the trade, and advocated that the government should vigorously support the development of industry and commodity economy. Moreover, they pointed out the rationality of employment relationship and private ownership (Zhao, Yingli/Han 2006; Cai 1998, 155-162).

Ye Shi (叶适) (1150-1223) assimilated the previous theoretical achievements of the Yongjia School and further refined the theory which occupied a vital position in then academic circles (Zhang, Yide 1994, 337-344). Ye Shi, born in Yongjia County, took the jinshi degree in 1178. A very important part of his thoughts was about the financial management of the imperial government. He thought that the fundamental purpose of the government's financial management was not to accumulate property for the government itself or to meet its financial needs, but for the people because the emperor was the leader of all people and thus should be responsible for maintaining the people's livelihoods. He also stressed that the government should not compete for profits with the people but enrich them. Only when the people got wealthy would the country be really wealthy. Therefore, enriching people should be primary responsibility of the emperor and his government (Ye, Shi 1961, 657-660; Zhang, Yide 1994, 206-218, 313-323).

Yongjia County had already been an area with developed industry and commerce in the Southern Song Dynasty. Thereupon a large number of wealthy businessmen and landlords emerged in this region. They requested the imperial government to actively resist the external aggression to maintain the social stability. They also hoped the government reduce taxes and improve the social status of those engaging in business. The Yongjia School was just speaking on behalf of these newly emerging social groups. However, China did not embark on the path which the Yongjia School wished. As the Southern Song Dynasty was completely destroyed by the Mongols in 1279, China's political center moved to the North again. Although the Yongjia School consequently declined, its ideas still had a profound impact on the local people who thus had an obvious inclination of mercantilism. Many locals of Wenzhou now believe that it was the mercantile-oriented thought of the Yongjia School that sowed the seeds for the contemporary prosperity of the commercial civilization of this region (Zhang, Li 2001, 51).

### **3.1.4 Overview on the Clan Settlements in the Nanxi River Basin**

Nowadays, there are more than 200 traditional clan settlements in the Nanxi River basin. The original settlers mostly moved from other regions where fierce wars broke out and the relatively closed Nanxi River basin was an ideal shelter for them<sup>35</sup> (Chen, Zhihua 2002, 73-74). Most of them belonged to the middle and upper classes of society before their migrations and thus all had been well educated. By virtue of knowledge advantage and working hard, they soon made the areas in the lower and middle reaches of the Nanxi River a prosperous place in both economy and culture.

The arrivals were only some close family members at the early stage of development. The scale of relatives was far from large enough to form clans. The most urgent task of the settlers was to meet their basic survival needs in this strange place, and they actually had no very clear goals for the future. Therefore, their settlements were, to a great degree, naturally developed adapting to the local geographical conditions. Thus the overall layouts of these settlements were often free and random without much careful planning. Buildings or streets were usually constructed in a broad range of scales, just maintaining a rough unity of the whole sense (Yao 2005).

However, as the original families rapidly developed into clans in this safe and peaceful region, various types of buildings and infrastructures, including ancestral halls, temples, schools, houses, pavilions, channels, ponds, and any others necessary for then farming life, were consequently constructed in their settlements through the efforts of several generations, often carefully planned by the clans<sup>36</sup>.

Since the local government never intervene the internal issues of the clans, the clan organizations almost managed all aspects of the local social life, including construction activities, in their settlements. They could mobilize and organize the people to complete large-scale construction projects in an efficient and quality way by virtue of their authority over the clan members.

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<sup>35</sup> There were two large-scale southward migrations of the northern population, caused by wars, in China's ancient history, in the late Western Jin and the late Northern Song Dynasties, respectively. Many northerners left their native places and moved to the Nanxi River basin in these two migrations, leading to a rapid growth of the population in the local areas.

<sup>36</sup> On the whole, the settlements in the lower and middle reaches of the Nanxi River showed more achievements in architecture and planning than those in the upper (Chen, Zhihua 2004, 3).

The clans often encouraged their members to contribute money on the construction of ancestral halls, clan schools, and so on. The names and deeds of these donors would be recorded in the genealogy books in detail. This was the highest reward the clan could give, and also the great honor that the clan members craved for because the people recorded in the genealogy books would be eulogized by the descendants of the clan from generation to generation. The clans also required their members to protect communal facilities. Some even had specific regulations that pigsties or cowsheds must be built in the lower reaches of the channels, and fowl or livestock also must be kept far away from these channels (Chen, Zhihua 2002, 70-72). In short, the clan could supervise all kinds of construction activities in the settlement to ensure the rationality and wholeness of the spatial structure of the settlement, and meanwhile, it clearly branded all parts of the settlement with patriarchal clan ideas (Li, Xiaofeng 2005, 25-27).

### 3.2 Furong Village

Furong Village is located in the middle reaches of the Nanxi River, south of Yantou Town (岩头镇) (Fig. 3-2) and on the west side of the Yongxian Road (永仙公路). The mountain, lying to the southwest of the village, is called Furong Peak (芙蓉峰; Hibiscus Peak) because the rock of its three protruding peaks is white touched with red that made the peak look like a hibiscus bud (Fig. 3-3). Furong Village got its name just from the mountain (Appendix p106). This settlement was constructed by the clan of Chen, that is, all the residents had the common surname, Chen.

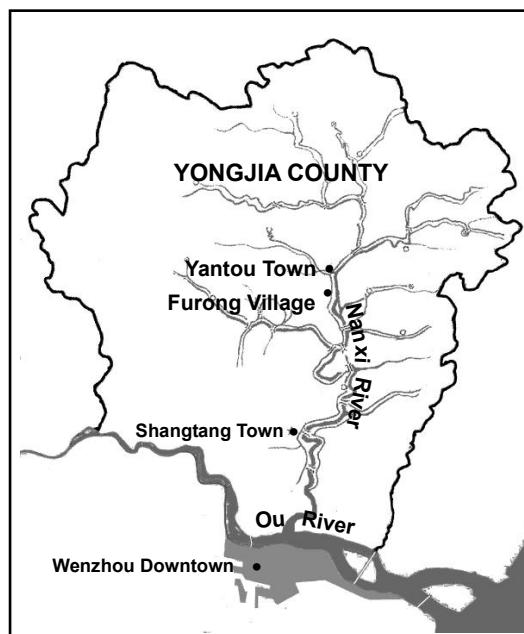


Figure 3-2: Location of Furong Village

Pictures modified from:

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Figure 3-3-1:



Figure 3-3-2

Close-ups of the Furong Peak with  
Changeable Colors

Source:[http://img.trip.elong.com/home/attachment/201103/15/11/4684327\\_1300201862JPAo.jpg](http://img.trip.elong.com/home/attachment/201103/15/11/4684327_1300201862JPAo.jpg)

### 3.2.1 The Early History

The ancestor of the Chen's clan who first came to settle there was Chen Gong (陈祺). It was said that fierce wars broke out in Chen Gong's hometown, and this made him leave there and migrate along the Nanxi River until he arrived at the foot of the Furong Peak. Chen Gong was attracted by the local superior natural conditions so deeply that he decided to permanently settle down. With the proliferation of his descendants, the Chen's clan resulted and developed into a large and well-known one in the local area, especially famous for its "eighteen golden belts" (Fig. 3-4).



Figure 3-4: The Portrait of "eighteen golden belts"

The “golden belt” originally was the belt worn by senior government official as a decoration, and gradually evolved to a deferential form of address to officials. A total of eighteen members of the Chen’s clan passed the imperial examinations and were appointed to serve in the imperial government of the Song Dynasty (Appendix p92, 104). This was not only the personal success of these eighteen people, but also the success of their respective families and the whole clan. This success greatly improved the social status of the clan and was considered the most glorious deed in the history of the Chen’s clan.

In order to commemorate the eighteen distinguished ancestors, the clan set the second day of the second lunar month as the day of the eighteen golden belts. The clan would hang their portrait and display many antiques ever used by them, such as gold official seals, ivory Hu (笏; a tablet held by the official when he received in audience by the emperor), court dresses, etc in the Chen’s ancestral hall on that day. Meanwhile, the clan would also hold drama performances which might last for three days and nights (Chen, Zhongguang 2001, 3-4). These performances were dedicated to the eighteen figures to show the descendants’ respect.

In addition to the great glory, the Chen’s clan ever experienced a huge disaster in its history. When Mongolian troops went down to attack the Southern Song Dynasty in 1276, the Chen’s clan, under the leadership of Chen Yuzhi (陈虞之), occupied the Furong Peak as its military base to fight against the Mongolian army for nearly three years. Due to running out of food, Chen Yuzhi committed suicide for allegiance to the Song emperor by riding his horse to jump off the cliff in 1279. Hundreds of his soldiers, including his wife, brothers, and nephews, consequently died in the battle. Even Furong Village was also reduced to ruin. The survivors of the Chen’s clan had to leave there until Furong Village was rebuilt under a general amnesty granted by the Yuan emperor in 1341 (Appendix p104-105).

### 3.2.2 The Communal Buildings and Places

Furong Village covered an area of about 14.3 hectares (Fig. 3-5). Its plan was nearly square and surrounded by about 2m thick, totally 1788m long rough rubble walls (Fig. 3-6), with several apertures on them for shooting, therefore, the settlement had certain defense capabilities just like a small fortress.

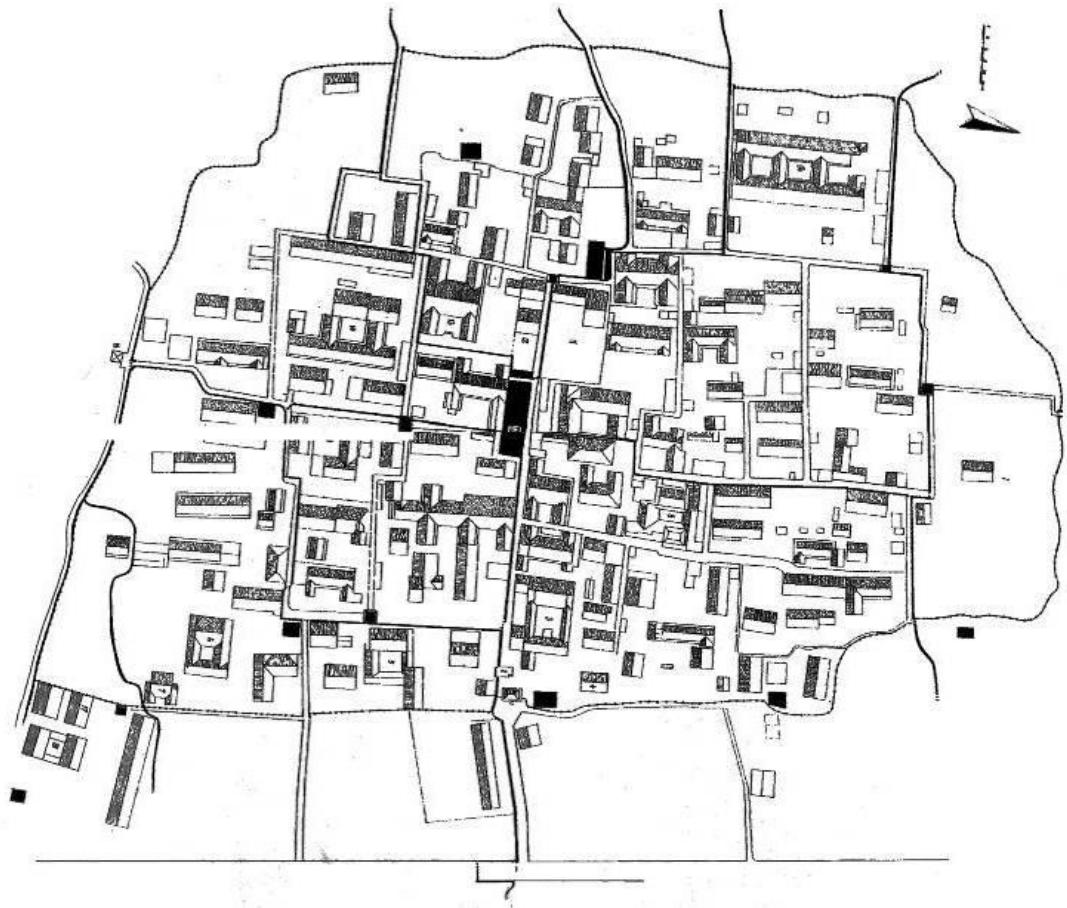


Figure 3-5: Map of Furong Village   Source: Zhejiang Province Bureau of Cultural Relics, 2000, 16

The settlement had seven gates and the east one was the main entry which was called “Che Men” (车门; Literally meaning: the gate for vehicles) (Fig. 3-7). After passing through the Che Men, people might see that the Chen’s ancestral hall on the right, and a 50cm high, 6m long and wide stone bandstand on the left (Fig. 3-8). When a celebration held in the ancestral hall, a band would play music on the bandstand to greet the people coming from inside or outside of the settlement (Appendix p104). With the bandstand as a starting point, it was a 195m long and 2m wide street named Ruyi Street (street of matching wishes), straight westward extending (Fig. 3-9). The Ruyi Street was the main street of the settlement. A pond, named Furong Pond, was located at the middle



Figure 3-6: Rough Rubble Wall

of the street, on the south side. Next to the Furong Pond, was the Furong Academy established by the Chen's clan at the western end of the street. And a grain-sunning ground, shared by all the clan members, was located opposite the Furong Academy, across the street, with some grain processing equipment nearby. All the above communal buildings and places were carefully designed and properly planned according to their respective functions to meet the needs of the clan.



Figure 3-7 (top):  
The Main Gate of Furong Village

Figure 3-8 (middle):  
The Bandstand

Figure 3-9 (bottom):  
The Ruyi Street

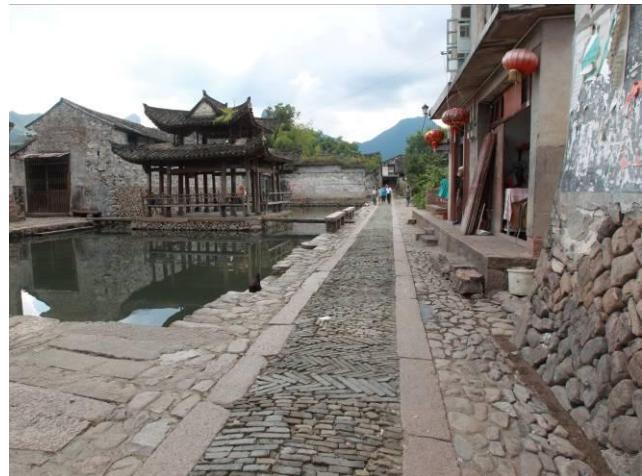


Photo by Lu, Yongshun (卢永顺)

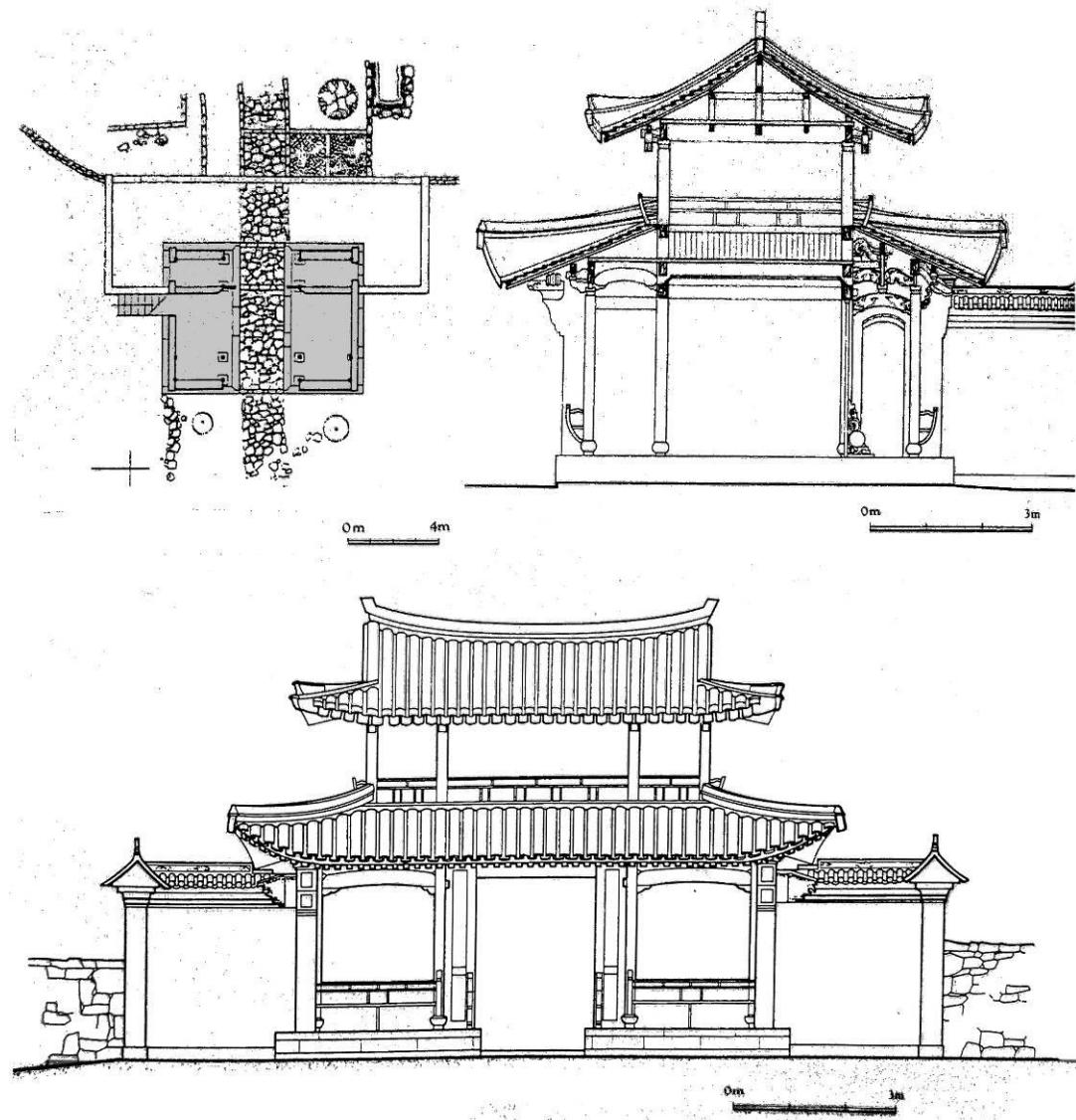


Figure 3-10: Plan (top left), Cross Section (top right), and Front Elevation (bottom) of the Che Men

Source: Zhejiang Province Bureau of Cultural Relics, 2000, 17

- The Che Men

According to the description of Chen Zhongguang (陈中光), a resident of Furong Village, the name “Che Men” could not be indiscriminately used in ancient times. Only when some residents of a settlement served as high-ranking officials in the imperial government or made a special contribution to the country could the main gate of the settlement be called Che Men. People must leave their conveyances in front of the Che Men and enter the settlement on foot. It was because of the “eighteen golden belts” that Furong Village was eligible to own a Che Men. The existing Che Men was rebuilt when Furong Village reconstructed in 1341 (Chen, Zhongguang 2001, 2-3) (Fig. 3-10).

There were always several clan members gathering at the Che Men on ordinary days, and these people were usually willing to spend some time staying there where they could see the outside world, such as passersby on the near roads or buildings in the distant settlements. It was hard to say that they were expecting to see something special, but if something special did happen, it would certainly become their chat topic and also be quickly spread into the settlement. Although they seemed to like watching the outside, this did not mean that they were eager to integrate into it. In fact, they would not leave the extent of their settlement half a step unless under certain special circumstances<sup>37</sup>. Their lives were always tightly tied with their clan, so they stayed at the Che Men just to spend the time of day.

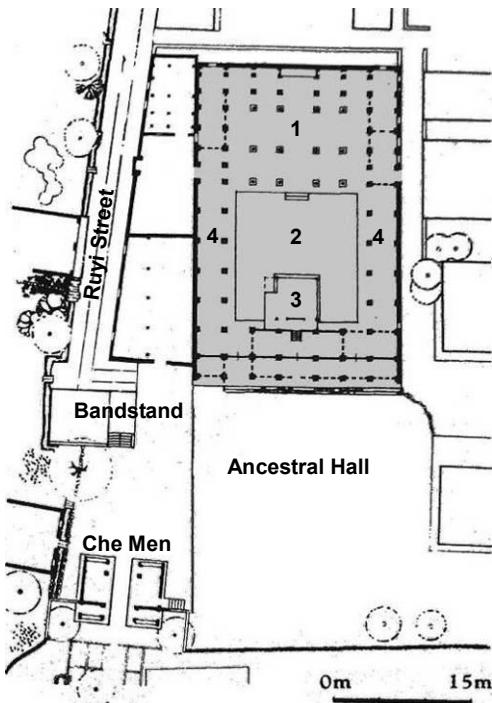
The Che Men was almost an exclusive male world, that is, only male clan members would gather there. In accordance with the traditional Chinese orthodox moral values, men should be responsible for dealing with affairs outside the home, and women should just stay at home to manage household affairs, which could make them avoid meeting with unfamiliar males of other families. However, in rural areas, since farming required a lot of labor, women often went out with their own family to work in the fields, and moreover, all of the residents had more or less kinship relations, so the scope of women's activities was in fact not strictly limited. But the women still should try to avoid contact with men (Appendix p112-113). After all, the clan upheld the Confucian ethics which emphasized the distinction between males and females. The content of women's lives always centered on the housework which apparently had no connection with the world at the Che Men.

- The Ancestral Hall

The plan of the Chen's ancestral hall was regular and symmetrical, with two courtyards front and back (Fig. 3-11~15). The main hall was located in the back courtyard flanked by two side spacious galleries. Opposite to the main hall, there was a delicate stage protruding to the courtyard with three sides open, convenient for the audience to watch performances from three directions.

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<sup>37</sup> For example, they would go to nearby big towns to purchase daily necessities which could not be obtained from their own settlement or to other settlements to send for a doctor.



1 Main Hall  
2 Inner Courtyard  
3 Stage  
4 Side Gallery

Figure 3-13 (top right):  
The Main Hall

Figure 3-14 (middle right):  
The Theatrical Stage

Figure 3-15 (bottom right):  
The Inner Courtyard



Figure 3-11 (top left):  
Plan of the Ancestral Hall  
(Zhejiang Province Bureau of Cultural Relics, 2000, 20)

Figure 3-12 (bottom left):  
The Side Gallery



The ancestral hall was located near to the settlement entrance, being separated from the residential area of the settlement without too much appearance in people's lives. Only when the clan members went to the Che Men would they pass by it. However, the residents spent most of their time inside the settlement, and even if they went to farm outside the settlement, they would go through other settlement gates instead of the Che Men which did not lead to the farmland, but to other settlements. They in fact could only feel the presence of their families and Fangs rather than the clan. In other words, their identities were usually the members of different families or Fangs, rather than of the clan as they were just living within the clan. It was when the people going to face the outside world that they could and needed to realize the presence of their clan. Therefore, it was proper for the ancestral hall, the symbol of the clan, to be arranged to appear beside the Che Men which was exactly the dividing point between the inside and outside of the settlement.

Ancient Chinese buildings were usually wrapped in courtyards and the ancestral hall was not an exception. What could the passersby directly touch with was only the courtyard wall and gate (Fig. 3-16), nevertheless, people could still perceive the ancestral hall's large volume from the exposed roof and comprehend the corresponding significance. The clan members were prohibited from entering the ancestral hall freely in order to ensure the safety of the stuff inside the ancestral hall. The ancestral hall in fact possessed more of a symbolic meaning, symbolizing the presence and strength of the clan, than to act as the center of the people's daily activities.



Figure 3-16: The Entrance of the Ancestral Hall

Many Fangs of the Chen's clan had their own branch ancestral halls mostly located in their respective Fang-communities. The significance of the branch ancestral halls was vastly inferior to the clan ancestral hall, so their scales and magnificence were far less than those of the latter. Moreover, since a branch ancestral hall usually did not be constructed until the Fang had acquired a certain

degree of development and accumulated sufficient economic strength, its location could not be planned in the early stage of formation of the Fang-community. The Fangs generally built the branch ancestral halls, under practical conditions, at the places where could be most easily seen in respective Fang-communities.

- The Space Enclosed by the Che Men, Bandstand, and Ancestral Hall

In the traditional Chinese model of city planning, it was the more common layout that the main gate was connected to the main street which would be designed as the most important axis of the whole city and the axis usually started from the main entry, which would be reasonable in terms of traffic organization<sup>38</sup>. Chang'an City of the Tang Dynasty and Beijing City of the Ming and Qing Dynasties were both good examples (Fig. 2-6, 3-17). Different with this usual layout, the main gate of Furong Village, the Che Men, was not directly connected with the main street, the Ruyi Street. After entering into Furong Village through the Che Men, one could see only a wall instead of the main street which lay on the left from the bandstand, that is, people had to round the bandstand before reaching the street (Fig. 3-18). Setting turns in the route was actually more often seen in the design of traditional Chinese residential courtyard.

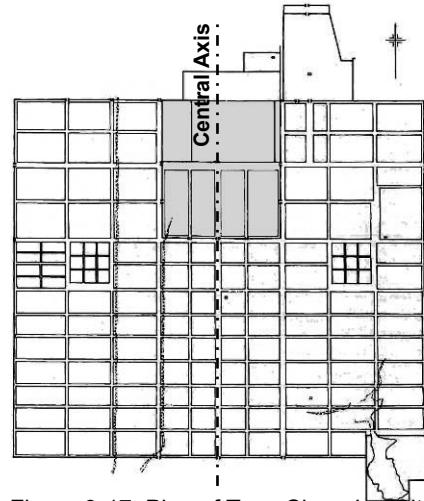


Figure 3-17: Plan of Tang Chang'an City

Source: Liu, Dunzhen, 1980, 106

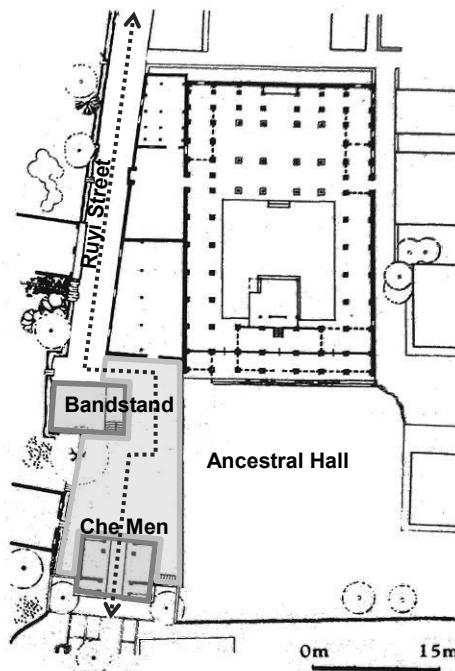


Figure 3-18: Space between the Che Men and the Ruyi Street

(Zhejiang Province Bureau of Cultural Relics, 2000, 20)

<sup>38</sup> Chinese rural settlements usually naturally formed without any specific planning. However, before the construction of cities, especially of the capital city, the imperial government would collect the most outstanding professional people to plan the cities carefully and the planning ideas reflected in the city layouts could represent the mainstream thinking about planning in then China.

There was also an obvious central axis in a standard plan of traditional Chinese residential courtyard, si he yuan (四合院; literally meaning a courtyard surrounded on four sides) (Fig. 3-19). The main entry of si he yuan was not at the end of the central axis, but located aside. When people passed through the entrance, they would also face a wall known as “screen wall” (影壁; Pinyin: ying bi) and usually engraved with decorative patterns. The distance between the main entry and the courtyard of the main house was thus purposely lengthened in order to enable people to experience an appropriate period of transition between outside and inside, communal and private spaces. The space between the Che Men and the eastern end of the Ruyi Street in Furong Village had the same transition function.

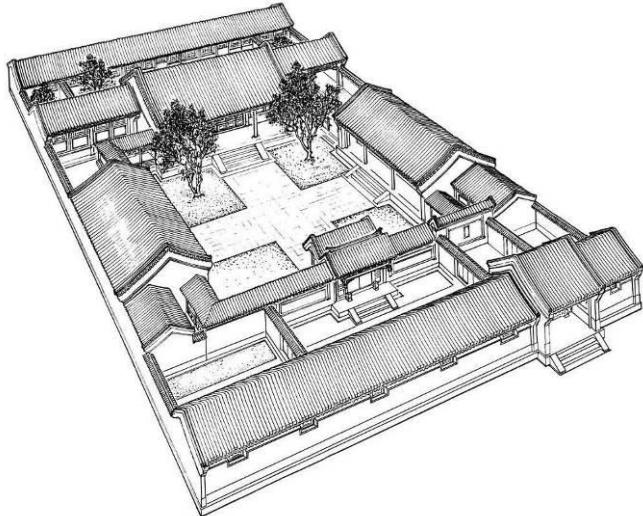


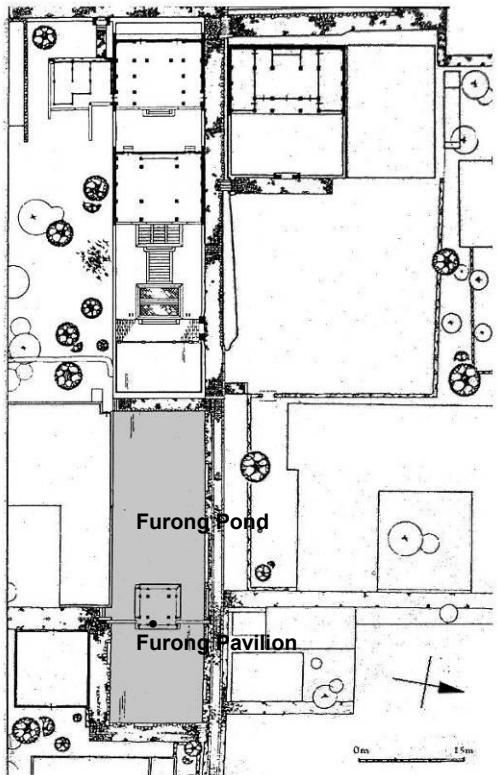
Figure 3-19: Traditional Chinese Si He Yuan

Source: Liu, Dunzhen, 1980, 316

This space was not large, in the shape of a narrow rectangle definitely determined by surrounding walls. Besides the bandstand, the gate of the ancestral hall and the Che Men, there were no other notable constructions in it. The space appeared slightly monotonous in general effect, however, this was exactly the quality that a transition space should have because the space connected the inside and outside of the settlement as well as the ancestral hall, each of which was a world with too much content. The monotony of this space could give people a moment of relief when they traveled to and fro among these worlds.

- The Furong Pond and the Furong Pavilion

The Furong Pond, with an east-west length of 43m and a north-south width of 13m, was an important fire fighting pond and communal place in Furong Village (Fig. 3-20). This space mainly belonged to the female clan members who often stayed



(Zhejiang Province Bureau of Cultural Relics, 2000, 18)



Figure 3-20 (left):  
Plan of the Furong Pond

Figure 3-21 (right):  
The Furong Pavilion

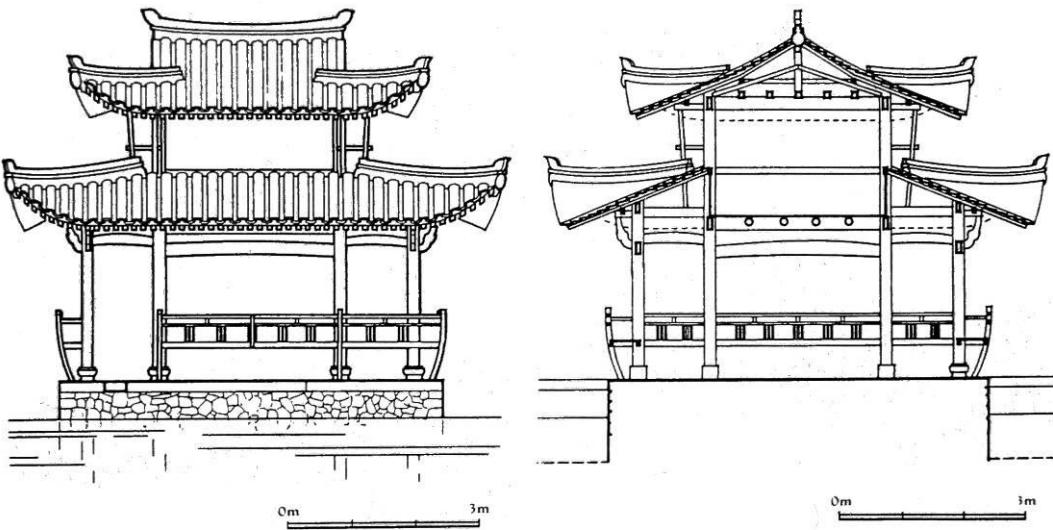


Figure 3-22: Northern Elevation (left) and Cross Section (right) of the Furong Pavilion

(Zhejiang Province Bureau of Cultural Relics, 2000, 19)

there to wash clothes. The clan life was so regular that the women all knew when to go there to encounter the ones they wanted to meet. As they got together by the Furong Pond, they would not only wash clothes, but also chat with each other to exchange their newly acquired information about the events happened in the clan. Mothers would always carry their young children with them since it was also one of their main duties to look after children. When they were washing clothes, their children played nearby.

A pavilion, named as Furong Pavilion, was constructed in the middle of the Furong Pond (Fig. 3-21, 22). On the south and north sides of the pavilion, there were two stone slabs leading to the pond shores as bridges. This pavilion was the most favorite place for the elderly people to stay in. Although there were no recreational facilities inside the pavilion, people were still very willing to come there in the afternoon without any specific purposes and would either chat with others or just stay alone, entranced at the surrounding familiar landscapes. They could always meet some people and see something happen, which would spend their leisure time.

The Furong Pond was surrounded by the walls of the nearby courtyards which enclosed the pond space definitely. In this space, there were serene elders sitting in the Furong Pavilion, busy women washing clothes by the pond, and happy children playing near their mothers. All of these made the whole atmosphere of the Furong Pond so lively, joyous, and relaxed that it became the most attractive communal center in Furong Village.

- The Furong Academy

The Furong Academy, adjacent to the west side of the Furong Pond, and the opposite grain-sunning ground (Fig. 3-23) across the street were located in the center of the settlement. They pointed out the themes of the clan life, that is, “farming” and “studying”. Farming was the lifeblood of clan’s survival, so the grain-sunning ground was placed in the central position of the settlement in order to make it convenient for the people to use. In fact, survival was no longer a major problem for the Chen’s clan. What the clan more cared about was how to enhance its social status. The “eighteen golden belts” brought great glory to the clan and the clan certainly wished to continue it. The clan attached great importance to education in order to train children to pass the imperial examination so as to enter the political stratum. The clan’s efforts were reflected both in the clan rules and in the establishment of the Furong Academy.



Figure 3-23: The Grain-sunning Ground

In ancient Chinese rural society, many families were unable to have enough money for their children to study. Only by virtue of the collective strength of the clan could the children from poor families have the opportunity to study. The Chen's clan prescribed in the clan rules that if some children were intelligent but could not go to study because of poverty, the clan would use the clan property to finance their study and support their participation in the imperial examinations (Appendix p99, 109, 116). It appeared more commendable for the Chen's clan to build the Furong Academy as a dedicated learning space. The establishment of clan schools was actually very rare in other clans because most of them could not or did not like to pay lots of money to construct and operate a school. The children in these clans generally went to study in the homes of their teachers which were often called "si shu" (私塾).

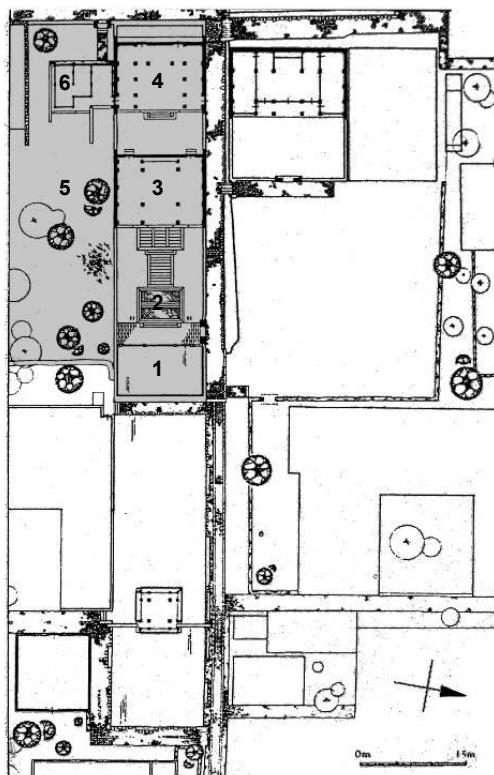
The Furong Academy was composed of a series of courtyards, covering about 1320.8m<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 3-24). Its outer wall was 52m long (east-west), extending along the Ruyi Street, and 25.4m wide (north-south). The academy could be divided into two equal parts—the northern and the southern. In the northern part, the main constructions and buildings on the axis from east to west were Pan Chi (泮池)<sup>39</sup>, Yi Men (仪门)<sup>40</sup>, Ming Lun Tang (明伦堂) and teaching room, respectively (Fig. 3-25~28). The Ming Lun Tang was a specific room for worshipping Confucius whose portrait was hung in the middle of the western wall. The southern part was a garden, very quiet and peaceful, planted with bamboos (Fig. 3-29). A teacher's residential house was located at the western end of the garden with a small gate leading to the teaching room (Fig. 3-30). There was only one teacher living in the Furong Academy to instruct children in Confucian classics which were the main content of the imperial examinations. The Furong Academy was solemnly arranged in the central position of the settlement, with the great hope of the Chen's clan to continue the glory of their ancestors.

The Furong Pond, the Furong Academy, and the grain-sunning ground had direct and practical relevance to the lives of the clan members. They constituted the central space of Furong Village.

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<sup>39</sup> Pan Chi was a pond usually constructed in the front part of the courtyard of traditional Chinese school or temple of Confucius.

<sup>40</sup> Yi Men specifically referred to the front entrance of the main courtyard and was constructed there to remind people to arrange their dress before entering the main courtyard.



1 Pan Chi  
2 Yi Men  
3 Ming Lun Tang  
4 Teaching Room  
5 Garden  
6 Teacher's House

Figure 3-25 (top right):  
The Pan Chi

Figure 3-27 (middle right):  
The Ming Lun Tang

Figure 3-28 (bottom right):  
The Teaching Room



Figure 3-24 (top left):  
Plan of the Furong Academy  
(Zhejiang Province Bureau of Cultural Relics, 2000, 18)

Figure 3-26 (bottom left):  
The Yi Men



Figure 3-29 (left):  
The Garden

Figure 3-30 (right):  
The Teacher's House

### 3.2.3 The Seven Stars and Eight Dou

Furong Village was famous for “seven stars and eight dou” planned in the settlement. The “seven stars” referred to the Northern Dipper in the sky which was in charge of multiplying people’s descendants in traditional Chinese culture, and four of the seven, Dubhe, Merak, Phecdra, and Megrez, constituted “kui xing”(魁星) which dominated human fortune in imperial examinations. The “seven stars” of the Furong settlement were actually seven square platforms, each of which was about 10cm high with an area of 2.2m<sup>2</sup>, constructed near the intersections of the cross main roads. The original function of these platforms cannot be determined now. It is said that they were altars to offer sacrifices to the ancestors at festival times or podiums for clan leaders to command people in wartimes. They were planned to be the “seven stars” by the clan to make the clan members thrive, particularly in the imperial examinations.

What constructions did “eight dou” refer to? There were two different answers to this question. In one answer, “eight dou” were eight ponds of unequal size, including the Furong Pond, distributed in the settlement for the residents to use, but the specific positions of most ponds had already become unknown. In the other answer, they referred to three ponds, that is, the Si Fang Pond (四方塘), the Chang Pond (长塘), and the Lao Zong Pond (老宗池), plus five wells, that is, the Xia Zhai Well (下宅井),

the Da Wu Well (大屋井), the Yang Tian Well (仰天井), the Lao Wu Well (老屋井), and the Jing Tou Well (井头井). The three ponds symbolized Heaven, Earth and Man respectively and the five wells Wood, Metal, Fire, Water, and Earth respectively, that is, the wu xing (Five Elements) (Appendix p92, 105). The second answer was more in detail and seemed definite. And ancient Chinese people were really good at using the combinations of numbers as metaphors to illuminate some concepts. But the second answer derived from such a small number of the clan members that was suspected to be only their personal conjecture. Most of the members still used the first answer to explain what the “eight dou” actually referred to.

The exact meaning of the “eight Dou” was also vague. In Chinese, dou(斗) meant the star in the sky, so the “eight Dou” might refer to the myriad stars that symbolized the clan being able to have uncountable descendants. Dou was also an ancient Chinese unit of measurement for grain. The one first using the word “eight dou” was just the famous figure in Yongjia County, Xie Lingyun. He once said that if all knowledge of the world could fill a dan (石, also an ancient Chinese unit of measurement, 1 dan=10 dou), then Cao Zhi of the Wei Dynasty possessed eight dou, he (Xie Lingyun) one dou, and all other people the left one. From then on, the “eight dou” was used for describing people with high talent and knowledge. It would be hard to say which meaning was originally adopted by the Chen’s clan when it was planning the ponds or wells, but the clan did choose an auspicious concept and embed it into the planning of the settlement, without minding that future generations would add more beautiful annotations.

The theme of the “seven stars and eight dou” was very evident, indicating that the clan wished to have descendants as many as possible and, more importantly, their descendants to have good fortune in imperial examinations. In other clan settlements, there were similar platforms, ponds, and wells with those in Furong Village, but few were designed as stars or dou. In the Furong settlement, the specific expectations of the Chen’s clan on its own future development played a decisive role in the planning. The clan determined the number and locations of the platforms, ponds, and wells, paying more attention to the realization of some specific symbolic meanings than that of their actual functions. Some of the platforms, ponds, or wells have already been disused and abandoned.

### 3.2.4 The Streets in the Residential Area

The residential area in Furong Village was just like a large perplexing maze. Most of the streets were less than 2m wide and actually only the Ruyi Street of 2m width. Most of the street intersections were not cross-shaped, but T-shaped that made the view of pedestrians always blocked by buildings at the end of streets, and the pedestrians had to frequently turn left or right. As the buildings were all surrounded by walls, what the pedestrians could see was merely monotonous walls rather than distinctive building façades, resulting in the weak recognizability of places. Moreover, because there were no particularly high buildings or constructions that could be seen as landmarks in the settlement, it was very easy for strangers to get lost in the narrow, winding streets (Fig. 3-31).



Figure 3-31: Close-ups of the Streets in Furong Village

- The T-shaped Intersections

The network of streets of an ancient Chinese city was usually planned to be regular gridiron pattern with a large number of cross-shaped intersections. It was hard to imagine that the Chen's clan would depart from this simple and popular planning pattern when the clan rebuilt Furong Village in 1341, and furthermore, there was reason to believe that the local residents seemed not to prefer the T-shaped intersections. The local residents thought that if there was a road straightly leading to a house, it would be not favorable to the house's feng shui because they believed that the flow of pedestrians on the road had a potential of forward shock which, even though invisible, would continually erode the house's wall and cause it to be unconsolidated. The homeowners had to erect small stone tablets, written "Mount Tai Being Here", at the feet of walls directly towards the streets (Fig. 3-32). Mount Tai is a famous mountain in China and there was a Chinese idiom literally meaning "as firm as Mount Tai". The clan members said that placing such a small stone tablet was able to offset the adverse effects of the road on the house (Appendix p106-107). Why did the clan members place themselves in such a dilemma without dealing with it at the early stage of the village reconstruction? It was the possible hypothesis that many intersections might not be T-shaped at all in their early times.

Since the original pattern of the street network in Furong Village had already been untraceable, it could not be definitely determined whether the intersections were originally cross-shaped or not, however, even though they originally were, there were indications that they would be changed into T-shaped gradually in the ever-changing clan settlement. The changes often occurred when families expanded their original family-compounds to the neighborhood ones. Some of the families sought to build commodious and splendid houses, but more of them expended their houses because



Figure 3-32: The "Mount Tai Being Here"

of the excessive growth of the family members which led to a lack of housing. It was much more reasonable and economical for them to purchase new house sites from adjacent neighborhood family-compounds to expand their existing house than to build new houses elsewhere. Consequently, the possible cross-shaped intersections would be inevitably changed into the T-shaped (Fig. 3-33).

Although the streets in the residential area were space that all the clan members had the right to pass through, they primarily served the families nearby, that is, they actually belonged to the neighboring families rather than the whole clan. As long as the families concerned raised no objections, the clan would not prohibit families from changing street locations. It was meaningless to strictly maintain the original street network at this time. Therefore, it would not be surprising if some of the T-shaped intersections were actually changed from the cross-shaped ones.

- The Life on the Streets

Although the Che Men and the Furong Pond were good communal places for the clan members to spend their leisure time, the people generally spent more time staying on the streets before their family-compounds. The men would gather together to chat or play chess while the women chatting together as well as doing some needlework. Moreover, the streets were also the paradise of children. In fact, it would be easier for the men to concentrate on playing chess and for the women doing needlework in their private courtyards, but they still preferred to do them on the streets where they could fully enjoy the atmosphere of communal environment, which was actually more important than the other things that they were doing. The families by the streets usually had lived there for many generations and were certainly very familiar with each other, but, even so, men would still stay with men and women with women when they were resting and chatting on the streets.

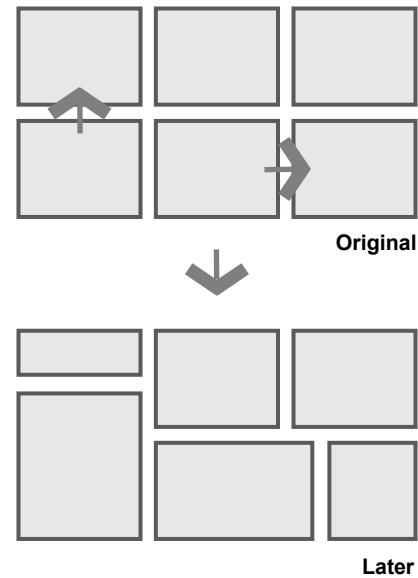


Figure 3-33: From the Cross-shaped  
to the T-shaped

Chatting was always a main part of the people's street life. There were no specialized agencies in the clan to collect, edit, and provide daily information for the clan members, so they exchanged, transmitted, and commented on all kinds of news through chatting. This kind of information transmission had incredible efficiency. By means of it, the people could always well know what happed to someone in the clan, even more quickly and comprehensively than the person concerned.

The residents of the settlement generally had close kinship relations with their neighbors. Their common street life would greatly strengthen and consolidate their original relations, and make their friendship accumulated in daily life and deeply rooted in memory.

- The Spring Space

When the street life had already become indispensable to the clan members' lives in Furong Village, the people were in fact often passively attracted into the streets rather than on their own initiative, in other words, the streets had a strong pulling force which could pull people out of their private living space and combined them together. Meanwhile, a part of their lives, which should be private, was also pulled out of the family-compounds, especially from those without inner courtyards, for example, many people would hold bowls in hands and eat just on the streets. The streets had been the extension of their living rooms. It could be said that the people's some private affairs became public on the streets, but on the other hand, the communal streets were to a certain degree privatized by the people and the street's unspecified "communal" actually had specific ownership, that is, it belonged to the families nearby.

Therefore, the families would often more or less encroach on the streets through some construction activities. Such behaviors should be corrected, but usually not. Behind these encroachments were silent contests among the families, filled with insistence and compromise. The clan usually did not initiatively involve itself in these contests unless the families concerned requested. Although such encroachments happened frequently, not only in Furong Village, but also in other rural settlements, the streets were still streets, still permitting people to pass through. The streets

actually had another force, a pushing force, which came from the confrontation of the families and reflected itself in the resistance to the squeeze from both sides of family-compounds.

The streets showed similar characteristics to those of springs which could not only pull, but also push things, and the street space could be described as a “spring space” whose characteristics were determined by the clan life. As mentioned previously, the families were residentially concentrated in the clan settlement with close mutual cooperation based on the blood relationships, which made them tightly bonded together without definite property boundaries. The pulling force of the street space was exactly a faithful reflection of this fact. On the other hand, each family still attempted to maintain a certain degree of independence and had competition relations with the others. This was also faithfully reflected in the street space’s pushing force. Due to the continuing interaction of the two forces, cooperation and competition, pulling and pushing, the social and spatial fabric of the residential area was constantly changing under the framework of the clan, and meanwhile all blocks of the settlement were connected by the elastic street spaces to maintain a kind of dynamic stability.

### 3.3 Cangpo Village

#### 3.3.1 The Early History

Cangpo Village is located in the middle reaches of the Nanxi River, north of now Yantou Town and by the west side of the Yongxian Road (Fig. 3-34). According to the description of the genealogy books, the first ancestor of Cangpo Village was Li Cen (李岑) who originally lived in Changxi (长溪), Fujian Province. Large-scale wars broke out in his hometown during the Five Dynasties period (907-960), so he had to leave home and was stranded in Xianjü (仙居) in the Nanxi River basin until an old man with the surname of Zhou took him in. The old man deeply appreciated Li Cen’s talent and then betrothed his daughter to Li. In 955, Li’s family moved to Cangdun (苍墩) where

Li Cen lived on teaching and was known as “Cangdun xian sheng” (苍墩先生; Mr. Cangdun).

When Li's family lived at Cangdun, his father-in-law dreamed that a white Chinese dragon flew down from the Mountain Cang which was located to the northwest of Cangdun. The white Chinese dragon represented auspiciousness and the dream implied that Cangdun was a valuable land with a good geomantic omen. This made Li Cen decide to permanently settle down there where the Li's clan was gradually established. In the Song Dynasty, there was a emperor named Zhao Dun (赵惇 1189-1194). In accordance with ancient China's naming taboo, the characters used in the emperor's given name, including their pronunciations, were for the emperor's exclusive use. Therefore, Cangdun was changed into Cangpo from then on.

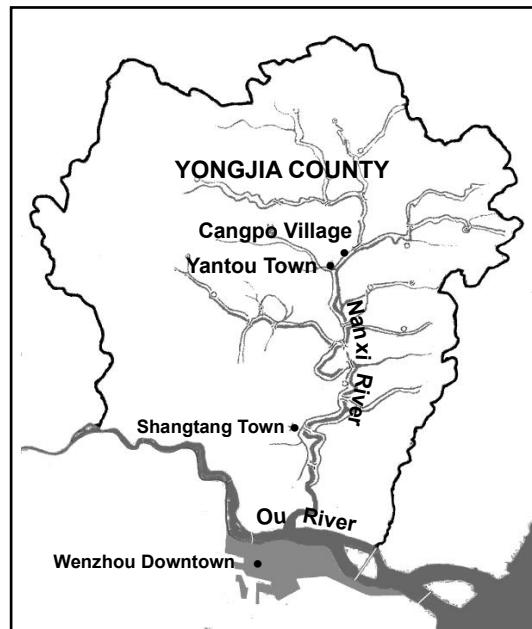


Figure 3-34: Location of Cangpo Village

### 3.3.2 The Feng Shui Design of the General Plan

Cangpo Village (Fig. 3-35) covered an area of about 9.44 hectares. Its plan was nearly a square, 300m from north to south and 340m from east to west. To the west of Cangpo, there was a mountain with three main peaks and the whole shape of the mountain was like an ancient Chinese brush rack, hence the mountain named Brush Rack Mountain (笔架山; Pinyin: Bi Jia Shan). This name actually did not only belong to the mountain near Cangpo Village, but also to those of similar shape. Brush rack was an essential thing for the ancient Chinese literati, so people often thought that this kind of mountain could bless the nearby settlements, especially giving the local people good fortune in imperial examinations.

This kind of mountain shape was also somewhat similar to the flame, and then the mountain also represented “fire” which was not a favorable factor to Cangpo's

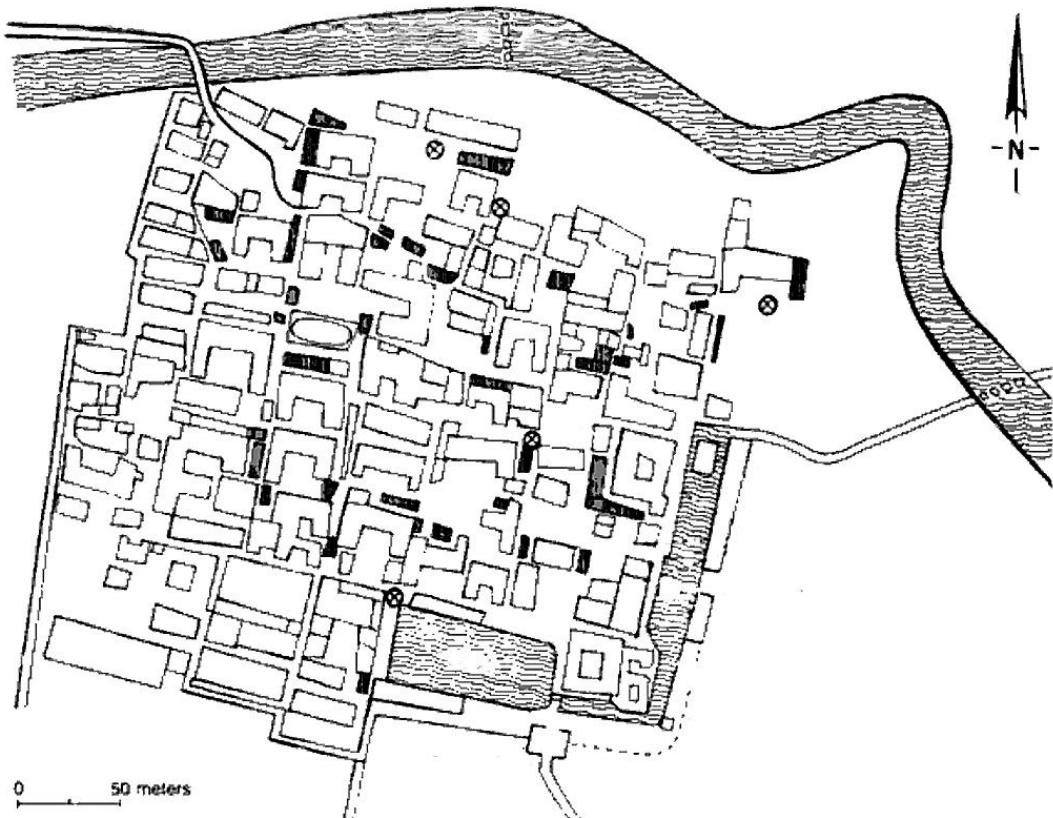


Figure 3-35: Map of Cangpo Village Source: Knapp, 1992, 175

feng shui. The Brush Rack Mountain lied to the west of Cangpo Village. According to the wu xing theory (Table 2-1), the “west” represented the element “metal”. When “metal” encountered the “fire”, it would be burned more and more hot. The “north” represented the element “water”. Although there are several brooks at the north of Cangpo, the quantity of water was not enough to quench “fire”. The “east” represented the element “wood” which might be ignited by the spreading “fire”. And the “south” represented the element “fire”, so the whole Cangpo Village seemed to be surrounded by fire (Liu, Peilin 1998, 135).

The ninth-generation ancestor Li Song (李嵩) invited Li Shiri (李时日) to plan the settlement carefully in 1178. According to his design, two large ponds were constructed in the southern part of Cangpo Village and canals were dug, drawing water to surround the whole settlement, in order to ensure that there was enough water to resist the threat of “fire” (*ibid*).

### 3.3.3 The Communal Buildings, Places, and Facilities

- The Che Men (Xi Men)

The settlement was surrounded by rough rubble walls with a height of about 2m and an average thickness of about 0.8m. The south gate was the main entry of the settlement, also known as “Che Men” (Fig. 3-36). In front of the Che Men, there was a small square called “Jinshi Tan” (进士坦) with three steps (now two steps) above the ground level. The three steps symbolized the three examinations a person must pass before obtaining the jinshi degree—the district examination, the provincial examination, and the metropolitan examination (Appendix p146).



Figure 3-36: The Che Men of Cangpo Village

The Che Men had seven stone steps and this number also had a special meaning. Li Zhongai (李仲爰), one of the eleventh-generation ancestors of the clan, was originally a seventh-rank official in the Song government. By virtue of outstanding achievements, he was appreciated by the emperor who consequently broke the rules to promote him to the first-rank position, serving as tai shi (太师). It was to commemorate this event that seven steps were constructed in front of the Che Men (Appendix p146-147). Behind these steps, there was a pattern of the tai shi's official hat of the Song Dynasty jointed together by four stones on the ground (Fig. 3-37), showing Li Zhongai's glory, also the clan's glory, and reminding the descendants to continue it. Since there were many other members of the Li's clan serving as senior government officials in the Song Dynasty, the Li's



Figure 3-37: Close-up of the “Tai Shi's Official Hat”

clan was eligible to build the Che Men. It is said that only Furong and Cangpo Villages had such qualifications. The Che Men was also a small world belonging to the male clan members, like in Furong Village. The men usually assembled there in twos and threes to spend the time by chatting.

A stone road extended from the Che Men to the residential area of the settlement. At the middle of the road there was a small stone arch bridge called Wu Long Bridge (五龙桥), also known as Dingxiang Bridge (鼎香桥), whose upward bending arc symbolized the back of lion (Fig. 3-38). The Che Men was the lion's



Figure 3-38: The Dingxiang Bridge

head and the two lanterns hung on the Che Men were just the lion's two eyes. Ancient Chinese people often compared the men of great abilities to the beasts, such as lions, tigers, or leopards, etc, so the above design implied that Cangpo Village was a place where able men lived in.

#### ▪ The West and East Ponds

Adjacent to the left side of the stone road was the rectangular West Pond (西池), about 35m wide from north to south (Fig. 3-39) and 80m long from east to west. Not far from the right side of the stone road was the rectangular East Pond(东池), about 19m wide from east to west and 147m long from north to south (Fig. 3-40). The two ponds were connected by a 16m wide and 28m long canal, part of which passed under the stone road (Fig. 3-41).

The water of ponds was drawn from the streams lying north of the settlement, and therefore a water-retaining dike, about 14m wide and 300m long, was constructed along the south side of the West Pond and canal, and the east side of the East Pond. Many pines and cypresses were planted on the retaining dike and together with the water made the dike a beautiful small garden.



Figure 3-39 (top):  
The West Pond

Figure 3-40 (middle):  
The East Pond

Figure 3-41 (bottom):  
The Canal



- The Wangxiong Pavilion and the Shuiyue Tang

A pavilion, called Wangxiong Pavilion (望兄亭; literally meaning a pavilion for expecting the elder brother), was built at the southeast corner of the East Pond (Fig. 3-42). It was said that the seventh-generation ancestors Li Gui (李桂) and Li Gong (李拱) were good brothers affectionate to each other. Although the elder brother Li Gui moved to Fangxiang Village (方巷村)<sup>41</sup>, about 1km to the south of Cangpo Village, in 1128, the two brothers still visited each other frequently and often chatted late into the

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<sup>41</sup> Li Gui's family gradually developed a branch clan of Li in Fangxiang Village.

night. But, it was not safe for the brother to go back home at night because many wild animals would haunt outside of the settlements at that moment, then the two brothers decided to build pavilions respectively in their own settlements: Li Gui built the Songdi Pavilion (送弟阁; literally meaning a pavilion for seeing younger

brother off) at the north of Fangxiang Village and Li Gong the Wangxiong Pavilion at the south of Cangpo Village. When one brother was walking home with a lantern, the other would stand in the pavilion, looking at the brother's lantern, until the brother safely arrived at the settlement and gave lantern signals from the opposite pavilion.

The Wangxiong Pavilion had already become a communal place in Cangpo Village. Elderly men (not women) often went to the Wangxiong Pavilion where they could get a good view of the nearby East Pond as well as of the outside of the settlement. Moreover, the pavilion, without many people passing by, was much quieter than the Che Men, so it was a pleasure for the elderly men to sit there for about one or two hours in the afternoon.

There was a small courtyard, called Shuiyue Tang (水月堂; Hall of Moon in the Water), at the northern end of the East Pond, opposite to the Wangxiong Pavilion. The original layout of the Shuiyue Tang could not be known. The existing courtyard was rebuilt by the thirty-third-generation ancestor Li Xipo (李西坡) in the late Qing Dynasty. It was not a communal building, but, behind it, there was another moving story of two brothers deserving of mention here. The eighth-generation ancestors Li Bang (李邦) and Li Kan (李刊) were also two good brothers. The elder brother Li Bang served in the army and died bravely in battle for the country in 1120. When Li Kan, serving as a civilian officer at that time, learnt of his brother's death, he was so grieved that decided to resign and return to his hometown, Cangpo Village, where he built the Shuiyue Tang in 1124 and stayed there to mourn his departed brother (Chen, Zhihua 2002, 14).



Figure 3-42: The Wangxiong Pavilion

The unity of the clan members was always an essential condition for the clan's prosperity (*ibid*, 16), therefore, the above two stories were handed down together with the buildings and used by the Li's clan to educate the descendants to love each other.

- The Ancestral Hall

Between the stone road and the East Pond were the Li's ancestral hall and the Renji Temple.

The Li's ancestral hall, adjacent to the east of the stone road, was built by the fifth-generation ancestors Li Xian (李显) and Li Yong (李颙) in 1055. The building was originally facing south. But the diversion of the streams near the settlement was perceived as undermining the settlement's original feng shui, which might consequently make the clan members lose the fortune in imperial examinations, therefore, the ancestral hall was converted to face west, just opposite to the Brush Rack Mountain, in order to create a new good feng shui.



Figure 3-45 (left): The Side Corridor

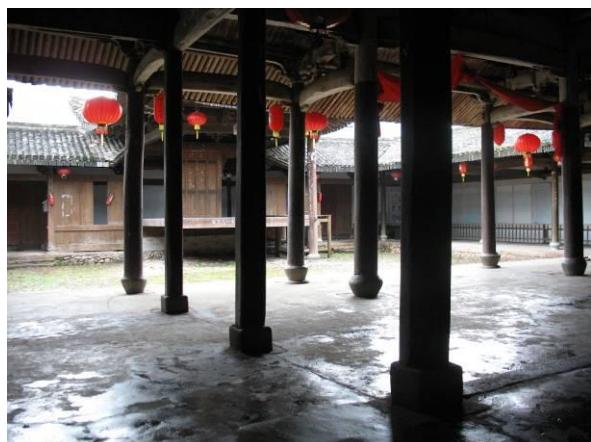


Figure 3-43 (top right): Interior of the Main Hall



Figure 3-44 (bottom right): The Stage

The ancestral hall consisted of main hall (on the east side), stage (on the west side), corridors (on the north and south sides), and inner courtyard (Fig. 3-43~45). The main hall honored the spirit tablet of the first ancestor Li Cen and the portraits of Li Cen and his wife. It was also a place where the clan members collectively discussed and handled the clan issues. If the clan had something important to deal with, people would beat the large drum placed in the north corridor to assemble the clan members (Fig. 3-46) (Appendix p148, 171).

Cangpo and Fangxiang Villages always got along very well with each other. On every Spring Festival and Lantern Festival, the two clans would jointly watch drama performances in the ancestral hall, the Fangxiang people standing in the south corridor and the Cangpo in the north. On the Lunar New Year's Day, the Fangxiang elderly people went to the Cangpo ancestral hall to share cakes and so would the Cangpo elderly people go to the Fangxiang ancestral hall on the winter solstice. The ceremony of sharing cakes represented that the two clans were of the same blood descent and their descendants would maintain this unity and harmony forever (Appendix p146, 170).

- The Renji Temple

A lot of famous figures in Chinese history were deified and people dedicated many temples to them (Feng, Erkang 2005, 32 (6)). These temples were the places where the people offered sacrifices and prayed for blessings. In this regard, temples had the same function as ancestral halls. It was the main difference between temples and ancestral halls that the former was dedicated to the deified figures but the latter to the ancestors. Additionally, the souls of ancestors attached themselves to the spirit tablets but the deified figures to the sculpted statues (Lin, Yaohua 2000, 32).



Figure 3-46: The Drum in the Side Corridor

Chinese people usually made sacrifices to various gods and such worship behaviors always had strong utilitarian purposes (Eliot 1998, 226-232). When someone could not get help from others, he or she would turn to gods. If the people's appeals were temporary, for example, praying to gods for gifting children, the corresponding sacrifices were usually offered temporarily; otherwise, for example, praying for health, wealth, or safety, the sacrifices would often be offered for a long time. Additionally, different gods had different capabilities, so the people should choose correct gods to pray.

Clans would only dedicate temples in their settlements to those who could permanently bless all of the clan members and the clans would also permanently offer sacrifices in the temples. The gods who might be needed occasionally were also important, but the clans usually shared common temples which were dedicated to such gods and were generally constructed outside of the settlements.

Although clans made sacrifices to both gods and ancestors, the latter was more important to the clans because they could choose gods but could not choose their ancestors whom they must unconditionally honor. Therefore, the locations of the temples were usually not as prominent as those of the ancestral halls. Many temples were just located at the inconspicuous edges of the settlements, and at the same time it was unnecessary to build them too much splendid.

The temple in Cangpo Village, named Renji Temple (仁济庙), was located on the east side of the ancestral hall and was built by the tenth-generation ancestor Li Bojün (李伯钧) in 1180. It was dedicated to Zhou Kai (周凯), the Holy King Ping Shui (平水圣王; a conferred title literally meaning a holy king capable of controlling floods). Zhou Kai lived in the Pingyang County (平阳县), Zhejiang, and died in fighting floods in the Western Jin Dynasty. After his death, people honored him as a water god and began to offer sacrifices to him. He was successively conferred the titles of "Duke Ping Shui Xian Ying" (平水显应公) in the Tang Dynasty and "King Hu Guo Ren Ji" (护国仁济王) in the Song Dynasty. Since water was vital for agriculture, people particularly respected the water god (Chen, Zhihua 2002. 16-17). The Li's clan honored Zhou Kai just for protection from floods and droughts.

The temple consisted of an entrance hall (on the south side and protruding into the canal), a main hall (on the north side), corridors (on the east and west sides), and an inner courtyard. A stone slab connected the entrance hall with the south bank of the canal. And a square pond was constructed in the center of the courtyard to imply the identity of Zhou Kai as a water god.

- The Design of the Central Space

The main buildings and constructions in the settlement were all concentrated near the West and East Ponds and formed a center. Behind the Che Men, there would not be a narrow, monotonous transition space as in Furong Village, but open water, splendid buildings, and verdant trees. The clan carefully prepared a magnificent landscape and directly presented it to people. The design of the transition space behind the Furong Che Men reflected the introverted character of the Chen's clan. Compared with it, the Li's clan showed more extroversion.

The West and East Ponds were not only reservoirs serving the residents in the settlement, but also were ingeniously used to constitute landscapes. The West Pond separated the stone road on the east bank and the houses on the west bank far from each other, so that people could clearly watch the distant rolling Brush Rack Mountain from the stone road, and meanwhile, the houses on the west bank seemed to blend into the mountain and all of them were perfectly reflected in the water, just like an elegant Chinese ink and wash painting (Fig. 3-47). It was very reasonable for the ancestral hall to be converted to face the west, to face this beautiful scenery. Moreover, to locate the entrance of the reconstructed ancestral hall on its west side, close to the stone road, could remind passersby of the presence of the ancestral hall, and at the same time, make the space in front of the ancestral hall look very spacious with the aid of the West Pond.



Figure 3-47: The Scenery of the West Pond

Ancestral halls and temples were usually enclosed within courtyard walls in other clans. The design of the Li's ancestral hall and the Renji Temple was apparently different. The walls adjacent to the south canal and the East Pond were replaced by open galleries where people could sit to have a rest (Fig. 3-48) and to watch the flowers and trees on the opposite dike, and furthermore the interior and exterior spaces of the courtyards fully interwovened with each other. This was very creative in design, and to some extent broke the introversive and conservative spatial patterns of such kinds of architectures. The fact also proved it a successful attempt.



Figure 3-48: Close-up of the Ancestral Hall

Although the Che Men, ancestral hall, Renji Temple, ponds, dike, and other constructions in Cangpo Village were constructed in different years, they were combined together in harmony. It was the same in Furong Village. Without the guidance, direction and supervision of the government, it was only by relying on the management of the clan organizations, that is, the management of the Chen's and Li's clans, could such buildings, constructions, and places be comprehensively planned, realized and maintained very well.

The clan not only encouraged its members to actively donate money to the construction of communal buildings and facilities, but also drew up and implemented strict regulations to safeguard these clan property. Li Xizhai (李西斋) ever planted three young cypresses on the water-retaining dike in 1178. But other clan members did not care for these trees and often tied oxen to them. One of the trees thus soon died. Li

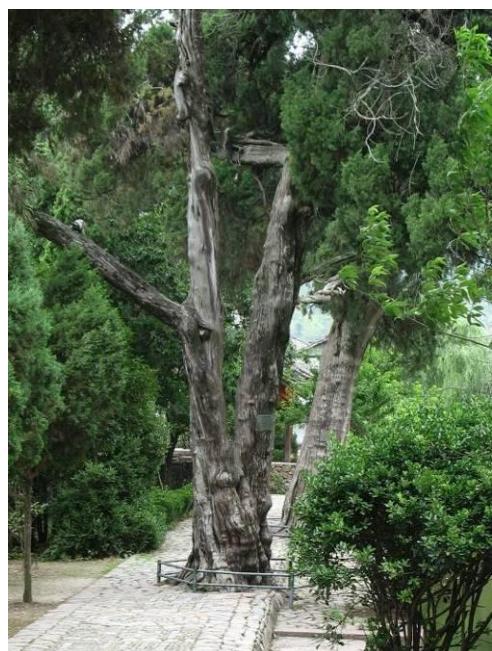


Figure 3-49: The Two Cypress Trees

Xizhai then established a ban that the oxen tied to the trees would be killed immediately without pardon. However, soon afterwards, a person tied an ox to the cypress tree again and he was exactly employed to pasture cattle for Li Xizhai. Even though it would take a lot of money to purchase an ox, Li Xizhai killed his ox in order to defend the ban. From then on, nobody dared to defy the ban. The remaining two cypress trees thus survived and have lived more than 800 years so far (Fig. 3-49), becoming very famous in the local area.

- The One Spring with Four Wells



Figure 3-50: The “One Spring with Four Wells”

The female clan members usually gathered by the West or East Ponds, but more usually at the “One Spring with Four Wells” which was located at the western end of the West Pond (Fig. 3-50). The “One Spring with Four Wells” actually referred to a spring well together with three small ponds nearby.

The well was one of the main sources of drinking water in the settlement and the three ponds were used for specific purposes respectively. The first one next to the well was used for washing rice and vegetables, the second for washing clothes and farm tools, and the third for washing chamber pots. The three ponds were very close to each other, but arranged according to the flow direction of the spring water to ensure that the clean water would not be contaminated by the sewage (Appendix p152). The women could always be seen busy washing vegetables, bowls, clothes, and other things, meanwhile, chatting at this place.

The space of the Che Men and the Wangxiong Pavilion belonged to the men but the One Spring with Four Wells to the women. Under the patriarchal clan system, there were so clear boundaries between men and women that they always gathered in their respective spaces.

- The Streets

There existed a fairly regular street network in Cangpo Village. Most of the streets and lanes intersected at right angles. Same as in Furong Village, the intersections were mostly T-shaped and the crossroads very few.

The streets in Cangpo Village could be roughly classified into three grades according to their respective widths. The Brush Street was the main street running through the whole settlement and dividing the settlement into two parts: the northern residential and the southern communal areas. The secondary streets were narrower than the Brush Street and perpendicular to it, dividing the residential area into several blocks. And there were many lanes as connections between the secondary streets.

- The Ditch System

There were many rainstorms in the vicinity of the Nanxi River, so it was very necessary for the settlement to construct a reliable drainage system to carry the water away quickly. A comprehensive ditch system was constructed in Cangpo Village. One of its main functions was to introduce water into the settlement for daily use, and another one to collect sewage as well as rainwater and drain them out of the settlement in time. Since the water supply and drainage were both operated by gravity, the ditch system should be carefully planned and became one of the basic content of the settlement planning.

The regular street network in Cangpo Village divided the whole residential area into a number of roughly equal blocks and ditches were constructed just along the streets. The one running along the south side of the Brush Street was the main line of the ditch system, about 1m wide (Fig. 3-51). The other ones along those secondary streets were of various widths narrower than the main line. One or two steps were usually constructed leading down to the water of the ditch to facilitate women washing there. And



Figure 3-51: Close-up of the Ditch

also there were many stone slabs spanning the ditches, used by women as washboards or for placing buckets, basins, and clothes. When the women squatted by the ditches washing, their children would be playing around them.

About the ditch construction in Cangpo Village there was a story, which will be very useful to reveal the distinctive negotiations in the process of settlement construction and the uncompromising competitions among families behind their blood relationships. The clan once planned to build a ditch along the Dengyin Lane (登银巷), however, Li zhaoyang (李朝阳) and Li Mingguang (李明光), the owners of the family-compounds on the left (west) and right (east) sides, respectively, both strongly opposed the ditch construction along the feet of their courtyard walls. Both of them refused to compromise until the clan proposed a solution accepted by the two sides: they compared with each other to find who was wealthier and the ditch would not be constructed on the side of the winner, but on the side of the loser. Li Mingguang put silver into dou and arranged the dou side by side from the Brush Street to the north Ba Gua Well (八卦井). But Li zhaoyang put silver into gou tong (构桶; 1 gou tong=2.5 dou) and also arranged them in the same distance. Then the ditch was constructed along the Li Mingguang's courtyard wall (Appendix p152).

### 3.3.4 The Four Treasures of the Studio

The clan embedded the “four treasures of the studio” into the settlement in order to bring the clan members good fortune in imperial examinations (Fig. 3-52). The four treasures of the studio referred to the brush, inkstone, ink stick, and paper, which were the basic tools and materials of ancient Chinese literati for writing or painting. The Li's clan utilized the main street of the settlement to symbolize the “brush”. The main street was not the north-south stone road starting from the Che Men, but the west-east one intersecting at the north end of the stone road. The main street was about 330m long, straight

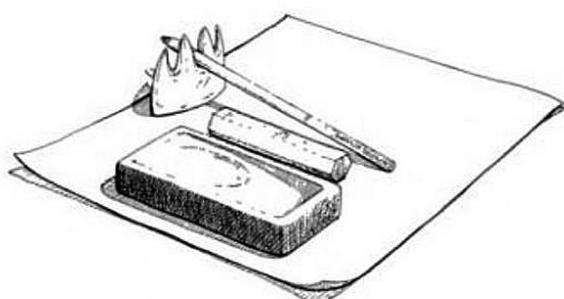


Figure 3-52: The “Four Treasures of the Studio”

Source: Knapp, 1992, 178

towards the west Brush Rack Mountain just like a brush on the brush rack and hence named Brush Street. The West Pond symbolized the “inkstone” and thus was also called Inkstone Pond. Between the north bank of the West Pond and the Brush Street, there was a small space where three boulder strips



Figure 3-53: The “Brush” and the “Inkstick”

were placed along the south side of the street. Each boulder strip was about 4.5m long with a cross-section of 50cmx30cm, symbolizing the “inkstick” (ink in its solid form) (Fig. 3-53). And the roughly square-shaped settlement site was exactly a large piece of “paper” (Appendix p147-148).

Ancient Chinese people had a sincere commitment to the concept of the harmony between human and nature. They believed that the creation of certain particular environmental conditions could help people to realize certain particular wishes. So, Chinese clans often gave abundant connotations to the planning and design of buildings, constructions, and places, such as ancestral halls, streets, ponds, pavilions, and even the whole settlements. Some layouts were believed to secure the continuity of the clans, some to protect the clans against disasters, or to realize something else.

Like the members of the Chen’s clan of Furong Village, many members of the Li’s clan had made remarkable achievements. It greatly enhanced the status of the clan. Therefore, the Li’s clan also had a strong desire to continue the glory achieved by the ancestors. Both of the Chen and Li’s clans hoped to realize the desire by means of creating auspicious layouts for their settlements. The Chen’s clan planned “seven stars and eight dou” in Furong Village, and similarly, the Li’s clan planned “four treasures of the studio” in Cangpo Village. Their expectations for the future development exerted so much influence on the settlement planning that the symbolic values of the layouts were even more than the concrete. For example, the Brush Street, as the main street in the settlement, did not establish any close contacts with the outside roads for convenience of traffic, but created a symbolic spatial connection with the west brush-rack-shaped mountain for the meaning as a brush. Similarly, in

Furong Village, the people were still enthusing about the symbolic meanings of the “seven stars and eight dou”, but could not point out the practical locations and the functions of the “stars” or “du” anymore.

Although it was hard to evaluate whether such layouts could really help the clans to achieve their aspirations, they did exert a long-lasting potential psychological influence on the clans in return, resulting in a strong feeling of identity of the descendants with those development goals. Perhaps many goals originally came from a small number of clan leaders, but, as soon as were integrated into the buildings and spaces of the settlements, they would be imperceptibly inculcated and fixed in local people’s minds, and inherited continuously from generation to generation.

## **Summary**

Furong and Cangpo Villages, the objects selected for case study, are located in the middle reaches of the Nanxi River, Yongjia County, Zhejiang Province. This region's geography, early history, and unique ancient culture represented by the Yongjia School are introduced in detail in this chapter.

Many of the original founders of local clan settlements migrated from other places where great calamities happened. After several generations of reproduction, their descendants gradually constructed clan organizations. And ancestral halls, temples, schools, dwelling houses, pavilions, channels, ponds, and other necessary buildings and infrastructures were consequently constructed by themselves in their respective settlements. As the local government rarely interfered in the internal affairs of a clan, it was the clan that took charge of planning and managing the various construction activities, especially those of communal buildings and facilities, within the settlement.

Both the Chen's and the Li's clans integrated the expectations of their own futures into the planning, creating the "seven stars and eight dou" and the "four treasures of the studio", respectively. This chapter focuses on the communal buildings, their functions, arrangements, and links with the lives of the clans in Furong and Cangpo Villages. Additionally, this chapter discusses the spatial development of residential areas in the settlements, especially the formation of T-shaped street intersections, and proposes a concept of "spring space". In short, the case study in this chapter shows that the ancient Chinese clan lives exerted a decisive impact on shaping the spaces of the rural clan settlements.



## **4. Changes of Chinese Clans and Rural Settlements after 1911**

With the ruinous defeat of the Qing Empire in the Opium War (1840-42) against Britain, the traditional Chinese society suffered a great shock of the Western civilization. Chinese people grew painfully aware that their civilization was not strong enough to win the conflicts with the Western. Therefore, rethinking tradition and learning from the West to seek the road to prosperity became a paramount theme of China's social development. The reform and transition of Chinese society were so important and unavoidable in the process of fighting for national independence and pursuing national modernization that many intellectuals, statesmen, political groups and parties made painstaking attempts and efforts in this respect. From then on, the Chinese society went through roughly three developmental stages. The first stage ran from the foundation of the Republic of China (RC) in 1911 to the foundation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, the second from 1949 to the mid-1970s, and the final began from the launch of reform in 1978.

### **4.1 Chinese Clans and Patriarchal Clan System between 1911 and 1949**

The introduction of the Western culture and system into China resulted in the decline of the Chinese patriarchal clan system after the Opium War; consequently, in August 1911, the Qing government was forced to promulgate the “Draft Civil Code of the Great Qing” (大清民律草案; Pinyin: Da Qing Min Lü Cao An) which was mainly based on the German models in order to accommodate itself to the trend of the times but essentially a mixture of Chinese traditional patriarchal clan system and then Western marriage and inheritance systems. Although this signaled the beginning of the modernization of Chinese related social systems, it was too late to prove the practical value of the new code since the Qing Dynasty was soon overthrown in October (Cheng, Weirong 2008, 238). Furthermore, the establishment of a republic did not make the transition of Chinese society go more easily or smoothly. In fact, Chinese people, especially political parties, significantly differed in their attitudes

towards clan organizations and the patriarchal culture. It made Chinese clans move along different roads.

#### **4.1.1 The Critique of Traditional Chinese Patriarchal Clan System in the Early Twentieth Century**

Since China was repeatedly defeated in the war against the West, even was critical to be gradually colonized by the West, Chinese people began to consider their own civilization far behind that of the West and the patriarchal clan system as well as the patriarchal culture responsible for this.

Li Dazhao, one of the left-wing leaders in early twentieth-century China, believed that the patriarchal clan system was the source of all evil in Chinese society because it was the foundation of all Chinese politics, laws, ethics, ideas, customs, and habits. The Confucian concepts, compatible with the patriarchal clan system, such as “loyalty” and “filial piety”, always sacrificed instead of building up people’s personality. In his view, the traditional Chinese society was without nation and individuals, but only with clans, and was doomed to collapse and perish under the unavoidable impact of Western economy and of liberalism as well as individualism advocated by the Western civilization (Li, Dazhao 2006, Vol.2, 365; Vol.3, 144-150).

Chen Duxiu, another famous figure, thought that the individuals in Chinese society had no rights, but followed the orders of the emperors and of their parents, which were called “loyalty” and “filial piety”, respectively. Such a system led Chinese people to lack of independent personality, freedom of thinking, and equal rights in laws, and would greatly restrict their creativity. Therefore, the traditional social system should be abolished to establish a person-based, rather than clan-based society (Chen, Duxiu 1993, 166-167).

The above figures’ critiques of the traditional Chinese patriarchal clan system were all based on the modern Western thought, to some extent, playing a positive role in emancipating the mind and reshaping family relationships. Nevertheless, their critiques were considered too radical, completely negating the rationality of the patriarchal clan system and its positive role in society and putting forward no practical approaches to eliminate the patriarchal clan system. The patriarchal clan system was

still prevalent in Chinese society during this period, and did not lose its vitality in spite of the criticism of these people (Cheng, Weirong 2008, 226).

Sun Yat-sen, as one of the important leaders to overthrow the Qing Dynasty, did not hold negative attitude towards Chinese clan organization and patriarchal clan culture, but wished to make better use of them. To save China, he thought it necessary to promote nationalism because our people only knew their families and clans rather than the nation. On the other hand, he also found it exceedingly difficult to unite Chinese people under a national banner because of China's enormous population, about 400 million at that time. But the clan groups can be used as the basis to unify them. The cohesion of Chinese families and clans was so strong that people could be expected to sacrifice their own lives in order to protect their families or clans; compared with this, they still had not enough courage to do the same thing for the country. Then Sun called on Chinese people to establish large clans in accordance with surnames which were not more than 400 clans according to his estimation. It was obvious that it would be much easier to unite these 400 clans to build a unified nation or state than to unite 400 million individuals. Meanwhile, he believed that it was not right for then "New Culture" to excessively reject the traditional morality altogether. If Chinese people continued to believe in some of the traditional values, such as "loyalty" and "filial piety", it could be conducive to the country's stability and prosperity<sup>42</sup>. (Sun, Yat-sen 1986, Vol.9, 185, 189, 238-240, 244)

Some Chinese scholars, represented by Liang Shuming and Yan Yangchu, also held moderate attitudes towards the traditional Chinese patriarchal clan culture and wished to take advantage of the fact for social reform and modernization that it was powerful and deep-rooted in Chinese society (Yue 1994). Liang Shuming (2006, 331-332) thought that China had plunged into a very severe crisis. On the one hand, the country suffered oppression from the outside, and on the other hand, the inside had been in dreadful disorder and chaos. And the Chinese society differed remarkably from the Western, so modern European democratic politics could not be easily

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<sup>42</sup> Chinese people must be loyal to the emperors in ancient times, which was called "loyalty". With the establishment of the Republic of China, there were no emperors anymore in China, but Sun Yat-sen thought people still needed "loyalty", not to the emperors, but to the country (Sun, Yat-sen 1986, Vol.9, 244).

practiced in China, that is to say, China's reformation could not rely on external forces. In his view, what China should do was to accumulate the forces of change within its own grass-roots society, i.e. rural society, to trigger comprehensive modernization. Besides, he was opposed to revolutionary change in the countryside, but advocated a certain degree of improvement without changing local pre-existing social relations. Specifically speaking, he advocated the consolidation of the already disordered rural social structure by virtue of the original patriarchal clan relationships, the popularization of education to improve the quality of the rural labors, and the overall promotion of new and advanced agricultural technologies.

Liang Shuming, Yan Yangchu, and other intellectuals launched the Rural Reconstruction Movement between 1926 and 1937. "By 1934, there existed 691 bodies engaged in various aspects of rural activity in China. Of this number, 109 or about 16% were financed privately, while of the 582 bodies either supported by public funds or in some way sponsored by government authority" (Lamley 1969). According to statistics by Yang Maochun (1980, 107), related reforms were carried out in a total of 63 villages from 1925 to 1934. But in general the movement failed to obtain so many satisfying results as were expected because the initiators of the movement never really found an effective means and source of strength to reform Chinese rural society (Wang, Huning 1991, 207). Chinese "rural society is a small-scale peasant economy" (Fei Xiaotong 1992, 113) which formed "a distinctive system, obeying its own logic and principles", (Huang, Philip C. C. 1990, 6) and the peasant family produced "mainly to satisfy the family's own consumption needs, rather than to maximize profits on the market", (ibid. 5)<sup>43</sup> therefore, the whole Chinese society ultimately did not take the road to modernization as the above intellectuals hoped.

To improve clans in a moderate way or to take strong measures against them, the both views had a certain number of adherents within the theoretical circles at that time. In contrast, the latter was more popular. The two views respectively affected the Kuomintang (KMT) (Chinese Nationalist Party) and the Communist Party of China

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<sup>43</sup> These two quotations are actually a summary of A. V. Chayanov's theory on peasant economy made by Philip C. C. Huang who subsequently proved through his research on commercialization in the Yangzi Delta's rural economy that Chayanov's theory could more accurately describe China's rural economy (Huang, Philip C. C. 1990, 10).

(CPC) so much that the two parties adopted quite different policies on the clans in political practice, and made Chinese society meet quite different fates (Chang, Jianhua 1999).

#### **4.1.2 The Reform of Chinese Rural Society under the KMT**

The bourgeois-democratic revolution and the New Culture Movement took place, one after another, in early twentieth-century China. Under the push of public opinion, the Beiyang government, a series of military regimes that ruled the country from 1912 to 1928 after the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty, based the civil law on European models. This made the original marriage and inheritance systems, filled with notions of the traditional patriarchal clan system, begin to change. However, this change proceeded very slowly and the Beiyang government's laws were still with strong colors of the patriarchal clan system. For example, the Dali Yuan (大理院, renamed by the government of the Republic of China to the Supreme Court in 1927) ever adjudicated in Case No. 852 (1917) that all family members' behaviors conducted in family affairs should be subject to parental supervision (Dali Yuan/Guo, 1931, 208). This adjudication recognized the parents' dominance status at home and the so-called family affairs always even included children's marriages (Cheng, Weirong 2008, 247-248).

Under the influence of Western political thought, "local self-government" had become a very popular concept in China at that time. Chinese people seemed so tired of all things belonging to the Qing Dynasty that intended to increase the power of the people through the implementation of local self-government and meanwhile to weaken or replace the previous centralized political system. Sun Yat-sen (1984 Vol.3, 345) ever said in a speech that although the Republic had been established, the political system was not perfected yet due to lack of full development of local self-government. Taking the United States as an example, he said that the United States became powerful and prosperous just because this country regarded local self-government as the foundation of its political institutions. The Beiyang government promulgated the "Proposed Regulations on Local Self-government" and the "Law on County Self-government" in December, 1914 and September, 1919, respectively,

subsequently, the “Law on Municipal Self-government” and the “Law on Township Self-government” in July, 1921. It was laid down in the Law on Township Self-government that a township, under the supervision of county government, was a self-government body, possessing the status of a legal entity that could enact internal regulations and deal with internal affairs. However, the so-called “local self-government” was no more than a mirage since most of above laws actually were not implemented (Xie, Zhenmin 2000, 675-684). During the Beiyang government, China was always full of wars among the warlords who were in no mood at all to actively promote the reform of Chinese society, especially the rural society.

In view of the continuing political chaos and social disorder, the KMT hoped to emulate the success of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and then attempted to penetrate into grass-roots society with the assistance of the CPC<sup>44</sup> and the consultants of the Soviet Union. The KMT finally successfully mobilized farmers, workers and other ordinary people and launched a national revolution, known as the Northern Expedition, against the warlords. The volatile situation was brought to a temporary close until the KMT established the National Government in Nanjing on April 18, 1927. However, what the KMT government faced was an absolutely awful mess.

Since the power of ancient Chinese central government could only touch the level of county, the grass-roots social order was mainly maintained by elites of local clans. After the foundation of the KMT government, the KMT had to continue to rely on the previous local staff to maintain local security, convey government orders, and collect taxes. In order to change this situation and to effectively control the rural society, the KMT government began to train its own personnel to replace the local elites. But the personnel, when sent to rural areas, were usually isolated, lacking acceptance and support of local people (Xü, Jilin/Chen 2006, 395-396). Besides the training of administrative staff to permeate local society, the government also tried to break the existing local power structure by means of reforming the local administrative system, but most such efforts did not succeed.

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<sup>44</sup> The KMT and the CPC established the first United Front between 1924 and 1927.

The KMT, early in its administration, ever gave impetus to local self-government again with the county as a unit of local self-government, and promulgated the County Organization Law in September 1928. Some rural reform activities were pushed forward by European and American non-government organizations and native scholars, such as Rockefeller Foundation's Dingxian Experiment and Liang Shuming and Yan Yangchu's Rural Reconstruction Movement, to some extent also contributed to the implementation of local self-government (Zhang, Ming 2001, 107). However, the true aims of the KMT were not to weaken the central power and transfer part of the power to the grass roots, but on the contrary to expand the central leadership at the local level in the name of implementing local self-government, bringing the rural society over which the central government had no effective control into the national management system (Fairbank/Feuerwerker 2002, 345).

During the process of local self-government, the KMT focused on the re-division of administrative areas below the county level, the improvement of agencies at local level, the management of local armed forces, and especially the establishment of new land tax system. But, as mentioned above, due to lack of authority at the grass-roots level, the KMT had to rely on the previous local elites to execute new policies. This made the agencies mostly dominated by local elites and as having vested interests, they actually would not really implement any reforms that might harm their interests. Therefore, the grass roots did not get any substantive benefits from the KMT's local self-government (Wen, Jüntian 1933, 451). And even the KMT failed to achieve its purpose of controlling the local society. For example, the KMT ever wanted to get the accurate data on the land area for collecting land tax and this would inevitably threaten the interests of the local elites. Hence various means, overt or covert, were used by the elites to obstruct the land measurement. Lack of local cooperation resulted in the fact that the land measured in Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces for ten years was no more than one-fifth of the total land area of these two provinces (Zhang, Ming 2001, 109). It seemed that the real beneficiaries of local self-government were the elites whose status and benefits in local society were further consolidated and strengthened during this period. And it could be said that the KMT's first attempt to control rural society through reforming the pattern of local administration ended in failure.

Many CPC members had to move from urban to rural areas to escape KMT persecution after the disruption of Kuomintang-Communist cooperation in 1927 (Twitchett/Fairbank 2005, 718). So, another important purpose for the KMT's "local self-government" was to organize the grass roots to prevent infiltration of the CPC into rural society and further compress the CPC's survival space. But this strategy obviously did not work since the CPC soon successfully established bases in many areas and began to initiate armed struggle against the KMT regime. In order to better control the countryside upon which the CPC depended for its survival, the KMT government eventually abandoned the system of local self-government and turned to implementation of the baojia system throughout the country, especially in the areas where the CPC was active.

The baojia system was first tried out in Hubei, Henan, and Anhui provinces from 1932 and put into practice throughout the country after 1934. Household was the basic unit of the system; every ten households constituted a jia and every ten jia a bao, headed by a jia zhang (甲长) and a bao zhang (保长), respectively. People in a jia had to vouch for the law-abidingness one another and share responsibility for what some member had done. Specifically, neighbors must monitor one another whether some of them had links with criminals, in fact primarily referring to Communists, and if so, the discoverers must immediately inform against the people concerned, otherwise, they would be implicated and punished together with the criminals (Wen, Jüntian 1933, 652, 658). Through the implementation of the baojia system, the KMT government began to check on rural population and attempted to transform villages into tightly organized paramilitary groups to confine the expansion of the CPC (Zhang, Ming 2001, 117). Nevertheless, the KMT still faced the same old problem that the lack of forces to mobilize the rural society made the government always rely on local elites, mostly leaders of clans, to implement new systems and maintain local domination.

The relations between local elites and the central government were very delicate. On the one hand, these elites did not want the CPC to set foot in their territory because its coming would inevitably seriously weaken their dominance in local society. So they were willing to actively cooperate with the KMT and make use of its administrative resources to resist the CPC and protect their own interests. But, on the other hand, they knew that the ultimate goal of the KMT's rural reform was to expand

the central power to the local level and substantially control the grass-roots society. It would also infringe upon their benefits and thus was unacceptable to them. So they would not sincerely try to implement the system for the KMT. Even a basic check on registered residents failed to be completed in Henan province where the baojia system was firstly implemented (Zhu, Dexin 1994, 23-30). The baojia system was implemented until the end of the KMT's rule on the mainland and a fiasco from start to finish. It failed not only to curb the expansion of the CPC's influence in the countryside, but also even to help the central government to effectively levy taxes or gain recruits (Zhang, Ming 2001, 122).

In ancient times, the sovereign power of the local elites was never formally legalized even though they practically controlled the rural society and to some extent such the control was acquiesced in by then central government. But along with the implementation of the baojia system, the elites occupied the positions at all levels, such as jia zhang or bao zhang, and could openly and legally exercised dominion over the local society in their official capacity. That is to say, although the baojia system paved the way for the central government to extend its power over the rural society in terms of systems, it actually legitimized the governance of the local elites and then provided more space for further development of the local clan organizations (Zhang, Jü 2002). It could be said that the local elites were always the beneficiaries.

The KMT always attempted to establish a tight and effective rural management system, but failed to obtain substantial results during the process of top-down reforms. The basic structure of the Chinese rural society had no obvious changes and the clan rules left by traditional society were still playing an important role in local people's lives (Xü, Jilin/Chen 2006, 395-396). After Japan launched an all-out war of aggression against China in 1937, the KMT lost large tracts of territory and at the same time completely lost opportunities to control and reform the Chinese rural society.

#### **4.1.3 Changes of Chinese Clans and Patriarchal Clan System**

Although the speed of the change in the Chinese society was rather slow during the Beiyang and KMT periods, new systems and ideas still made a profound impact on the Chinese traditional clan organizations. The clans took control of rural society as tightly as before, but their organization and the relevant patriarchal clan system had already differed from the traditional in many respects.

Chinese people usually obtained a basic education in clan schools in the traditional society and what they learnt was limited only to the thought of Confucianism. China's education system began to change in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and teachers started to give instruction in Western natural and social sciences. Accordingly, the government established and improved a new education system, including setting up schools in rural areas to provide basic education for local people, and gradually replaced the obsolete clan education. As Western culture spread rapidly in China, some ideas of democracy and equality had penetrated into the rural people's minds (Cheng, Weirong 2008, 195, 197, 207), plus the shock of a series of movements, such as the May Fourth Movement advocating a "new culture", had already shaken the ideological foundation of traditional Chinese society. Some new patriarchal clan ideas emerged and proponents of these ideas emphasized that clans should be democratic communities in which clan members would enjoy equal status and rights (Feng, Erkang 2005, 266-267).

Although the prior mission of clans was to unite their respective members as many as possible, the control of clan organizations over individuals had not been perceived as tight as before (*ibid.* 246). In the past, rural people were so firmly tied, besides by kinship links, to the land that they had to be residentially concentrated in their settlements and obey the managements of their clans from generation to generation. However, along with the rise of industry and urban economy as well as the emergence of modern means of transportation, like steamship or train, rural people could more easily cast off the shackles of clans and land to make a living in cities and to seek their personal development in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century than in the past (Cheng, Weirong 2008, 207). Meanwhile, another major factor that broke the hard shells of the clans and severely weakened the internal cohesion within each clan was

the turbulent social situation in China during this period. After the corrupt Qing government was violently overthrown, the Republic's foundation did not usher in a period of peace and development in China, but the nation was plunged into the tragedy of war. During the period 1911-49, Chinese people experienced the tangled warfare among warlords 1916-28, the Northern Expedition against the warlords 1926-28, the War of Resistance against Japan 1937-45, and the War of Liberation 1945-49. As ever, war and other kinds of subsequent disasters resulted in the fact that large numbers of people became homeless. Large-scale migration of people between provinces, even from China to Southeast Asia or America, greatly undermined the stability of the structure of the Chinese patriarchal clan. Many clans thus could never again organize clan activities to unite their members (Feng, Erkang 2005, 262-264). However, the internal cohesion cherished by each clan could still be of a certain practical significance. By virtue of kinship, clan members could help one another. It seemed quite valuable and precious in such a tumultuous world.

The reform of the patriarchal clan system was clearly reflected in the changes of the content of clan rules. After the foundation of the Republic, many clans abolished their previous clan rules made in the Ming or Qing Dynasties and drew up new ones which followed the example of the European and American constitutions. According to the new clan rules, these clans set up congresses within themselves and the clan members elected their clan heads in the Western democratic way. The clan heads even were replaced by councils in some clans. If the clan rules needed to be further revised, the new provisions required the consent of two-thirds congress members, and if the clans wanted to punish those who violated the clan rules, they had to go through certain procedures instead of mostly depending on the wills of the clan heads in the past. Meanwhile, many clans reduced the forms of punishment, especially the cruel ones. It was the most severe punishment on those violating the clan rules to expel them from the clans and remove their names from the genealogy books. The clans, when still following the former clan rules, also revised the provisions according to the newly enacted national laws or added a lot of new content to them to adapt to the times. Some clan rules allowed acceptance of female clan members and some even permitted the clan members to believe in Catholicism or Christianity freely (Song/Zhao 2003; Fei, Chengkang 2002, 23-25).

The clans in fact had to make some changes in the clan rules because the importance of these rules had already been seriously challenged by national laws in the maintenance of their internal relations. In ancient times, the clan rules to a great extent were considered as supplementary to the national laws and could exert functions independently. But in the Republican period, the continuous improvement of the national legal system gradually made the clans accept the existence of the laws in the maintenance of local social order. Although local elites, also as clan heads, might usually utilize their own clans' power to interfere with the normal exercise of laws for personal interests, they would not be so blatantly against the laws for the clans that the laws could, to a certain degree, change the old order of the rural society. There was a huge difference between the new laws and the old clan rules or even the old laws. The new ones abolished the difference in social status among the sons born of a man's lawful wife, of his concubines<sup>45</sup>, and those adopted as heirs, lifted restrictions on inheritance rights of women, restricted and weakened the power of parents, and, in short, shook the legal status of the old patriarchal clan system (Xie, Weiyang 1995).

During the process of the laws replacing the clan rules, many people violated the clan rules and undermined the previous moral order of the rural society, but successfully took shelter under national laws. Sometimes this caused a lot of bad feelings among local people toward the laws and law enforcement agencies. Fei, Xiaotong ever gave an example. A person found his wife committing adultery and then wounded the adulterer. His behavior was beyond reproach in traditional Chinese society. But according to the new laws, it was not a crime to commit adultery and the husband was eventually punished for assaulting the adulterer. It was quite hard for Chinese people to quickly accept such laws whose principles were directly copied from the Western ones (Fei, Xiaotong 1992, 105-107).

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<sup>45</sup> "The Chinese have only one lawful wife, but as many concubines as can be afforded. Concubines are definitely considered to be of a lower social order than the wife. ...Sometimes a man takes a concubine solely for the purpose of producing a son and sends her away as soon as the boy is born." (Lach/Kley 1998, 1624) The above quotation represents the reality in the ancient China.

Generally speaking the above changes mainly occurred in the clans under the role of the Beiyang and Kuomintang governments. Since these governments attempted to utilize the clans to maintain order in rural society, they held moderate attitudes toward the existence of clans. The external social environment was so loose for the clans that they could change themselves in different ways to continue to maintain their existence and development in new times. However, the clans were in a very different situation in the areas ruled by the CPC during the same period.

#### **4.1.4 The Reform of the Chinese Rural Society under the CPC**

The CPC decided to transform the old China rapidly and completely in a radical way, that is, to lay hopes on uncompromising revolutions instead of compromising improvements. For this reason, the CPC needed to mobilize social forces as much as possible and the peasants who accounted for the overwhelming majority of the total population of the country thus became the main group deserving to be relied on. The CPC considered that in order to gain support from peasants, it was the primary task to solve their land problems (Xü, Jilin/Chen 2006, 402).

At that time, the land ownership in Chinese rural areas was highly concentrated in the hands of a few local elites, of whom some were also heads of the clans. A large number of landless peasants were reduced to the status of tenant peasants. According to statistics, the landlords who accounted for only 4 per cent of the total rural population owned more than 40 per cent of all farmland in the mid-1930s (Table 4-1) (Ning 1999, 2356; Zhang, Youyi 1997, 82-84). The landlords, meanwhile, charged exorbitant land rents, paid mainly in kinds of harvest goods, to exploit the

Table 4-1: The Land Occupation in Chinese Rural Areas in the Middle 1930s (Ning 1999, 2356)

	Percentage of Households				Percentage of Occupied Land			
	T	W	X	Average	T	W	X	Average
Landlords	4	3	3.5	3.5	50	32	45.8	42.6
Rich Peasants	6	7	6.4	6.5	18	25	18.0	20.3
Middle Peasants	20	22	19.6	20.5	15	23	17.8	18.6
Poor Peasants	70	68	70.5	69.5	17	20	18.4	18.5

T: Tao Zhifu's statistics; W: Wu Wenhui's statistics; X: Xue Muqiao

famers. Under normal circumstances 50 per cent of harvest was paid as rent to the landlords and this percentage was much higher in some regions, even up to 70-80 per cent. The degree of exploitation suffered by Chinese peasants could be clearly shown by comparing the numbers of years' purchase<sup>46</sup> in China, England, and Germany, respectively (Table 4-2). Moreover, the peasants who rented inferior land had to pay higher rent because only the most vulnerable peasants would cultivate such land and they always lacked bargaining power on issues of rent in front of the landlords (Yan, Zhongping 1955, 301-310). As enormous wealth flowed to the landlords and the peasants became more and more poor, a serious social crisis broke out in China.

Table 4-2: The Comparison of the numbers of years' purchase (Yan, Zhongping, 1955, 310)

Country	Years' purchase	Time
China	7.09-9.06	1934
Germany	28-32	During the Bismarck period
	20	After World War I
England	20-25	During the late of 18 <sup>th</sup> century
	27-30	After World War I

To resolve this crisis, Sun Yat-sen put forward his political views very early, that is, to ensure peasant land access by equalizing land ownership in rural areas. He suggested that the landlords should estimate the value of their land and report the valuations to the government. Then the government could choose to purchase land from landlords according to their valuations and assign the land to landless peasants. If the landlords overestimated their land prices, the government could choose not to purchase but charge a tax upon the land in accordance with the overestimated prices which would make the landlords pay more tax than they should (Sun, Yat-sen 1986, Vol.9, 120). However, Sun did not get a chance to implement his vision.

Liang Shuming also ever discussed China's land problems in his book first published in 1937. He attributed the uneven distribution of land to the system of private ownership of land and thought that the Chinese land crisis was inevitable

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<sup>46</sup> "Years' purchase" means the length of time required for the land rent to amount to the purchasing price of land (Fetter 1911, 118-122).

unless all of the land owned by the public. On the other hand, he did not believe that the system of public ownership of land could be successfully implemented in China at that time (Liang 2006, 331-332).

The CPC shared with Liang Shuming the view that the private ownership of land was the root cause of uneven distribution of land, but with a difference in respect to the public ownership of land. The CPC did determine to solve the Chinese land problems by replacing the private ownership of land with the public, and thus adopted policies very distinct from those of the KMT, consequently placing Chinese rural clans in a completely different situation.

- The Peasant Movement, 1921-27

The CPC, founded in 1921 during the Beiyang government period, carried out activities in rural areas in its early period. Unlike Sun Yat-sen, intellectuals represented by Liang Shuming, and the KMT government, the CPC did not focus on cooperation with local elites, but actively organized peasants to form peasant associations by means of which these peasants could require the elites, mostly the landlords, to reduce land rents. The landlords and peasants were, in fact, also heads of clans and the clan members, respectively. Therefore, it was the peasant struggle against the landlords that the clan members broke the previous strict hierarchy and fought against their heads within the clans.

The earliest peasant movement led by the CPC broke out at Yaqian (衙前), Xiaoshan County, Zhejiang Province and the most successful one was led by Peng Pai (澎湃), a communist, in his hometown of Haifeng (海丰), Guangdong Province. Under the leadership of Peng Pai, peasant associations were set up one after another in the areas around Haifeng, such as in Lufeng (陆丰), Huiyang (惠阳), Wuhua (五华), Zijin (紫金), Huilai (惠来), and Xingning (兴宁), and the total number of association members was even up to 20,000, making the peasant associations become a powerful force in local politics (Zhang, Qizhi 2002, 298). The early peasant associations mostly conducted legitimate struggles for reducing the tax burden on peasants and improving women's social rights. Actually many of the Communists who led the peasant struggles were youth coming from wealthy families, so it could be said

that they were originally a part of the local elites, and local peasants regarded them more often as kind-hearted, trustworthy, respectable gentry than as Communists (Zhang, Ming 2001, 89-90).

However, the peasant movements were gradually so intermingled with violence that both the peasants and the landlords armed themselves which was soon hardly distinguished whether for self-defense or for attack. Even though had inextricable relationships of interest with the landlords, the KMT exercised restraint and tolerance toward the peasant movements initiated by the CPC because the KMT itself was still only a weak party at the time. Its most urgent task was to establish and maintain cooperation with the CPC which could be greatly helpful in mobilizing the rural masses to join the KMT's Northern Expeditionary Army and to a large extent enable the army to win the war against the warlords. As the Northern Expeditionary Army gradually occupied a dominant position in the civil war, the KMT began to consider limiting the CPC's activities, especially the peasant movements.

The peasant movements had made the social order, based on the deeply-rooted patriarchal clan system in the Chinese countryside, undergo a certain change. According to Mao Zedong's description in his famous "Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan", "the worst clan elders and administrators, being local tyrants, have been thrown out. No one any longer dares to practise the cruel corporal and capital punishments that used to be inflicted in the ancestral temples, such as flogging, drowning and burying alive. The old rule barring women and poor people from the banquets in the ancestral temples has also been broken. The women of Paikuo in Hengshan County gathered in force and swarmed into their ancestral temple, firmly planted their backsides in the seats and joined in the eating and drinking, while the venerable clan bigwigs had willy-nilly to let them do as they pleased. At another place, where poor peasants had been excluded from temple banquets, a group of them flocked in and ate and drank their fill, while the local tyrants and evil gentry and other long-gowned gentlemen all took to their heels in fright." (Mao 1965, Vol.1, 45) But, some scholars believe "the fact remains that, in effect, the action of the peasantry of Hunan in 1926-7 (or, to be more precise, the various and divergent activities of a minority of peasants, some of whom continued to be manipulated by their traditional masters) justified neither the enthusiasm that Mao expressed in his

Report, after the event, nor the hopes he had entertained before it." (Fairbank/Feuerwerker 2002, 306) And the CPC's enthusiastic agitation seemed unable to bring any substantial changes to the original Chinese rural social structure. Many peasants considered the strange Communists or League members preaching communism in the villages as urban rich kids who felt extremely bored and then came to the villages just for fun (Zhang, Ming 2001, 90).

- The Agrarian Revolution, 1927-37

In the KMT's eyes, the peasant movements were full of lawlessness and all crimes should be imputed to the CPC. In order to maintain the cooperation with the KMT which had gradually gained control over China, the CPC leaders had to acknowledge that some peasants were too radical and their conduct should be condemned. Nevertheless, this compromise failed to prevent the formal rupture of Kuomintang-Communist Cooperation in 1927. From then on the KMT began to quell peasant movements and hunt down CPC members throughout the country. "The membership of the party dropped from its peak of nearly 60,000 in April 1927 to probably less than 10,000 by the end of the year." (Fairbank/Feuerwerker 2002, 169) The CPC eventually chose the path of armed struggle against the KMT regime and subsequently launched rebellions in some urban and rural areas of Hunan, Hubei, Jiangxi, and Guangdong Provinces. The military operations in the cities failed in succession with heavy loss. An army of over 20,000 men was the first to rebel in Nanchang, Jiangxi Province, on August 1, 1927. However, only about 3,000 were still alive by October (Central Archives 1981, 100, 103), and had to shift to rural areas where the CPC found its survival space.

Mao Zedong was beginning to become a striking figure at that time. He always enthusiastically supported the peasant movements. The conduct of some peasants, perhaps too radical and thus unacceptable by many Communists, was of certain inevitability and justifiability in Mao's eyes. "First, the local tyrants, evil gentry and lawless landlords have themselves driven the peasants to this. ...The most violent revolts and the most serious disorders have invariably occurred in places where the local tyrants, evil gentry and lawless landlords perpetrated the worst

outrages. ...Secondly, a revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous. ...The rural areas need a mighty revolutionary upsurge, for it alone can rouse the people in their millions to become a powerful force. ...There is revolutionary significance in all the actions which were labelled as “going too far” in this period. To put it bluntly, it is necessary to create terror for a while in every rural area, or otherwise it would be impossible to suppress the activities of the counter-revolutionaries in the countryside or overthrow the authority of the gentry. Proper limits have to be exceeded in order to right a wrong, or else the wrong cannot be righted.” (Mao 1965, Vol.1, 28-29) “An utter fantasy” was a Western scholar's verdict on then Mao's viewpoint (Hofheinz 1977, 35; Fairbank/Feuerwerker 2002, 305). Mao's views did not occupy a dominant position inside the CPC itself since he had not been the Party's paramount leader yet.

Mao played an important role in directing the 1927 Autumn Harvest Uprising in Hunan, but the insurrectionary army was soon defeated. Then Mao immediately gave up the original plan of attacking big cities and led the remaining forces to the Jinggang Mountain, where he successfully established a base area, depending on the local peasants (Yü, Boliu/Chen 2007, 34-37). Although Mao thought the CPC army had better accumulate strength in the countryside, rather than rashly attack cities as the army was still relatively very weak. Many other CPC leaders remained skeptical about whether to completely pin their hopes for the Party's future on the peasants. “From the perspective of a leader of the party centre, urban struggles and the capture of cities doctrinally and practically looked larger and more decisive than the guerrilla activities in the widely scattered mountain fastnesses.” (Fairbank/Feuerwerker 2002, 201-202) Moreover, the CPC should be a party of the proletariat, primarily industrial workers. According to Marx's doctrine, “the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class.” But the peasant is “not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more”, it is “reactionary”, for it tries to “roll back the wheel of history” (Marx/Engels 1972, 44). Another CPC leader thus “doubted the viability of the rural soviet movement. Without a proletarian base, only petty bourgeois in nature, he thought the Soviets were merely a disguise for power and territorial occupation which had nothing to do with the welfare of the nation.” (Fairbank/Feuerwerker 2002, 182)

Although the CPC's decision-makers had different opinions, they had to face the reality that the possibility of seizing cities had gotten smaller and smaller. So, in order to overthrow the KMT regime, the CPC decided to win the support of peasants by launching the Agrarian Revolution. The CPC subsequently set out some guiding principles for the Agrarian Revolution: 1) Determining poor peasants as the fundamental force of the proletariat in rural areas; 2) confiscating all land of the landlord class for equal distribution to the landless and land-poor peasants; and 3) establishing rural Soviet regimes (Party History Research Center of the CPC Central Committee 1982, 11-12). To implement these principles meant that each village would be changed into a new type of society in which the members would not be identified by their blood relationships or generational positions, but so did by the socio-economic and political relations in accordance with Marx's doctrines. Evidently, it was completely incompatible with the original Chinese patriarchal clan system and culture.

The clan's common property, such as the income from clan land, was mainly used to construct ancestral halls or hold sacrificial activities. Sometimes it was also used to relieve the poor clan members, but the relief could not really solve their problems of lack of land. After many generations of accumulation, the land of each clan was usually much bigger in area than that of individual landlord (Central Archives 1981, 36-37). Therefore, besides the land of landlords, all the clan land was also confiscated by the CPC in the base areas. The confiscated land did not belong to any clans or surnames, but was evenly distributed according to the local populations, even women having equal rights with men to get their own land. The distributions of clan land cut off the main financial sources of clan activities and seriously damaged the foundation of clans, clearing the way to release the peasants from their clans.

The CPC still had not accumulated enough experience on how to mobilize and organize peasants to participate in the revolution. Some policies were very stupid and ridiculous, for example, burning villages to make local peasants become proletarians and "firmly" join the revolution. The scattered CPC troops established Soviet regimes following the pattern of Russia in various base areas. Nevertheless, many of the regimes were poorly managed, almost always accompanied by violent conflicts. The armed forces of local elites were destroyed and the old regime's agency staff who did

not escape was mostly killed. The Red regimes, just like a catalyst, made the long-standing conflict between rich and poor completely intensified. The peasants actually did not understand the concept of the CPC's revolution, but simply regarded the proletarian revolution as a war of the poor against the rich. The old society as a whole was splitting into two great hostile camps: the rich and the poor between which there was no compromise at all. It was often without any clear criteria for the rebellious peasants to define the members of the so-called rich camp, so that many poor peasants employed by landlords were considered as accomplices of the landlord class and thus suffered great cruelty. The radical actions resulted in the fact that the CPC, when establishing new base areas, would often encounter fierce force resistance organized by local elites who usually dealt with the people of the Soviet base areas in much more cruel ways. Although the CPC ever attempted to reform some rural societies in a suave manner, the main tendency was still radical at that time (Zhang, Ming 2001, 136-144).

The CPC found itself faced with a very thorny problem that many of the peasants who first actively responded to the revolution were the "lumpen proletariats". These people had nothing, always lawless in the past and hence reckless of the consequences of the rebellion. Compared with them, most of the unsophisticated peasants actually were often indifferent to the revolution even though they were also very dissatisfied with their own situation. When a CPC army planed to establish a Soviet regime in an unfamiliar area, they would easily let the local active lumpen proletariats dominate the leadership of each new agency. Some Soviet regimes thus failed to bring benefits to the local people and win their support (Jiangxi Provincial Archives 1982, 377). To these lumpen proletariats, the CPC had to continually rely on their help to penetrate into the closed rural society on the one hand, but looked for suitable opportunities to gradually replace them with other qualified people on the other hand (Zhang, Ming 2001, 144-145).

It was a much thornier problem that the deep-rooted patriarchal clan ideas made the development of the Soviet regimes to a great extent deviate from the CPC's original intention. A Soviet regime usually governed a number of villages. In order to expand the influence in these villages, the CPC actively trained local people, not elites but mostly poor peasants, to become Party members and set up a Party branch in

every village. With the CPC's help, these Party members took over the power of the local elites, but subsequently distributed it according to the patriarchal clan concept instead of the Marxist class theory.

In fact, the clan organization as well as anything related, such as the patriarchal clan system, ideas, or relationships, as a whole, had already been regarded by the CPC as a heavy shackle on the peasants and thus lost its legitimacy in Soviet regimes. Nevertheless, families, fangs, and clans were still communities of interests at their respective levels. The old patterns of power distribution or relevant disputes among various clans or various branches of a certain clan did not disappear even in the same Soviet regime. For example, those who first joined the Party only recommended their close relatives as probationary Party members. It made the Party branch almost equivalent to a clan's one (Jiangxi Provincial Archives 1982, 14). Facts proved that the traditional Chinese patriarchal clan concept which had evolved for more than two thousand years could not be replaced by Marx's concept of social class in just a few years (Zhang, Ming 2001, 157-159). Many so-called revolutionary movements just helped to bring about a simple transfer of power from the previous elites to the new ones. When the new elites distributed or exercised their power, the common ground of their class could hardly fill the gap between lineages. The life-and-death struggle between the KMT and CPC temporarily restrained the conflicts of interest among clans. Facing the KMT's strong military threat, the clans in the CPC's base areas could only cooperate with one another to jointly maintain the Soviet regime's survival and development. But the temporary restraint of the conflicts was not equal to their permanent elimination. As the living environment was not materially changed, the clan organizations and the patriarchal clan concept would doggedly reveal themselves as soon as the time was ripe. In short, the transformation process of the Chinese rural society, performed by the CPC, was not smooth at all.

The KMT mobilized nearly one million troops to "encircle and suppress" the CPC's military base areas in 1933 and ultimately made the Red Army suffer serious military reverses. "The state so arduously created since 1927 was now destroyed" (Fairbank/Feuerwerker 2002, 208). The CPC and its army had to begin the famous Long March in 1934. When this "epic hegira" (*ibid.* 209) ended in 1936, the CPC's fate seemed to be hanging by a thread. But due to the outbreak of Japan's all-out

aggression against China in 1937, China's domestic situation underwent great changes. The CPC's development in Chinese rural areas also entered a new stage from then on.

- Reform of Chinese Rural Society during the War of Resistance Against Japan

The KMT was forced to re-establish cooperation with the CPC to resist Japan in 1937. The CPC temporarily no longer stressed the communism from then on, but erected the banner of nationalism. By mobilizing and organizing the peasants in the enemy's rear areas, i.e. those occupied by Japanese army, the CPC set up sizable anti-Japanese base areas, and gradually realized the full and effective control over parts of the Chinese rural society.

As had learned the hard lessons from the Agrarian Revolution, the CPC changed its original approach, and began to reform the rural regimes through peaceful elections in base areas. As long as effectively unifying the poor peasants in the elections, the CPC could rely on their numerical superiority to get its satisfied candidates elected, replacing the local pro-Kuomintang elites. In the new regime, all powers were vested in the poor and middle peasants who thus occupied the supreme status. The rich peasants as well as landlords could only play an insignificant role as symbolic representatives (Gatu 1987, 247).

However, the establishment of the regime of poor peasants did not mean that the CPC stood its ground in rural areas. The Japanese army had much greater fighting capacity than the KMT army. Therefore, when Japanese troops launched large-scale mopping-up operations, many rural regimes established by the CPC collapsed. Meanwhile, the poor peasants who newly grasped the regimes were usually not the most prestigious in their original clans, but perhaps quite the contrary (Zhang, Ming 2001, 172-176). Besides the support granted by the CPC, the reason why these people could be elected was that most peasants held an attitude of apathy and indifferent toward elections as well as politics. The peasants who had lived in their respective closed and stable patriarchal clan societies from generation to generation neither understood, nor cared about the rules of modern politics. In their eyes, their lives would never be substantially changed no matter who became the new leaders of

the villages (Institute of History 1983, 20). In this respect the CPC had to spend much effort preaching and propagating the significance of local elections to the masses in the base areas. Even some training courses were set up for the peasants, specifically on the technical issues of local election (Zhang, Ming 2001, 177).

During the process that the CPC attempted to reform the Chinese rural society, the Party itself had been also reformed by the latter. To resist Japanese aggression was the top priority for Chinese people during that period. In general, due to the influence of national culture, local elites had developed for themselves a much stronger national consciousness than ordinary famers, also with high anti-Japanese enthusiasm. In order to maximize public support, the CPC permitted some local elites to join. This made the Party undergo a subtle change in composition, and be more broadly representative of social classes than before (*ibid.* 182-183). The CPC began to put forward the “three-thirds system” of political power in the base areas from 1940. According to this system, the allocation of positions within the regimes “should be one-third for Communists, one-third for non-Party left progressives, and one-third for the intermediate sections who are neither left nor right.” (Mao 1965, Vol.2, 418) The so-called “intermediate sections” specifically referred to “the middle bourgeoisie, the enlightened gentry and the regional power groups” and the “enlightened gentry” meant “the left-wing of the landlord class” (*ibid.* 423). This policy made a lot of local elites have a favorable impression of the CPC.

The CPC’s policy on the land issue also appeared to be very flexible then. The land of landlords was not confiscated anymore, but the landlords were required to reduce land rent and interest on loans to improve the lives of poor peasants, on the one hand, and the peasants to pay rent and interest to protect the benefit of landlords on the other hand (Cheng, Hanchang 1994, 530-531). Since the past policies of confiscating and distributing the clan land caused great dissatisfaction among the clans, the CPC no longer implemented them, but attempted to reform the management of the clan land (Cheng, Weirong 2008, 238). Many efforts made by the CPC in base areas gave a strong impression of reversion to Chinese tradition. For example, the smell of gunpowder in the CPC’s propaganda was not so heavy as before. The propaganda more concerned itself with the traditional Chinese moral values, such as honesty, diligence, and probity, instead of the class struggle.

Meanwhile, village government organizations gave up emphasizing the uniformity of administrative regions, that is, all the regimes at the grass-roots level were based on individual villages to accommodate to the natural living conditions of local clans (Zhang, Ming 2001, 186-188).

Mao Zedong's leadership position had been gradually determined and consolidated within the CPC. Mao once expatiated upon the CPC's policy in a speech (Nov. 1941): "Chinese society is small at both ends and big in the middle, that is, the proletariat at one end and the landlord class and big bourgeoisie at the other each constitute only a small minority, while the great majority of the people consists of the peasants, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the other intermediate classes. No political party that wants to run China's affairs properly can do so unless its policy gives consideration to the interests of these classes, unless some provision is made for the members of these classes, and unless they have the right to voice their opinions. ...In agrarian relations, on the one hand we carry out reduction of rent and interest so that the peasants will have food, and on the other we provide for the payment of the reduced rent and interest so that the landlords, too, can live. In the relations between labour and capital, on the one hand we help the workers so that they have both work and food, and on the other we pursue a policy of developing industry so that the capitalists may obtain some profit. In all this our purpose is to unite the people of the whole country in the common endeavour of resistance to Japan. This is what we call the policy of New Democracy." (Mao 1965, Vol.3, 32-33) Although implementing moderate policies helped the CPC successfully integrate itself into and control the Chinese rural society, the New Democracy only suited "a certain historical period and is therefore transitional" as far as the CPC's overall guiding ideology was concerned (ibid. Vol.2 350).

A simple comparison between the policies conducted by the CPC during 1927-37 and 1937-45, respectively, could clearly show that the Party made an effort to let the Chinese society, especially the rural society, adapt itself to Marxism-Leninism in the first period, but began to adapt these two isms to Chinese society in the second period. The Chinese Communists never gave up their ultimate goal of communism. Nevertheless, they were realists in the revolution and could pragmatically carry out some interim policies based on the actual social conditions (Xiang, Jiqüan 2002, 93).

Just because timely changing the past simple, rough way of reforming Chinese rural society, the CPC could successfully unite the majority of the people and appease local elites during the period of the War of Resistance against Japan. Moreover, the CPC won strong support from the people, especially from the peasants, in the subsequent civil war and eventually overthrew the KMT regime.

- Reform of Chinese Rural Society during the War of Liberation

After the victory over Japan in 1945, there were two possibilities for China's future domestic political situation: the CPC and KMT might maintain peaceful relations with each other or renew hostilities. In order to gain support from all the social classes and prevent being isolated, the CPC continued the moderated policy which called on landlords to reduce rent and interest rather than on peasants to divide up the land of landlords. This policy did not change until the civil war seemed inevitable in 1946. The CPC again supported the peasants to occupy and distribute the land of landlords because this could win the support of peasants which would become a decisive force in the imminent war. The clan land received special protection. It could still be owned and managed by the clans (Central Archives 1981, 17), and if a part of clan land had already been occupied by landlords, it would be taken back from the landlords and redistributed within the clan that it originally belonged to, rarely being redistributed to the peasants of other clans (Cheng, Hanchang 1994, 589). However, in 1947 the CPC announced land reform and promulgated the Outline Land Law of China which completely abolished the land ownership rights of clans as well as of landlords, and decreed an even distribution of land among all members of the rural population, without distinction of sex and age (Central Archives 1981, 85). During the implementation, although the violence which ever occurred in the Agrarian Revolution emerged on a large scale again, the CPC had become more experienced than before. It took timely measures to stop the violence and did not let the situation out of control.

More and more peasants went over to the CPC as they obtained tangible benefits from the Party's land reform. According to an estimate, more than 100 million poor peasants had received about 370 million mu of land and other necessary means of subsistence from landlords and rich peasants by the end of the War of Liberation

(Cheng, Hanchang 1994, 618). It could be said that the land reform paved the way for the CPC's victory in the civil war against the KMT. Furthermore, a large number of peasants joined the Party, not only making its social basis even more solid but also resulting in the fact that the peasants, confined within their respective clans from generation to generation in the past, were gradually integrated into a unified political system (Xü, Jilin/Chen 2006, 408). And meanwhile a lot of propaganda was made to encourage the peasants to go beyond the interests of their own clans and throw themselves into the revolutionary struggles for the whole country. To a certain extent, the barriers among Chinese rural clans were broken under the impetus of the CPC. This provided an opportunity for Chinese peasants to establish new social relations in a wider range of rural society than before, and brought significant changes in their psychology and behavior (Meng 2004).

Power, together with land, shifted from local elites to poor peasants. The local elites mostly were the heads in clans, but now completely deprived of their right to manage other clan members (*ibid*). Although some policies of land equalization ever emerged in China's history, they had not as thoroughly subverted the power structure of the rural society as the CPC's land reform did. The old patriarchal clan order was replaced by a new type of order in which the traditional social hierarchy was turned upside-down. Rural people were labeled as landlords, rich peasants, upper-middle peasants, middle peasants, lower-middle peasants, poor peasants, and farm laborers, respectively. And the poorer people had the higher social status because they were the most oppressed in the past and would be the most revolutionary. The local elites, who originally had obvious advantages in respect to property, culture, and generational position, nearly all fell to the lowest level of society (Zhang, Ming 2001, 250-252). The Traditional patriarchal clan system subsequently began to collapse totally; the clan rules were ineffective and the functions played by rural clans were replaced by new social organizations (Cheng, Weirong 2008, 298).

The traditional Chinese rural society had undergone fundamental changes both in its form and content, but the rural social order was not out of control. After all, a new administrative structure and relevant norms were set up there. Compared with the former elites, the new leaders of rural society, mostly coming from poor peasant families, to a great extent relied on the assistance and support of the CPC regime

because they generally lacked necessary management skills and cultural qualities (Party History Teaching and Research Office of the PLA Political Academy 1979, 147). This made China's rural society enter a new era in which the CPC's political power could unrestrictedly expand at the grass roots level, and the space of traditional rural society almost disappeared during the process of such expansion (Zhang, Ming 2001, 252, 255).

## **4.2 Chinese Clans and Patriarchal Clan System after 1949**

The Chinese central governments always attempted to achieve effective control over the rural society. The ancient ones wished to ensure the rural people's loyalty to the emperors, but the modern ones to integrate the closed, scattered, and self-governed clan societies into a unified national society (Zhao, Xudong 2003, 327). Although the KMT failed, the CPC did not seem to stop such efforts after the foundation of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

During the PRC's first three decades (1949-79), Chinese rural society underwent frequent reformations, and could roughly be divided into three stages or periods: the land reform, the agricultural cooperative movement, and the People's Commune Movement. The CPC government was trying to lead the Chinese peasants to accept a set of new social relations based on class rather than the old ones based on consanguinity, and meanwhile trying to replace the former system of private ownership with another one of public ownership. In order to achieve these objectives, the CPC was usually in a manner so radical and uncompromising that the traditional rural patriarchal clan culture suffered severe destruction, and even the emotions among clan members were repressed or cut off by fierce class struggles (Zhang Jü 2002; Xie, Jianshe 2003).

#### **4.2.1 The Period from the Land Reform to the Agricultural Cooperative Movement**

The land reform was still not executed in a large part of the country with about 290 million rural people in 1949. The central government promulgated the Agrarian Reform Law of the People's Republic of China in June 1950 according to which the government would launch a new land reform all over the country in the fall of that year. The reform was basically completed in most of the country, except for some ethnic minority areas, in the spring of 1953 (Cheng, Hanchang 1994, 619). During the reform period, in order to consolidate the new regime, the CPC government began to eliminate the power of clans which had dominated Chinese rural society for generations:

1) All the clan land, about 10% of the total cultivated area, was considered as a product of the former backward system and thus confiscated while the government abolished the past ownership of land (Xü, Yangjie 1992, 465-466). The redistribution of the clan land could not only to a great extent meet the requirements of poor peasants for the land, but also destroy the economic basis of clans, which made the clans lose their economic strength necessary for uniting and ruling the clan members.

2) Ancestral halls, the symbols of clans, were also confiscated by the government. Since not suitable for residence, they were usually used as village government offices, primary schools, or meeting halls (*ibid.* 467), and thus had no symbolic significance anymore. The clans could neither declare their existence through the ancestral halls nor hold any sacrificial activities there.

3) Genealogy books, which recorded the descent of each clan and were used to confirm the identities of clan members, were mostly burned by clan members with the government's support. This was mainly because each clan's ownership of land was usually recorded in the clan's genealogy books, but resulted in the fact that the clans lost the most important tool to clarify and maintain the blood relationships among the clan members.

4) Clan and Fang heads originally had the right to manage clan/Fang members. The new government thought there was serious exploitation within such management so that most of the clan heads, Fang heads, and other administrators were classified

as exploiting classes, becoming the main target of attack. The loss of leadership made the clans naturally tend to collapse.

5) The legitimacy of clan rules were completely denied by the new national laws. The clans thus could no longer control the conduct of the clan members. (*ibid.* 467-471)

In short, the clan land, ancestral hall, genealogy books, clan leaders, and clan rules, as the fundamental pillars of clan organization, were destroyed one by one. The Chinese patriarchal clan system which had lasted for more than two thousand years suffered an unprecedented blow.

The CPC attached great importance to the elimination of the patriarchal clan concept deeply rooted in people's minds. During the land reform, the government not only attempted to implant the concept of class in the minds of peasants through a lot of propaganda, but also called on the peasants to thoroughly criticize the traditional concept with the new one (Feng, Erkang 2005, 319). The government wanted to guide the peasants to establish a sense of belonging as well as identity to their class to weaken and replace the one to their descent (Yue 1994).

The land reform ensured the basic livelihood of large numbers of poor peasants and thus greatly consolidated the CPC's new regime. Nevertheless, this was only the beginning because, in the eyes of the Chinese Communists, the redistribution of land only completed a task left over from the democratic revolution (Zhang, Ming 2001, 172-176). The land reform, regarded by the CPC as a bourgeois-democratic movement, did not change the fact that China was still based on a self-sufficient, small-scale peasant economy at that time. Such economy was vulnerable and unstable. Furthermore, it could easily lead to a waste of land and labor, not conducive to the realization of the specialization and socialization of production. This not only conflicted with the goals of the country's industrialization and modernization, but also impeded the CPC to establish a planned economy based on socialist public ownership. The Party, therefore, determined to eliminate the small peasant economy in order to achieve rural co-operation and collectivization of Chinese rural society.

Some of the views of Marx and Engels became an important theoretical basis for the CPC to make its decisions (Xiang, Jiqüan 2002, 115-116). Marx insisted on the nationalization of land: "the land can but be owned by the nation itself. ...The

nationalization of land will work a complete change in the relations between labour and capital ...all branches of production, will gradually be organised in the most adequate manner." (Marx 1973, 290) Frederick Engels thought "it is precisely the individual farming conditioned by individual ownership that drives the peasants to their doom." He further recommended "the pooling of farms to form co-operative enterprises, in which the exploitation of wage labor will be eliminated more and more, and their gradual transformation into branches of the great national producers' co-operative with each branch enjoying equal rights and duties can be instituted." (Engels 1962, 438)

Marx and Engel's theoretical assumptions were comprehensively practiced in the Soviet Union and the achievements left a deep impression on the CPC. As early as 1943 Mao Zedong already pointed out: "Among the peasant masses a system of individual economy has prevailed for thousands of years, with each family or household forming a productive unit. This scattered, individual form of production is the economic foundation of feudal rule and keeps the peasants in perpetual poverty. The only way to change it is gradual collectivization, and the only way to bring about collectivization, according to Lenin, is through co-operatives." (Mao 1965, Vol.3, 156) Mao and the CPC led by Mao always considered the realization of rural cooperation as an important way to guide the peasants to take the socialist road and an important step to achieve the ideals of socialism and communism in China (Xiang, Jiqüan 2002, 120). Rural individual families, in fact, due to their low level of productivity, often encountered difficult problems in their lives which they could not solve on their respective strength. Therefore, to some extent, they needed to unite with one another and establish mutual cooperation. This was a crucial factor inducing the spontaneous establishment of clan organizations of Chinese peasants in the past, but now, the peasants would set up agricultural cooperatives under the leadership of the government.

The CPC Central Committee issued the "Resolution on Mutual Aid and Cooperation in Agricultural Production (Draft)" in 1951 which supported and encouraged the Chinese peasants to practice mutual cooperation. There were generally three forms of mutual assistance and cooperation. The first one referred to a simple mutual assistance that the peasants just temporarily and seasonally aided one

another. The second one referred to the stable mutual-aid team in which the peasants had long-term steady mutual-aid relations. The peasants of each team would make some simple production plans, perform technical division of labour, and even own a small amount of public property. And the third one referred to the cooperative society of agricultural production characterized by the pooling of land as shares. The cooperative actually had many similarities with the mutual-aid team, but developing a much closer degree of cooperation and being regarded as the advanced form of peasants' mutual assistance and cooperation (Party History, Party Building, and Political Work Teaching and Research Office of the National Defense University of the Chinese People's Liberation Army 1986, Vol.19, 389-394). Under the top-down impetus of the government, as many as 87.8 per cent of total peasant households in the country had participated in the advanced cooperatives by the end of 1956 (Zhu, Jiannong 1985, 61).

The agricultural cooperative movement transformed the individual economy into a collective economy in the Chinese rural areas. The basic construction of farmland that was very hard for individual peasants to complete was afforded by the cooperative organizations. Meanwhile, the government was responsible for the overall arrangement of agricultural production. The production of major crops must be conducted under the guidance of the government. All the harvested grain would be purchased and sold exclusively by the government which was also in charge of distributing the profits to the peasants according to their respective land and labor input. To the Chinese peasants, the cooperative as well as the mutual-aid team was a new form of organizations entirely different from clans. In these organizations, people were tightly united together in accordance with the rational allocation of production resources rather than their descent. The government reconstructed and reformed the rural administrative system during the implementation process of agricultural cooperation. This, on the one hand, made the government's authority gradually established and strengthened in the rural society, and, on the other hand, further weakened the influence of clans in local areas (Wang, Huning 1991, 53-54).

However, the peasants having close blood relationships still lived in their original settlements, which provided wide space and rich soil for the survival of the patriarchal clan system. And meanwhile, the newly established cooperatives and social

institutions could not really replace the clan organizations to give peasants adequate service and assistance. When the peasants encountered difficulties in their lives, they actually relied more on their relatives. So, the clan organizations did not completely withdraw themselves from Chinese rural life, but were quietly playing a role during the agricultural cooperative movement (Liu, Shikui/Chen 1994). The most powerful impact on the Chinese rural patriarchal clan culture came from the establishment of people's communes (Wang, Huning 1991, 55).

#### 4.2.2 Absolute Destruction of Chinese Patriarchal Clan Culture during the People's Commune Movement

In 1958, the CPC Central Committee issued the “Resolution on the Establishment of People's Communes in the Rural Areas” in which the Party determined to mobilize the peasants to establish larger cooperative organizations engaging in agricultural production, that is, the people's communes. Furthermore, in this resolution, establishing people's communes was regarded as the basic principle that the Party must adopt in order to accomplish the building of socialism and the transition to communism ahead of schedule (Party History, Party Building, and Political Work Teaching and Research Office of the National Defense University of the Chinese People's Liberation Army 1986, Vol.22, 508-510).

The people's commune (Fig. 4-1) was not a purely economic organization, but the one that combined economic, cultural, political and military affairs into one entity (Fairbank/Bowie 1962, 461). The production team, composed of a number of adjacent

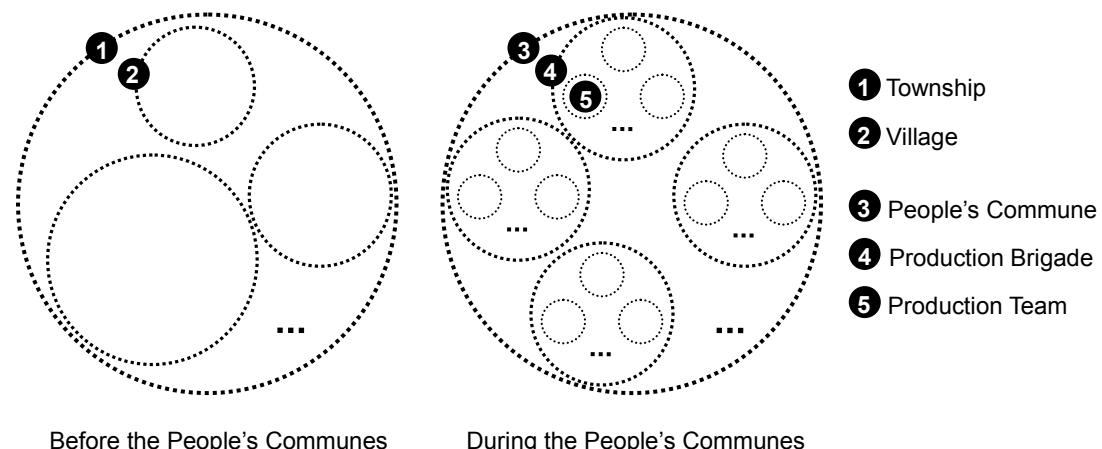


Figure 4-1: The Chinese Rural Administrative Structure

households, was the basic production and accounting unit without any administrative independence. The production brigade, composed of one or several villages, was the basic administrative unit. The brigade Party branch and the brigade management committee were the legal organs of authority responsible for handling all affairs of the brigade. And the commune was playing a role as a grassroots unit of state power. (Tang, Zhongxin 1995) The country's agricultural cooperatives, as many as 740,000, were rapidly merged into about 26,500 people's communes within a month after the issue of the resolution. Over 126,900,000 peasant households, accounting for 99.1 per cent of the total number of peasants, joined the people's communes, (Wang, Huning 1991, 55-56).

The establishment of people's communes was a movement for the replacement of private ownership with public ownership (Yue 1994). In the land reform period, most rural households were allotted land, and had full autonomy in their respective agricultural production. Even in the mutual-aid teams, the peasants could still own private land and base the mutual assistance and cooperation on their own needs. But, in the period of the people's communes, the peasants lost much of their autonomy in production decisions since their land and other means of production were all collectively owned. The communes were responsible for the planning of agricultural production. What the individual peasants should do was to fulfill the production tasks assigned by the production teams. For this reason, the peasants were organized to participate in collective farm work every day. It could be said that the rural cooperativization and collectivization, pushed by the CPC government, reached the peak in this period. The power of the CPC as well as the government was also extended to every corner of the Chinese rural society. The Party branch was set up in each production brigade to ensure the Party's effective political leadership among local people. And meanwhile, the administrative personnel at all levels were firmly in control of all rural economic resources (Song/Zhao 2003; Tang, Zhongxin 1995).

The people's commune movement made the remaining clan organizations and the patriarchal clan system almost completely disappeared in the rural society. Firstly, the clan lost the necessary mass basis. The peasants, as commune members, could ask the teams, brigades, or even communes for help when encountering difficulties in their lives. Compared with these organizations, the clans had already lost all social

and economic rights. They seemed so weak that few people were still willing to stand under their banner any longer.

Secondly, it was impossible for the clans to have opportunities to hold clan activities. One of the important missions of the people's commune movement was to break the social boundaries between clans for the large-scale integration of the rural society. The communes thus forbade the commune members to hold or take part in any activities that might help to maintain the existence of the clan organizations. The strict management of the communes resulted in the original clan activities being almost completely stopped in the rural areas.

Finally, the value and significance of the patriarchal clan system was absolutely denied and the patriarchal clan culture suffered serious destruction. The CPC had always regarded the clan organizations and the patriarchal clan culture as a stumbling block, hindering the modernization of the Chinese rural society. So, besides carrying out new systems to ban or disintegrate the clan organizations, the government frequently launched social movements in which the peasants were mobilized to criticize the traditional patriarchal clan concepts. Especially during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), all things related to the patriarchal clan culture were ruthlessly attacked and destroyed. Those who ever held leading positions in clans, such as the clan or Fang heads, were cruelly criticized and denounced. Once being searched out, the genealogy books were burned. Since people began to worship government leaders rather than ancestors, the spirit tablets of ancestors were broken, and even many ancestors' tombstones were destroyed. Under the intensive political propaganda, the patriarchal clan ideas were driven out of the peasants' minds so speedily that a large number of peasants who belonged to common clans in the past began to carry out merciless class struggles against one another (Yue 1994; Liu, Shikui/Chen 1994). China's clan organizations and the patriarchal clan system had been subjected to numerous blows from the government, but never shattered so severely as in the Cultural Revolution.

The Chinese society, especially the rural society paid a high price for the people's commune system. On the one hand, the government achieved the reorganization of the rural social structure through launching mass movements in this period, almost monopolizing and controlling the total rural social resources, but on the other hand the

penetration of government power into the rural society made the lives of peasants highly politicized, and the society lose its necessary autonomy as well as independent space. The communes relied on the issuing of executive orders to maintain their respective internal organization and management. Within the organizations at various levels of a commune, the determination of production quotas, the allocation of production resources, the arrangement of working time, and the distribution of products were all carried out in accordance with the planning and instruction of the superior organizations. But it was difficult for the superior organizations to fully grasp the actual situation of the grass roots, thus many unreasonable and even wrong plans or decisions were made, which not only resulted in very low production efficiency, but also caused severe laziness and discontent of the peasants. As these emotions accumulated and spread abroad, the government control over the rural society become increasingly fragile and the people's commune system gradually came to its end (Xiang, Jiqüan 2002, 137-140).

Compared with the Chinese rural society in the period of the people's communes, the traditional one had a flexible social structure due to the existence of clans. The clans played a significant buffer role between the grass roots and the government. They, on the one hand, enabled the rural masses to enjoy a fairly high degree of autonomy, and on the other hand, maintained the local social stability for the government, and, therefore, greatly reduced the government's administrative costs. The CPC destroyed the clan organizations in so short time that the rural social structure abruptly lost its original flexibility without undergoing any smooth transitions. This not only greatly increased the government's administrative costs, but also led to serious social unrest (Tang, Lixing 2005). The CPC government, in fact, attempted to build a new modern social contract between the country and individual peasants that the peasants' loyalty to the clans would be converted to the country, and their compliance with the clan rules would be converted to that with the national laws. But, only the government possessed full rights to explain the contract during the whole process. The peasants were actually placed in a vulnerable situation (Wang, Shuibai/Chen 2004), therefore, would inevitably turn to the traditional social organizations, i.e., the clans, to seek protection of their own interests since the people's commune system failed to satisfy them.

Although the clan organizations and activities had almost disappeared, the patriarchal clan relationships and the relevant concepts were still deeply rooted in the lives and minds of the peasants, respectively. It was the most important reason for this situation that the people's commune system failed to transform the rural people's mode of residence, just the same as that in the previous agricultural cooperative movement. Those who shared common descent were still residentially concentrated in their original settlements especially after the government implemented a strict household registration system in 1958 to restrict free migration of people. Perhaps the distribution of social benefits in accordance with the patriarchal clan relationships might be suppressed under the intensive political pressure, but the reality that the rural people's social relations could hardly separate themselves from these people's blood relationships was not changed. Whenever the intensive political pressure disappeared, the influence of patriarchal clan relationships and concepts would always re-appear (Wang, Huning 1991, 56-57).

Actually, even during the period in which the communes seemed to have, on the whole, won an overwhelming victory against the clans, the government sometimes had to compromise to the forces of local clans in reality. For example, the government ever planned to assign the management positions of some communes to some cadres coming from other places during the Great Leap Forward (1958-60). Such assignments immediately met with violent resistance from the commune members (Wang, Shuobai/Chen 2004). It could be said that the CPC ran into the same trouble as the KMT ever did when it reforming the rural society decades ago. "By the winter of 1960-61, Communist planners and cadremen alike had gained new respect for the enduring significance of natural social systems, and were seeking ways to use traditional solidarities for their own organizational ends." (Skinner 1965) The "natural social system" just referred to the patriarchal clan system formed on the basis of blood and geographical relations (Wang, Shuobai/Chen 2004). The government had to select cadres from local people and devolve the local management positions to them. The cadres coming from other places were re-transferred to their original places of residence. "In justifying the transfer of veteran cadremen back to their native communities, the following points were made: Leaders native to the community are 'familiar with local conditions pertaining to social relations and to geography...' They

know not only ‘the condition of every plant in the locality’ but also ‘the character and personality of everyone in the village.’ For, after all, ‘the local villagers are all either relatives or friends.’ These advantages are ‘not within the reach of cadremen from other places.’” (Skinner 1965, 396; Lewis, John Wilson 1963) In fact, the CPC also relied on local leaders to maintain the local social order, but these cadres were all trained up by the Party, and could implement the policies issued by the CPC government better than those local elites in the period of the KMT government. However, the patriarchal clan culture was potentially influencing the thinking and behavior of the commune cadres so that the policies, even the laws, could not be implemented really in accordance with their original intention. That is to say, the systems, policies, or regulations formulated by the CPC government were often imperceptibly transformed by the grassroots cadres. In their minds, the traditional patriarchal clan concept still remained and played an unperceivable role (Zhao, Xudong 2003, 332).

The forces of clan organizations, in Chinese history, usually made concessions when the government expanding its power and authority, but rose once the government power declined in rural society. As long as the rural people’s social relations did not fundamentally change, the clan forces would always shrink or expand themselves along with the rise and fall of government power in local areas (Wang, Shuobai/Chen 2004). The clan organizations, disappearing in the period of the people’s communes, were just patiently waiting for its opportunity to resurrect.

#### **4.2.3 Resurrection of Chinese Clans and Patriarchal Clan Ideas after 1978**

- The Collapse of the People’s Commune System

One of the landmark events that led to the collapse of the people’s commune system was a bold action of the peasants in Xiaogang Village, Fengyang County, Anhui Province, at the end of 1978. At that time, Anhui Province encountered a severe drought which was rarely seen in the history and seriously affected the local agricultural production. The peasants in Xiaogang Village worried that their hope of

survival would be very slim if they continued to collectively farm their land under the leadership of their commune and expect the inefficient commune to take measures in time to carry them through the present crisis. So the production team leader Yan Hongchang (严宏昌) called together representatives of all families in the village and held a secret meeting. They finally decided in this meeting that they represented their respectively families to contract the team's land and farmed the land in accordance with their own actual situation. Since their decision seriously deviated from the people's commune system, the participants were very likely to meet with severe punishments. The remaining clan cohesion played an important role at this moment. Most of the Xiaogang villagers belonged to the Yan's clan. Their clan relationships and emotions provided a strong guarantee that they would strictly keep the secret. Meanwhile, the villagers promised that if the decision maker Yan Hongchang was put into prison or put to death for this event, they would raise his children until they were 18 years old (Chen, Guidi/Chun 2009, 39).

However, the commune which had jurisdiction over Xiaogang Village soon noticed that the Xiaogang villagers no longer collectively, but independently farmed the land, taking the household, rather than the production team, as a unit, and subsequently discovered the secret. The CPC seemed to have already realized that the people's commune system was unsustainable, and therefore did not punish the Xiaogang villagers, but decided to popularize the practice of Xiaogang Village in the whole Fengyang County as a pilot project. The individual families which had got rid of the shackles of the people's commune released so amazing power that the grain production in the county in 1979 increased by 49% over the previous year and the income per capita 85% (Zhao, Gang 2005, 103). In the following years, the government began to carefully popularize the successful practice of Fengyang throughout the country, developing it into a new land system, the household contract responsibility system. The implementation of this system eventually became a key component of the comprehensive reform in China.

The rural land was still collectively owned according to the household contract responsibility system, but each family could contract the land and independently arrange for its production and business activities. Besides paying a certain amount of land revenue to the government, individual families could freely dispose of the rest of

the revenue, regardless of how much the remaining revenue was. The new system in fact made the peasants who had already been integrated into the people's communes independent again. This resulted not only in the disintegration of the commune's collective economy, but also in the collapse of the commune's administrative system (Xü, Xianglin 2004, 199-200; Xiang, Jiqüan 2002, 151).

In accordance with the new Constitution of the People's Republic of China promulgated in 1982, the township governments were reestablished in Chinese rural areas to replace the people's communes, and meanwhile each village established its own village committee to replace the previous production brigade. The township government was at the bottom level of the national governance structure. As for the villages, they became self-governing communities and each village committee was local people's self-government organization responsible for managing communal affairs and social services in the village (Zheng, Shuchao 1992, 119-120). The promulgation of the new constitution marked the end of the era of the people's commune system.

- Resurrected Clan Activities and Influence in Chinese Rural Society

The whole Chinese rural society seemed to be rebooted by the household contract responsibility system. The individual families became the basic agricultural production units again. Since the government was unable to continue to maintain the tight control over the grassroots society, the peasants were granted more autonomy than before. The fact was followed by the resurgence of the patriarchal clan culture. Many villages began to hold various clan activities mainly including:

1) The worship to ancestors, such as calling the clan members together to offer sacrifices in front of the spirit tablets of ancestors at traditional festivals, repairing the ancestral cemeteries and sweeping the tombs regularly, and expressing gratitude to ancestors during weddings, funerals, and other important ceremonies. Along with a growth in the living standard, rural people were spending more and more time and money on these activities through which they wished to arouse the patriarchal clan emotions of the clan members, and to strengthen their sense of identity with the common ancestors, so as to enhance their mutual cohesion. (Liu, Shikui/Chen 1994; Lai 2003)

2) The revision of genealogy books. As “constitutions” of clans (Lai 2003), genealogy books were of vital importance to the confirmation and maintenance of clan relationships. However, many genealogy books had already been burned or lost, and even the luckily preserved ones needed to be recompiled in time for adding new information of the clans, so a large number of clans began to revise their respective genealogy books. Those who mobilized their clan members to participate in the revision of new genealogy books were mostly the venerable elders in the clans. Many of them were serving or retired village cadres, or even communists, which was absolutely unimaginable in the period of the people’s communes, the period filled with all kinds of cruel ideological struggles. The clan members who actively took part in the revision work had mostly received a good education, including civil servants, researchers, teachers, company clerks, etc. In fact, only the people with a certain level of education could be competent for the work to revise genealogy books (Feng, Erkang 2009, 432).

3) The construction of ancestral halls. As the symbol of the existence of clans, ancestral halls and genealogy books shared a familiar fate, becoming important objects of attack in the people’s commune period. The ancestral halls had been demolished or changed for other uses. With the end of the people’s commune period, Chinese rural people began to raise funds to rebuild the ancestral halls used to preserve the spirit tablets of ancestors and to hold sacrificial activities. Only when the clans got full support from the clan members could the reconstructions be realized because the construction as well as the following maintenance of the ancestral halls usually required a lot of money which would be afforded by these clan members. Therefore, the completion of an ancestral hall in somewhere could indicate that the recurrence of the local clan had basically been achieved (Lai 2003).

The CPC government, which had already shifted its attention from ideological struggle to economic construction, did not prohibit above clan activities as before. After all, these activities did not violate any present legal systems. However, the recurrence of rural clan forces reflected itself not only in such activities, but also in the fights with weapons among clans which obviously had challenged the law. Clan fights, mostly for ownership of land, water, or mountains, were the most extreme form of conflict among the neighboring clans. They had become a serious social problem

plaguing local government as early as the Ming Dynasty. Up to the Qing Dynasty, clan fights frequently broke out in Southern China, such as in Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Anhui, Guangdong, and Fujian Provinces, where the forces of clans were generally very strong. When a fight broke out, the clans concerned would always mobilize their respective members as many as possible to participate in the fight, easily resulting in serious casualties. The defeated side would usually not resort to the law, but wait for opportunity to launch new fights, thus leading to a feud among the clans. Since the grassroots society was actually in the control of clans at that time, local governments were often quite unable to do anything in clan fights except for letting such matters drift (Feng, Erkang 2009, 278-285). Clan fights disappeared together with clans during the people's commune period. After the implementation of the household contract responsibility system, there were frequent disputes over water or land use right, and clan fights emerged again together with resurrected clans<sup>47</sup>.

In addition, some of the resurrected clans were inclined to exert influence on local politics. According to the trial Organic Law of the Villagers' Committee issued in 1988, a village committee was responsible for handing the affairs of the village and its personnel should be directly elected by the villagers. However, in some elections, the largest clans or Fangs could always get their satisfied candidates elected by virtue of their numerical superiority and regained the lost control over the local society (Xü, Xianglin 2003, 168-174).

- The Reasons for the Resurrection of Chinese Rural Clan Organizations

The resurrection of clans was determined by many factors. Firstly, individual families could rely on former patriarchal clan relationships to get necessary help. After the implementation of the household contract responsibility system, the individual families had to directly face the possible risks in their agricultural production again.

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<sup>47</sup> In Wanzai County (万载县), Jiangxi Province, in 2006, the conflicts over tomb-sweeping issues between the Long's clan in Zhutan town (株潭镇) and the Ding's clan in Tanbu Town (潭埠镇) almost led to a large-scale clan fight with iron bars, steel pipes, spears, machetes, etc., about one thousand people mustered by the Long's clan while several hundred by the Ding's clans. The local government called out about 260 policemen, 400 armed policemen, and 500 cadres to prevent the fight from happening (Cheng Weirong 2008, 313-314; [http://news.xinhuanet.com/legal/2006-04/28/content\\_4486480.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/legal/2006-04/28/content_4486480.htm)).

But their productivity did not been significantly improved in the previous people's commune era so that these families could still hardly bear the risk of production alone and needed to reestablish a new reliable mutual collaboration. Although the utopian people's commune system based itself on a modern theory which seemed very convincing, it caused so many painful memories in Chinese rural people's minds that it was difficult for the people to have enough courage to try other new, unfamiliar systems. The traditional interpersonal relationships and operating rules seemed much more reliable in these people's eyes. Therefore, when a family was in trouble, it would first ask the help of the families having close blood relationships with it. It was not difficult to find such families for help in that the Chinese rural society was still a world of relativities. According to the survey, the Chinese rural families which shared common descent were mostly residentially concentrated in their own settlements in the early 1990s, accounting for 81.04 per cent of the total number of Chinese rural households (Liu, Shikui 1996).

During the following rapid process of China's urbanization, a large number of peasants left their settlements where their ancestors had inhabited for generations, and poured into cities to seek employment. These people could also rely on the patriarchal clan relationships to get some help. For example, if someone went to a strange city looking for work, his clan members who had already set foot in this city would be more or less willing to provide assistance to him because they always enjoy a strong sense of cohesion based on their natural blood relationships. The clan members usually could keep faith and truth with one another. This made the contracts, which were often created on the basis of patriarchal clan relationships and even unwritten, sometimes more credible than those on the basis of law<sup>48</sup>. The costs of

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<sup>48</sup> A simple example might be conducive to understanding how and why clan members strictly adhered to the contracts created on the basis of patriarchal clan relationships. In Cangpo Village, if someone accepted a cash gift from another clan member in his marriage, he must give the same amount of cash gift to the latter as the latter got married. Even though the former perhaps no longer lived in the same area with the latter, he should manage to send the gift because this was an unwritten rule in the clan that every member had to abide by. If the former violated it, the latter would certainly not ask him for the gift, but the former's conduct would inevitably seriously damage his credibility in his clan, and other clan members might never easily help him afterwards. And even his direct relatives, such as father or brothers, might also be implicated to some extent.

business transactions among clan members were thus greatly reduced, being helpful for these people to maximize their business benefits (Zhang, Jü 2002).

Secondly, besides the clans, the Chinese society lacked other social organizations to provide effective assistance to the individual families (*ibid*). During the previous period of the people's communes, production brigades occupied the stage originally belonging to the clans to be responsible for solving daily problems of the peasants. In order to solve the problems, especially those in agricultural production, the brigades, as a part of the state's administrative system, could request their respective communes to deploy resources within the range of commune much larger than within the village. This was the thing that traditional clan organizations could not achieve. However, after the brigades disappeared together with the communes, Chinese rural society urgently needed a new, reliable authority to maintain local security and order. It provided a good opportunity for the return of clan organizations to the stage.

There might be better patterns of organization than the clans to give Chinese peasants necessary help, but nobody knew what they were. Although the clan organizations represented a backward pattern and did not meet the trend of the times in the CPC government's eyes, they are familiar and could meet current needs in the Chinese rural people's eyes. Therefore, the power of clan organizations was aroused to fill in the gap left after the national administrative power withdrew itself from the rural society. The clans thus again played an important role in protecting local people's interests and maintaining local social order. The authorities never expressed affirmation or support for the resurrection of rural clans on formal occasions, but adopted a wait-and-see attitude. In fact, many CPC or government cadres had already openly participated in clan activities (Xiao/Dai 2003), which largely contributed to the reconstruction of clan organizations in the countryside.

Finally, Chinese rural people still showed a strong emotional dependence on the clan organizations. China's patriarchal clan culture had undergone more than two thousand years of evolution and been deeply rooted in Chinese rural people's thoughts and feelings. It made the people have a strong sense of belonging to their ancestors as well as descent. Perhaps exactly as Chen Duxiu said (1993, Vol.1, 166-167), the development of independent personality of China's rural masses was

fettered by the traditional patriarchal clan concepts. But once these people really had opportunity to get rid of the shackles of being bound within the clans and to detach themselves from their original narrow circles of life, they generally lost their psychological sense of security and stability (Liu, Shikui 1996). Although the government exerted tremendous pressure, trying to make rural people accept new ideas and concepts, the fact showed that the people's deep memories of clans, accumulated for generations, could impossibly be erased in a short time. As soon as the political pressure disappeared, the rural people's long-repressed patriarchal clan emotions were immediately released.

The deep patriarchal clan emotions were usually manifested in the people's emotional attachment to the settlements where the clan members were residentially concentrated in. Even ones having settled in other areas, they hardly cut off this kind of emotional attachment. Chinese people often compared themselves to the leaves, their own clans to the trees, and ancestors to the roots. Furthermore, they believed that the best destination of leaves was to land near their respective roots. In modern China, large numbers of people were blown away from their branches by the winds of revolution, wafting in a strange forest. When the social situation gradually settled down, they naturally wanted to drift back to their hometowns where their roots were. It was actually impossible for most of them to go back to their hometowns to live, but they wished at least to reconnect with their clans to soothe their sense of drift (Wen, Rui/Jiang 2004).

A large number of rural people are constantly leaving their hometowns and clans to cities seeking work in recent years. But confronting a rapid pace of work and life, as well as intense competition, in the cities, everybody is under tremendous mental pressure. Meanwhile, as the economic activities of individuals become more and more active during the transition from the previous planned economy to a market economy, the pursuit of utilitarian goals, in many cases, is the major theme of interpersonal communication, even between family or clan members. These make the family love, which was always specially emphasized by the patriarchal clan culture, more precious and valuable to the people in nowadays (Cheng, Weirong 2008, 310-311). So the people wish to rebuild their clans through various clan activities, such as revision of genealogy books or construction of ancestral halls, to create a

safe haven for the clan members, where their emotional requirements can be met to some extent.

- The Mutated Modern Chinese Clan Organizations

The resurrection of Chinese rural clan organizations is not a simple reversion to the previous traditional clans. Although sharing some similar features with the traditional ones, the contemporary reemerging clans are undergoing some substantial mutations and are thus called the variants of the traditional Chinese clans by some scholars (Feng, Erkang 2009, 23).

The traditional Chinese clans were only composed of males, rather than females, in accordance with their respective descent. Now, many resurrected clans have already begun to recognize female descendants as their members, making the scope of descent expanded. The clans which shared the same surname but different apical ancestors were independent of one another in the past, but can achieve a certain degree of combination just depending on their same surname in contemporary China (ibid, 460-461). The main purpose of making these changes is to expand the scales of the clans as much as possible. Since the clan members no longer limit their lives within their own settlements in nowadays, they will have more opportunities to obtain helps from other clan members through the expansion of the scope of their clans.

The revision of genealogy books is always a top priority for clans. The relevant costs are still shared equally by the clan members. Some people will voluntarily provide more funding for the revision work. And the clans never begrudge praise to the generous clan members. The same as traditional genealogy books, modern genealogy books record the descent of the clan members, the deeds worthy of praise or remembrance, and the development history of each clan. The format, printing, and binding basically maintain the traditional style. The most significant difference between the traditional and contemporary genealogy books consists in the fact that the information of female descendants is added into many of the latter (Feng, Erkang 2005, 382-400).

Currently, resurrected clan organizations rarely create the positions of clan heads within themselves, partly because the clan heads already became a main target of attack in the past political movements. Although seeming to have decided to say goodbye to political movements, the government has never expressed an affirmative or supportive attitude to the resurrection of rural clan organizations. So nobody is interested in contesting for a definite and formal identity of clan heads. Without the title of clan heads, ones having high prestige in their clans can still play a leadership role among the clan members, but rarely have the same absolute control over their clans as the past clan heads. In most cases, they can no longer forcibly dominate the wills or behaviors of other clan members, but exert influence only by virtue of their prestige (Wang, Huning 1991, 88-92; Qian 1995 (3)). This is mainly because they have lost the legal power to control others. This power was conferred and protected by clan rules in the past, but even the clan rules have already lost their legitimacy in today's rural society.

The clan rules, as a necessary complement to national laws, had nearly become local laws under the acquiescence of the government in ancient times, but were gradually replaced by the national laws and ultimately completely abolished during the transition of Chinese rural society. Nowadays, when a dispute happens between clan members, the prestigious elders can mediate between the people concerned, but all kinds of civil and criminal cases must be handed over to specialized judicial bodies to be dealt with. Neither clans nor families have the right to go beyond the law to punish their members. Although formulated by a number of clans to regulate the behaviors of the clan members, the rules are actually similar to traditional clan rules only in form and have not so much authority and constraining force as before, but very limited practical significance (Zhang, Zhongqiu 2004).

Overall, contemporary clan organizations, without definite clan heads and effective clan rules, in fact are very loosely organized social groups, basically being the products of voluntary combinations of people who have common descent and purposes. The clan members can decide for themselves whether to participate in the clan activities. And if they lose connection with their clans, they will not have the same deep fear as they used to do (Qian 1995 (3)). The original inviolable social hierarchy constructed on the basis of descent and generational position has been broken.

Despite the fact that the younger generation still needs to maintain respect for their elders and even has to listen to their views in many cases, all of these are based on their (the younger generation and the elders) mutual equality of legal rights. As for the descent, only the people responsible for revising genealogy books pay attention to it.

The loosely organized rural clans still play a special role in the local society, almost everywhere in the rural people's daily lives. The clan members can rely on patriarchal clan relationships to more conveniently and smoothly collaborate with one another in agricultural production. The trivial, unimportant disputes among the clan members can be more effectively and timely resolved in the framework of the clans, which is difficult for the country's administrative and judicial agencies to achieve. That is to say, the clans can help the government to significantly reduce the cost of maintaining the local social order. Village committees are legal organizations responsible for managing the village affairs, but, as mentioned before, the election of the members of village committees is hard to shake off the influence of clan forces. In the villages composed of one or several clans, the important positions in committees are usually occupied by the people coming from the largest Fangs or clans. Those from small Fangs or clans can only occupy the secondary ones. Meanwhile, the cadres supported by large clans or Fangs always have a louder voice in handling the affairs of the villages (Xiao 2001, 10-11).

The contemporary clan organizations maintain a delicate relationship with the government. The high-profile clan activities have clearly shown the existence of the clans in the current Chinese rural society, and the people seldom avoid letting others know their identities as the members of their respective clans, nevertheless, the clans do not want to pursue a formal status in the law. Clan organizations were all naturally formed in ancient China, and nobody thought the existence of a clan needed the approval of the government. This is still continuing in the present. Clan organizations are never secret or underground organizations, but always invisible before the law. The CPC government ever comprehensively critiqued and attacked the clans in the early period of its regime. Although having changed the completely negative attitude toward the clans nowadays, the government can hardly give formal recognition to them. Maintenance of a certain degree of vagueness in the law seems to be the most appropriate way for the government to confront the resurrection of rural clans in

current period. In short, the vast majority of clans can comply with the national laws and appear in front of the people in a manner not only suited to the Chinese tradition, but also acceptable for the existing national system (Qian 1994).

- The Way before the Modern Chinese Clan Organizations

The revival of clans has become a reality in today's Chinese society, especially in the Chinese rural society, even though these clans have undergone great changes, entirely different from the traditional ones. Multiple factors, as mentioned before, have contributed to the reconstruction of clans, but some others are slowly eroding the foundation of these clans at the same time. The clans are still of utility and sentimental value to rural people, but the two values are severely weakened in modern Chinese society.

In ancient China, since the imperial government and law could not provide effective protection, individual families spontaneously formed clans on the basis of their respective common descent to jointly resist natural disasters as well as to share competitive pressures from external world. It is obvious that the performance of modern government has been greatly enhanced. When natural disasters happen, the government can be more reliable than the clans because it can mobilize great resources, but the clans incomparable in this aspect. This may inevitably reduce the utility value of the clans. Meanwhile, the government's power has successfully extended to the grassroots society. During the period of the people's communes, the government ever used its strong administrative power to destroy the barriers among clans. It not only replaced the clans to be responsible for balancing different interests, but also to a great extent eliminated the competition among the people. It was proved that such a practice of the government was unsustainable, but the government's administrative power did not completely leave from the grassroots society along with the collapse of the people's commune system. Although the law has recognized the autonomous status of villages, it does not mean that the villages can separated themselves from the government's supervision and management. For example, if villagers plan to build houses for themselves, they have to go through necessary examination and approval procedures in local government agencies in accordance

with the requirements of relevant laws or regulations. As the Chinese legal system is becoming increasingly perfect, individual households and even individuals themselves will develop much closer links with various specialized agencies or departments of the government. Once the strong prestige of the law is established in the rural society, the present utility value of clans will be further reduced. When Chinese rural people exercise their powers, they will be more likely to follow the law rather than the written or unwritten clan rules; and when they fight for their rights, they will also be more likely to go to law rather than their clans for help.

China began to implement economic reforms aimed at transforming the previous planned economy into a market economy since 1978. Various factors of production are not distributed rigidly according to the government instructions anymore, but often manipulated and dominated by the “invisible hand”. Meanwhile, the Chinese people, who only when severe disasters occurred would move to other places on a large scale in the past, are no longer residentially concentrated in their land where they have lived for generations. They form huge floods surging around the country, mainly from rural to urban areas. Statistics show that the recurrent population<sup>49</sup> increased by 7 times from 1984 to 2004, at an average annual growth rate of about 40 per cent. Nearly 70 per cent of the recurrent population was peasantry. They left their original places of residence to seek employment, usually known as rural migrant workers. The floating rural population was around 40-50 million in the early 1990s, and up to 120 million in 2004 (Zhai/Duan 2006, 525). These people take the initiative to follow the guide of the invisible hand to pursue interests, but at the same time are passively driven and towed by this hand, having to go their separate ways for their respective interests. This results in the fact that the geographical relations which ever tied the clan members together into tight and cohesive units are being torn apart. Subsequently, the importance of blood relationships in these people's lives is greatly reduced because when clan members leave the settlements of their clans and mix themselves with others of different descent, they can no longer base their new interpersonal relationships and distribution of benefits on the degree of kinship. The clan members

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<sup>49</sup> The recurrent population refers to those who temporarily, not permanently, leave their original places of residence for some purposes (General Editorial Board of Encyclopedia of China 1991, 171).

show a huge enthusiasm for the reconstruction of their clans now, but since it is difficult for them to maintain the previous residential concentration, the reconstruction of their clans is largely symbolic for these scattered people. If China is able to stay on course towards establishment of a market economy, the geographical relations connecting clan members will be inevitably more and more relaxed, and the people's interpersonal relations featured by the combination of the relations of blood and benefits will thus be changed completely.

The enormous social and economic changes not only make the closed shells and firm structures of the Chinese rural clans broken, but also deeply affected the local people's ideas and concepts. The mass media has played an important role in this process through impregnating the people's minds with a new culture to replace the traditional patriarchal clan culture. Since the channel for the rural people to acquire information was extremely limited in traditional Chinese society, all kinds of skills, knowledge, life experiences, rules, customs, and traditions were handed down from the elders to the youths through the oral method. So the elders were monopolizing almost all of the above communication content, which therefore to a great degree strengthened their own authority (Wang, Huning 1991, 186-188). The modern mass media has changed this situation. Young people can easily get access to the information and cultures from other places or even foreign countries through many channels, such as radio, television, network, audio and video products, etc. Their vision is no longer limited to their respective families, Fangs, or clans, and their thoughts and ideas no longer give in to those of the elders.

In the traditional Chinese patriarchal clan culture, the collective interests of family, Fang, and clan were so important that the will and acts of individuals always centered around the collective interests. It resulted in the people's lack of independent and powerful personalities. Even their marriages were not determined by themselves, but by their families. Personal emotions were secondary in the traditional marriages. It was the most important to continue the family line and to ensure the survival of the clans from generation to generation. This was still very common in the countryside before 1970s. Although the clans had already crumbled, up to 98 per cent of marriages were determined by the parents (*ibid.* 193). But under the influence of modern culture, young people become increasingly aware of their existence as

individuals, gradually establishing their independent personalities and drawing clear boundaries with their previous collective personalities. They are no longer strictly compliant with the will of their parents to organize their lives, not to speak of their marriages (Jiang 2007).

In a word, the rule of law, market economy, and associated value are consistent with one another and complement one another, making the reconstructed clans unable to be self-enclosed, but become more open and more loosely organized. The course of development of Chinese clans in the past has shown that the value of clan organizations can always be reduced as long as the external social forces are strong enough to replace the clans to protect the rights and interests of the clan members and to provide more benefits at the same time. In other words, the clans are just like refuges for the clan members. When these people feel sure that there is no crisis anymore outside, they will naturally leave the refuges to live independently.

There is no doubt that the value of clans has been greatly reduced, even though experiencing a renaissance. However, this does not mean that the clans will eventually become worthless. Chinese clans still show a tenacious ability to adapt to the modern society, being able to survive even in the Western world. Large numbers of Chinese people have immigrated abroad since the beginning of the last century. No matter what type of job they are engaged in, they will establish clan organizations based on their respective descent in the new places of residence (Feng, Erkang 2009, 29). There were/are usually associations of clan relatives (宗亲会, Pinyin: zong qin hui) located in Chinatowns all over the world (Qian 2009, 2). People will always wish to have a refuge for themselves after all. The patriarchal clan culture has been engraved on the Chinese people's minds so deeply that they always seek refuge or solace in the clans when feeling suffocated because of the government's tight control over their lives, such as in the past people's commune period, or helpless under the manipulation of the unpredictable market, such as at the present time. The revival of Chinese clans indicates that the clan organizations will continue to go their own way, co-existing with the executive and judicial powers, and exerting a certain influence on the people's behavior, including building behavior, in today's Chinese rural society.

### **4.3 Construction of Chinese Rural Settlements after 1911**

The incursions of Western civilization not only fundamentally transformed the traditional Chinese society, but also had a profound impact on the construction and development of Chinese cities and rural areas. This actually began as early as from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Foreign countries, including England, the United States, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Austria-Hungary, Russia, and Japan, established concessions in Shanghai, Tianjin, Hankou, Guangzhou, Xiamen, Fuzhou, Hangzhou, Suzhou, Zhenjiang, Jiujiang, Shashi, and Chongqing, which significantly changed the original spatial patterns of these cities (Zhuang/Zhang 2002, 175-179).

At the same time some rural areas were urbanized due to industrialization, such as now Wuxi, one of the most important commercial cities in the Yangtze River Delta, Tangshan, and Shijiazhuang, a major coal-mining city and a hub of communications, respectively, in Hebei Province (He, Yimin 1994, 355-358). There were still some rural areas that developed into large cities because of colonization by foreign countries. Such cities like Qingdao in Shandong Province and Harbin in Heilongjiang Province were planned by the occupying countries, Germany and Russia, respectively, according to the planning ideas and methods of these two countries instead of the traditional Chinese ones. (ibid. 351-352; Zhuang/Zhang 2002, 202 -204, 208-209)

#### **4.3.1 Under the KMT Regime**

As an efficient national government was basically established by the KMT in the late 1920s, the government began to engage city planning experts who, in fact, mainly came from foreign countries to carefully plan some large cities in order to meet the requirements of modernization of those cities. Of those cities the most important one was Nanjing, the capital of the country at that time. It was comprehensively planned by Henry Killam Murphy and Ernest Payson Goodrich between 1928 and 1929 (Zhang, Yan 2000, 4).

However, the planning and construction of rural areas seemed to be neglected even in the Rural Reconstruction Movement. The Rural Reconstruction Movement, as mentioned in Chapter 4.1.1, was a non-radical rural reform movement initiated by Liang Shuming and Yan Yangchu and joined by many other intellectuals, social groups, and government agencies in the 1920-30s. In order to revitalize the Chinese rural society, the people and organizations concentrated their efforts on four aspects: popularizing education, improving sanitation conditions, reforming the patriarchal clan system, and raising agricultural production (Yü, Dingbang/Niu 2004, 109). Several villages, of which Zouping in Shandong Province and Dingxian in Hebei Province were the most famous, were selected as experimental units to implement their reform ideas in practice. Although several schools and hospitals were established in these rural areas, it was still far away from the goal of improving local infrastructure. And moreover, these new schools and hospitals finally became utterly useless due to lack of continuously adequate financial support (*ibid.* 111).

Facts proved that the Rural Reconstruction Movement might be all very nice in theory but unimplementable in practice. The clans still continued to manage the internal affairs of their own settlements, including various construction activities. In fact, according to the data in Table 4-3 and 4, Chinese peasants generally lived at a very low standard of living, earning so little income that they had to spend money mainly in maintaining their bare subsistence rather than on education, medical care, or housing.

Table 4-3: A Comparison of Engel Coefficients<sup>50</sup> of Households among Countries

	The Share of Food in Total Consumption	Year
Australia	34.8%	1913
New Zealand	39.0%	1919
United States	37.0%	1923
Denmark	42.1%	1922
Germany	41.0%	1928
Poland	59.0%	1927
China	59.9%	1922-1934

Source: Sun, Benwen, 1944, 69

<sup>50</sup> Engel coefficient refers to the percentage of expenditure on food in total household consumption expenditure. Engel's law indicates that "as income rises the percentage of income spent on food (the Engle coefficient) declines. Generally, the lower the Engle coefficient, the higher the standard of living." (Downes/Goodman 2010, 224)

Table 4-4: Average Annual Household Expenditures by Regions within China (Per cent) Source: Sun, Benwen 1944, 67-68

	<b>Food</b>	<b>Clothing</b>	<b>Housing</b>	<b>Fuel</b>	<b>Misc.</b>	<b>Year</b>
Heishanhu in Beiping	65.8%	4.5%	3.0%	12.8%	13.9%	1927
Guajiatun in Beiping	64.3%	7.7%	4.4%	7.9%	15.7%	1926
Dingxian in Hebei Province	69.2%	6.1%	7.6%	8.1%	9.0%	1928
Huaiyuan in Anhui Province	57.9%	8.9%	3.6%	10.4%	19.2%	1924
Xüxian in Anhui Province	59.2%	8.4%	1.7%	8.8%	21.9%	1923
Pingxiang in Hebei Province	66.4%	4.5%	10.4%	13.1%	5.6%	1923
Yanshan in Hebei Province	55.0%	5.9%	8.2%	18.1%	12.8%	1922
Yanshan in Hebei Province	56.7%	4.7%	5.5%	17.1%	16.0%	1923
Xinzhang in Henan Province	75.1%	2.3%	3.3%	11.0%	8.3%	1923
Kaifeng in Henan Province	76.7%	7.0%	3.7%	5.9%	6.7%	1923
Wuxiang in Shanxi Province	50.0%	9.6%	5.7%	15.9%	18.8%	1922
Tushazhen in Jiangsu Province	59.8%	4.6%	1.9%	8.9%	24.8%	1934
Lai'an in Anhui Province	48.7%	8.2%	6.1%	19.6%	17.4%	1922
Lianjiang in Fujian Province	52.9%	12.8%	5.2%	8.2%	20.9%	1923
Chunhuazhen in Jiangsu Province	53.0%	11.0%	7.3%	7.9%	20.8%	1923
Taipingmen in Jiangsu Province	49.2%	8.7%	2.3%	14.8%	25.0%	1923
Wujin in Jiangsu Province	65.5%	2.3%	6.6%	8.7%	16.9%	1924

#### **4.3.2 Under the CPC Regime from 1949**

After the foundation of the PRC in 1949, “significant efforts have been made ...to restructure rural settlement and to go beyond spontaneous settlement toward planned development and overall land-use planning.” (Knapp/Shen 1992, 47)

- The First Ten Years after 1949

The first ten years “was a period of national recovery” (*ibid.* 48) from previous decades of turmoil. “Following the promulgation of the Land Reform Law in 1950 ...land, housing, and the tools of production were confiscated from landlords and redistributed to poor peasants.” (*ibid.*) Ancestral halls of clans were also confiscated by local governments and used as village offices, primary schools, or meeting halls.

It is worthwhile to note that “from 1949 through 1957, little attention was given to altering or improving individual village sites or buildings as emphasis instead was placed on increasing agricultural production ...State investment in rural capital construction was ...mainly focused on water conservancy and land reclamation rather than village structure itself. Most peasants continued to live in old houses ...Where new housing was built, the materials continued to be tamped earth, adobe, or kiln-dried bricks for the walls, either load-bearing or with traditional wooden frameworks to support the roof. Thatched dwellings were still common in many areas of the country. Moreover, traditional patterns of housing design, size, and placement continued with very little attention paid to reducing land occupied by housing or improvement in the ventilation, lighting, and general sanitation of housing. Little concern ...was placed on anything beyond providing every villager with shelter, and only limited construction of public buildings in rural areas was carried out.” (*ibid.*)

“The national Patriotic Sanitation Movement ...begun in the early 1950s to eliminate ‘the four pests’ and later expanded to embrace environmental sanitation ...came to focus later in the 1960s on improving health through the prevention of disease. The proper maintenance of manure pits, the cleaning up of polluted ditches and ponds, and the elimination of pests such as rodents and

mosquitoes were accompanied by attention to the quality of drinking water and the construction of public toilets." (ibid. 48-49)

"In summary, during this period villages throughout the country generally changed little in morphology, but made some improvement in the quality of their living environments." (ibid. 50) This was mainly because China was suffering from a severe shortage not only of financial and material resources needed for large-scale housing and infrastructure construction, but also of professionals engaged in planning and architectural design (Hua 2006, 28-29). There were no Chinese universities having created urban planning speciality during the period of the Republic of China. The government had to depend on foreign planners or the native ones who actually received relevant training in foreign countries to plan cities. After the foundation of the PRC, this situation continued until the first Chinese urban planning speciality was formally established in Tongji University, Shanghai, in 1956 (Feng, Jizhong 2005).

- The Period of the People's Communes

As China entered the era of the People's Communes from 1958, Chinese rural construction subsequently stepped into a new development phase, usually being deeply impacted by, or closely associated with various social movements. In fact, the establishment of People's Communes itself was a countrywide social movement.

In some sense, the people's commune movement stemmed from building water conservancy projects in rural areas (Hua 2006, 83). Although Chinese peasants had achieved significant improvements in agricultural production through generally establishing cooperatives for mutual aid in the mid-1950s, the strength of each cooperative was still weak. It was most obviously reflected in construction of large water conservancy projects. "Spontaneous merger of farming co-ops into larger units began in many parts of China in the spring of 1958 ...as a result of needs discovered in the irrigation drive of the previous winter. ...forty-eight small co-ops on the Tanshui River in Honan built eighty small water-control projects during the winter, but because of small scale, poor quality, and inability to select the best site, which might be on another farm's land, many of these projects were damaged in the summer flood. When the small co-ops merged, they were able to plan thirteen larger reservoirs, which eliminated the menace of flood and drought." (Strong 1960, 17)

Many such examples gradually made decision makers in the central government believe that “the way to cure the weaknesses of the cooperatives was to combine them” (*ibid.* 19). People’s communes were thus established throughout the country. “The commune’s tasks were to develop ‘an expanding agricultural output,’ to build ‘industry as rapidly as possible,’ to build roads, dredge waterways, and build modern communications.” (*ibid.* 22) Every commune was responsible for formulating its development plans, including construction planning. Some plans were comprehensive and realistic, but some were too general and utopian (Hua 2006, 85).

In 1964, Dazhai was championed by the central government as a national model for other villages to emulate, triggering the “Learn from Dazhai” campaign which had a profound impact on China’s rural development for up to 16 years. The famous call “In Agriculture, Learn from Dazhai” (农业学大寨), first issued in August, 1966 (Li, Jingping 2011, 83), echoed throughout China until the end of the campaign in 1980.

“Dazhai …was a small village of eighty-two households farming some 80 hectares of rocky and hilly land in a semiarid area of the Taihang Mountains in Shanxi province of north China.” (Knapp/Shen 1992, 56) The local land was so barren that the average grain yield per mu was often only about 40kg per year before liberation (Li, Jingping 2011, 31). After liberation, the Dazhai villagers were united by founding cooperatives and began to build terraces and water conservancy facilities. Although suffering from various natural disasters in the 1950s, they still increased the grain yield per mu to 387kg in 1962. However, a devastating disaster destructed most of their below-ground cave dwellings and surface dwellings in the summer of 1963. 724 mu of their total 800 mu of arable land was stricken. Many roads and irrigation facilities were severely damaged.

The villagers were not defeated by the disaster and decided to overcome the difficulties by themselves. Under the leadership of village Party secretary Chen Yonggui, the villagers renovated terraces during the day and rebuilt dwelling houses at night. Only relying on simple tools, they restored more than 70 percent of the land by the end of that year and constructed two hundred stone-lined caves and more than five hundred dwelling rooms in the following three years (Fig. 4-2~3). Moreover, Dazhai had access to tap water and electricity in 1964 and 1965, respectively (*ibid.* 34-35; Knapp/Shen 1992, 57; Hua 2006, 106-107).

Figure 4-2: A Poster: Dazhai



Source: <http://chineseposters.net/images/e15-119.jpg>

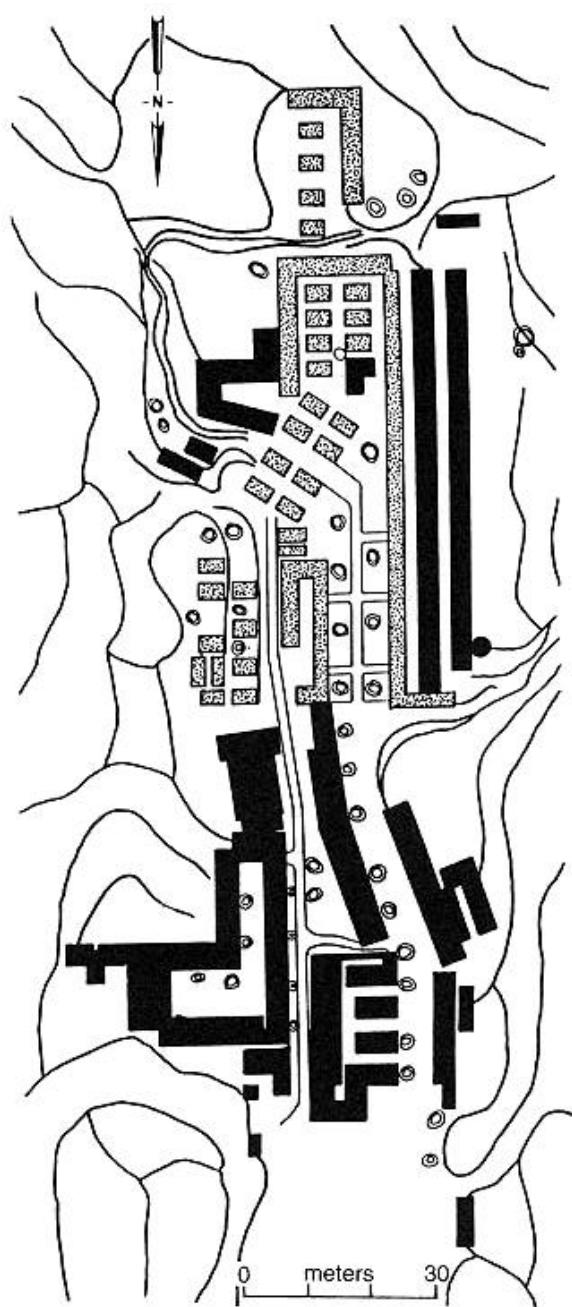


Figure 4-3: Plan of Dazhai,

Gray Area: Village Residences  
Black Area: Public Facilities

Source: Salter 1992, 196

Dazhai's deeds subsequently attracted considerable attention from the central government, particularly because rural construction had actually faced tremendous difficulties at that time. After 15 years of recovery and adjustment, even though there had been considerable growth in China's national economy, the country's financial and material resources were still very limited, and moreover, had to be mainly invested in industrial construction, rather than agricultural construction. The spirit of "self-reliance and hard work" shown by the Dazhai villagers would no doubt be immensely helpful in upholding rural construction (Li, Jingping 2011, 43). At the beginning of the "Learn from Dazhai" campaign, the Dazhai spirit indeed inspired great passion among Chinese peasants who, full of enthusiasm, consequently dedicate themselves to agricultural production and capital construction even under extremely adverse conditions (Fig. 4-4~5). However, Dazhai gradually changed from a model of agricultural production into a political one during the Cultural Revolution (ibid. 1). This made Dazhai lose its original value and thus step down from the stage of history soon after the end of the Cultural Revolution (Hua 2006, 108).

Source: <http://chineseposters.net/images/e15-496.jpg>



Figure 4-4 (top):

A Poster: Study Dazhai, We Must Rely on  
Self-reliance and Hard Work

Source: <http://chineseposters.net/images/e15-493.jpg>



Figure 4-5 (bottom):

A Poster: Struggle to Realize Chairman  
Mao's Great Call: "In Agriculture,  
Learn from Dazhai"

The buildings were placed in a geometrically regular pattern in Dazhai. Perhaps because of lack of design by professional architects or planners, most of the dwelling units were arranged in monotonous long rows (*ibid.* 110). Geometrically regular planning could be seen not only in Dazhai, but also in other villages constructed during this era.

Dwelling houses in these villages were almost entirely oriented to the south. "The country's geoclimatic conditions, expanding north and south of 35 degrees latitude, are of decisive importance for this pronounced practice of orientation ...Orientation of residential housing to the west or the east is not recommended due to sun angle and declination. In the case of east or west orientation, the sun's low position after sunrise and before sunset would cause excessive heat gains in apartments. However, in the case of south orientation, vertical surfaces provide ample protection to sunlight due to the sun's high position at noon. On the other hand, in winter, the sun's position is less steep and shallow enough in the south for sunlight and thus warmth to enter apartments. Orientation to the north is not relevant to residential construction in the northern hemisphere above 30 degrees latitude". (*Hassenpflug 2010, 41*) In order to let dwelling units of households share equal orientation, the residential row houses were generally placed in parallel. Besides this, they were arranged as neatly and compactly as possible (Fig. 4-6).

"The sight of such a new village is very peculiar, because it is so much like an urban industrial housing area of the nineteenth century—except that there's just one slice of it and in a rural setting." (*Vermeer 2009, 177*) However, besides ensuring southern orientation of dwelling houses, this planning pattern "saved space, cut down on costs of water and electricity facilities and heating, and showed the virtues of collective living." (*ibid*)

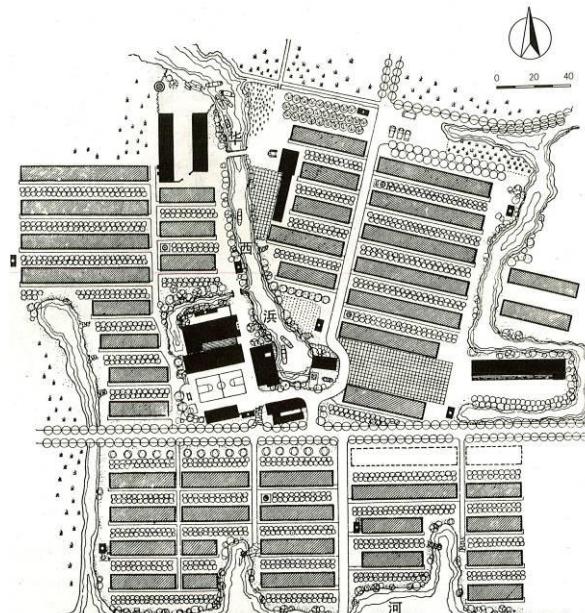


Figure 4-6: Plan of Huaxi Brigade, Jiangsu Province

Such simple and regular planning was popularly adopted throughout China's countryside not only because construction investment was so insufficient that people had to focus more intently on economics than on aesthetics, but also because of a serious lack of qualified planning and design professionals. The city planning courses were cancelled in all universities during the Cultural Revolution. The relevant decision makers thought that knowing how to construct roads, sewers, and buildings was enough for urban construction. In the eyes of "rebels", those "aesthetic philosophers" were of no use at all and abstract research could only lead them onto the revisionist track. In order to remould them and let them do something really useful for people, the rebels assigned, for example, the director of City Planning Department of Tsinghua University to serve as an apprentice to bricklayers on the Beijing Hotel construction site (Hua 2006, 124-125).

For maximum yields, it was necessary to re-concentrate small pieces of land into large ones (*ibid.* 85). Some small villages were thus leveled and combined into large ones, such as the Huaxi Brigade in Jiangsu Province (Fig. 4-7). It was composed of 243 households, with a population of 1015. These households previously lived in 12 dispersed hamlets. After the consolidation of land, the brigade established a new village in the central region, with 670 new buildings instead of the original 284 ones. However, this kind of combination of villages was far away from being popularized because it implied the need to construct wholly new housing and related facilities, which could be achieved only by wealthy production brigades or communes (*ibid.* 227-228).

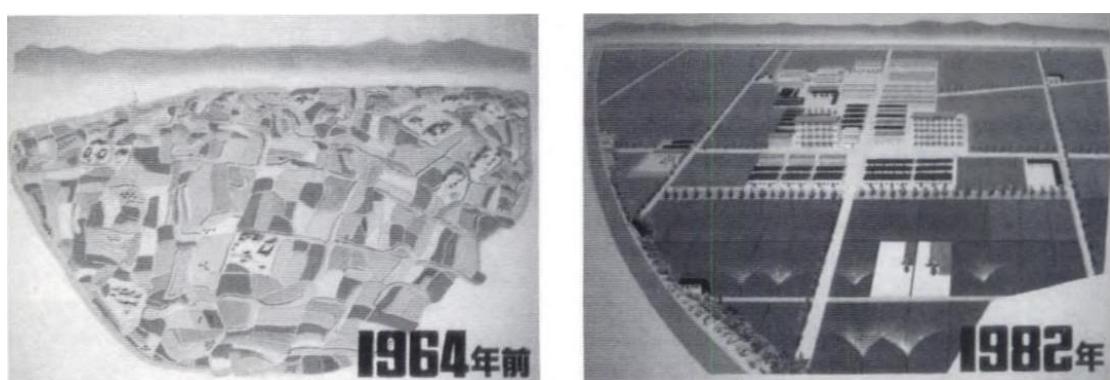


Figure 4-7: A Comparison between Old and New Huaxi Brigade

Source: Knapp/Shen 1992, 61

On the whole, due to the impact of frequent social movements, China's rural construction never could be carried out at a steady rhythm in the period of the People's Communes. During the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976, there were so many radical movements that the order of rural society was severely damaged, bringing China's rural economy to the verge of bankruptcy. It could be said that there was very little improvement in living conditions of the majority of Chinese peasants in the ten years (Division of Information Research 1989).

- After 1978

China's economy developed rapidly during the first ten years after the reform and opening-up was initiated in 1978. There was also a significant increase in peasant income. The per capita income of peasants increased from 137 to 545 Yuan between 1978 and 1988, leading to a housing boom throughout China's countryside. Housing investment by peasants reached 61.14 billion Yuan in 1988, almost 20 times the 1978 figure, 30.8 billion Yuan. A total of 6.2 billion square meters of new residential buildings were completed in rural areas from 1979 to 1988, about 2 times the total of those completed in thirty years before. During the first decade of reform, 86 million peasant households moved into new homes, accounting for 43.7% of the total peasant households in China (*ibid*).

"This long-overdue renewal of rural housing stock included not only the building of housing of traditional designs using traditional materials, but also the introduction of designs and materials that broke with tradition. ...Less wood and more concrete was being used in new houses than in the past. The change in materials stemmed not only from a shortage of timber and the high cost of wood, but also from governmental policies encouraging the substitution of other materials for wood in structural members and decorative elements. ...In 1980, only 3 percent of new housing countrywide was multistoried, but by 1986 this figure had reached 36 percent. In southern China, more than half of new housing has been multistoried, and the trend is observable elsewhere in the country as well". (*Knapp/Shen 1992, 63-64, 67*)

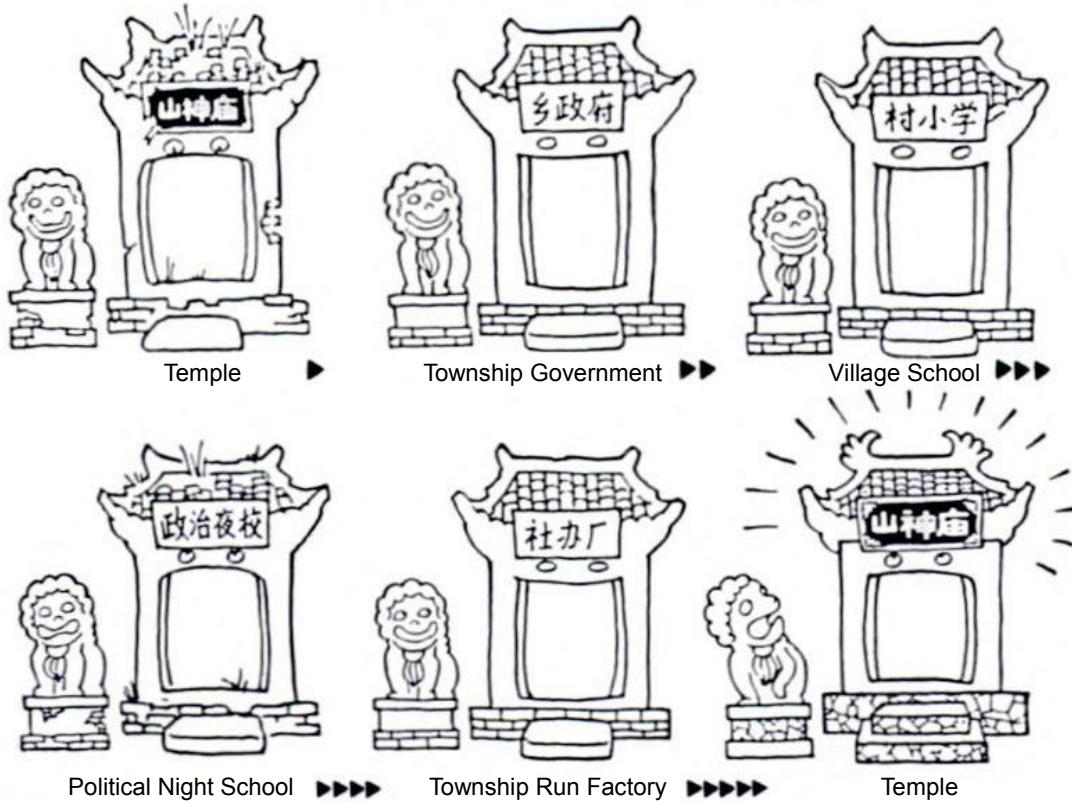


Figure 4-8: A Cartoon: “Changes in a Temple” Source: Knapp/Shen 1992, 69

Ancestral halls and temples, which had already been confiscated and put to other uses in the 1950s and 1960s, were returned to their original owners during this period. With the revival of clan organizations in Chinese rural society, many local people threw themselves enthusiastically into the repair or reconstruction of these buildings. The departed ancestors began to occupy a position of unchallengeable supremacy among their living descendants again (Fig. 4-8~9).

In order to regulate building activities in rural areas, relevant Chinese government departments had issued a series of rules and regulations on rural planning, housing design and construction since 1982. It is clearly stipulated in the “Land Management



Source: Knapp/Shen 1992, 70

Figure 4-9: A Cartoon: “Generous with Death, Stingy with Life”

Act" promulgated by the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee in 1987 that all types of construction and development activities must be based on planning (Division of Information Research 1989). "The pace and quality of planning, however, have generally been inadequate to meet the varied demands in the countryside ...Most rural housing in the 1980s was built without blueprints—simply as imitations or copies of nearby houses—because of the severe shortage of skilled laborers and skilled instruction." (Knapp/Shen 1992, 67-68)

China's national economy continued to maintain a rapid growth in the 1990s, but the wealth gap between urban and rural areas became increasingly apparent. In fact, the seeds had already been planted. As early as the 1950s, the government began to adopt the policy of state monopoly for the purchasing and marketing of some major agricultural and sideline products, and, through secretly opening an artificial "price scissors", that is, purchasing agricultural products at state-determined low prices but selling industrial products at high prices, the government accumulated huge surpluses and invested heavily in industrial construction. It took China only about twenty years to achieve the "original accumulation of capital" required for industrialization. The proportion of gross industrial output in the gross domestic product (GDP) increased from 20 percent to 44 percent between 1952 and 1978. Peasants had borne almost the full cost of the country's industrialization but did not share the benefits they deserved. (Wen, Tiejun 2010, 11-12)

The government has abolished the policy of state monopoly for purchasing and marketing since the reform. Nevertheless, vast amount of agricultural land was being swallowed up by urban sprawl, and hundreds of millions of peasants poured into cities for job hunting. It resulted in a continued decline of rural society. The urban-rural gap did not narrow, but still increasing, and further became one of the primary factors restricting the development of China. Lack of funding and effective management of funds had long plagued rural capital construction.

This has not changed even after 2000. According to statistics in 2005, half of the villages throughout the country still did not have access to tap water. Each year, over 25 million tonnes of domestic sewage was discharged without any treatment and 120 million tonnes of home scrap was piled up in the open air. It resulted in a serious pollution of rivers, streams, and ponds. About 280 million peasants lacked access to

safe drinking water. Meanwhile, more than 60 percent of rural households were still without access to sanitary toilets; 70 million households needed to improve their housing; 150 million needed to address the fuel starvation problem; 6 percent of administrative villages were not accessible by road; 6 percent had no access to a telephone; and even 2 percent no access to electricity (*ibid.* 86, 173, 179).

In view of the seriousness of the problems of China's rural development, Chinese President Hu Jintao clearly put forward the principle of "industry nurturing agriculture and cities supporting countryside" at the Fourth Plenary Session of the Sixteenth Central Committee of the CPC in 2004 and subsequently determined the "new rural construction" as a national strategy at the Fifth Plenary Session in 2005. For 8 years, from 2004 to 2011, the No.1 Documents of the CPC Central Committee continuously focused on the "three rural issues" (三农问题; sannong wenti) —agriculture, rural areas, and peasants, sending a strong, clear signal of the intention to revitalize China's rural society. Official Chinese media, quoting an authoritative interpretation of the CPC Central Committee's No.1 Document for 2011, said that the government would rise up to 4 trillion Yuan to invest in farmland water conservancy projects alone ([http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2011-01/29/c\\_121039176\\_3.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2011-01/29/c_121039176_3.htm)). In the early years of the PRC, political movements "acted to guide the appearance of Chinese rural landscapes, all too often divorcing them from their historical antecedents. Quite uniform and somewhat monotonic villages appear(ed) all over China". (Knapp/Shen 1992, 72) Today, the Chinese government seems to have learned a lesson from the past and become more sophisticated and cautious than before, without intending to carry out rural construction through radical social movements. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the Chinese rural world, especially those old clan settlements, will undergo another comprehensive and profound change both of external appearance and internal social relations in the foreseeable future.

## **Summary**

The traditional Chinese civilization suffered a big shock of the Western civilization in modern times. The Chinese society went through roughly three developmental stages during the consequent striving for national independence and modernization. The first stage ran from the foundation of the Republic of China (RC) in 1911 to the foundation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, the second from 1949 to the mid-1970s, and the final began from the launch of reform in 1978.

Chinese people significantly differed in attitudes towards the Chinese clan organizations and patriarchal culture. To reform the clans in a moderate way or to take strong measures against them, both views had a certain number of adherents and respectively affected the KMT and the CPC so much that the two parties adopted quite different policies on the clans, resulting in quite different fates of the Chinese society.

This chapter focuses on the changes of rural clan organizations in modern and contemporary China. Having experienced both decline and revival, the contemporary Chinese clans are transformed into loosely organized groups even though still sharing some similar basic features with the traditional ones. Additionally, it is demonstrated in this chapter that the Chinese rural society will not go back to its past forever, but the current revival of clan organizations indicates that they will continue to accompany Chinese rural people in the following days. Along with the transition of Chinese rural society, the clan settlements also undergo a comprehensive and profound change. It is described in the last part of this chapter.

## **5. Transformation of the Clan Organizations in the Nanxi River Basin and Its Influence on the Settlement Spaces: A Case Study on Furong and Cangpo Villages**

### **5.1 Furong Village**

#### **5.1.1 The Chen's Clan and Its Influence on the Settlement Spaces during the Republic of China**

The Furong Chen's clan still followed the traditional operation mode in the period of the Republic of China. The clan/Fang heads and those with high generational positions firmly controlled the clan, responsible for handling daily affairs of the settlement and regular organizing clan activities in the settlement (Appendix p95-96). The grandest ceremony held by the clan in every year was the sacrifice to the Chen's ancestors, especially including the "eighteen golden belts", in the clan's ancestral hall on February 2 of the Chinese lunar year (Appendix p105). The clan would invite a troupe to perform opera in the ancestral hall for three days and nights and the cost of the performance was paid by the clan property. After the three days, some families would separately fund the troupe to continue performing in order to celebrate their respective achievements in the past year, such as earning a lot of money or certain family members becoming high-ranking government officials. Therefore, the whole performance of the troupe might last for five, seven, and even nine days and nights. It was wise for these families to concentrate holding celebrations with the clan. The troupe was usually invited from outside. If the families held their celebrations dispersedly, they had to respectively pay the round-trip travel costs to the troupes by themselves; but if they held one by one just after the clan's sacrificial ceremony, they needed not to pay for the troupe's travel cost because it could be afforded by the clan. Meanwhile, consecutive days of opera performances made the clan's original three-day sacrificial ceremony much grander. (Appendix p116)

The revision of genealogy books was always a major event for the Chen's clan and did not change after the establishment of the Republic. The Chen's clan revised the genealogy books about every thirty years to add the information about the new generations of the clan members. It once did this in 1894 before the Republic, and then once again in 1928, which was the clan's fifteenth consecutive revision without any interruption. (Appendix p113)

The Chen's clan still owned land as the common property of its members during this period. Although the imperial examination system had already been abolished, the clan continued its tradition to encourage the young members to study and a portion of profits of the clan land was used to reward those who were qualified to enter high school or college. The clan sometimes would even lend parts of the clan land to poor clan members who then could rent the land to others and use the rent money to support their children's education. (Appendix p100)

The Chen's clan, instead of the government, was normally responsible for maintaining the internal order of Furong Village. For example, the clan heads as well as the elders were entitled to make adjudication of disputes and, usually without requesting the local government's permission, could even directly punish the ones who violated the clan rules. Theft was the main criminal act in the settlement. To steal an ox was a relatively serious crime and the criminals would often be severely punished. It was said that one of such a criminal's eyes would be gouged out in this clan. (Appendix p128)

The new buildings in the settlement were constructed in compliance with the local traditional style during this period. They were all wooden-structured and mostly of two storeys. Typhoon was one of the decisive factors in determining the height of buildings in the Nanxi River area. There were usually some typhoons hitting Zhejiang Province in summer. Due to the weak wind resistance of the local traditional wooden-structured buildings, the ones located in the areas, such as in the lower reaches of the Nanxi River, could be severely damaged by typhoon, and not be built too high, mostly being of one storey. But Furong Village was located in the middle reaches of the Nanxi River, surrounded by mountains which to a great degree relieved the shocks of typhoon, and so the local residents could construct two-storey buildings

there. Nevertheless, they still needed to maintain their houses carefully and in time to prevent them from falling into disrepair and being destroyed by typhoon.

The government of the Republic of China, no matter whether the Beiyang or the KMT government, as same as the previous imperial government, did not set up any specialized agencies responsible for approving and monitoring the various construction activities in the rural clan settlements. Then the residents of Furong Village could decide the construction of their own houses for themselves according to their respective needs and economic strength. Besides the common land belonging to all the clan members, the ownership of all other parts of the settlement land had long been determined beyond dispute, and retained by the individual families respectively. The property boundaries between the neighboring families were hardly definite because these families had already established close relationships with one another in daily life, especially basing on their common descent, but each family always strictly safeguarded its own property in land, usually fighting every inch of the ground.

In fact, many families in Furong Village had no formal documents to definitely and clearly demonstrate the actual scope of their respective land, but the adjacent families were all able to know very well where their land boundaries were (Appendix p127). This was not difficult for them because they long dwelt in their own land, guarding their small, definitely determined territories all the time and passing them down to their descendants from generation to generation. Meanwhile, the walls and ditches played important roles in identifying their territories. The walls not only performed the function to protect the privacy and security of the residents of family-compounds, but also acted as the concrete and physical boundaries of the neighborhood which sometimes was the real significance of the walls (Fig. 5-1). The families also usually located their outside lavatories<sup>51</sup> or tool sheds along the inside of land boundaries (Fig. 5-2), both to maximize



Figure 5-1: The Family-Compound's Wall

<sup>51</sup> There were rarely any lavatories located inside the traditional Chinese rural dwelling-houses.

the internal courtyard space and to make use of the exterior building walls in order to mark the land boundaries. The drainage ditches, constructed to divert rain and stream water by every family in Furong Village, at the same time became the boundary lines delimiting the private territories (Fig. 5-3).



Figure5-2 (top):  
The Tool Shed as a Boundary  
Mark

Figure 5-3-1 (middle),-2 (bottom):  
The Drainage Ditches as Boundary  
Lines

The Chen's clan usually did not initiatively intervene or interfere in the private construction activities of the clan members unless some of them encroached upon the village common land. When conflict over land occurred during the construction process, the clan heads would be asked by the families concerned to mediate within and between them. Despite lack of formal documents to certify land ownership, the people could still occupy their land with definite boundaries under the protection of the clan as long as their occupation had already become part of the clan's memory, that is, had long been recognized and accepted by the residents in the settlement. In the practical process of housing construction, people actually would seldom presumptuously encroach upon the land of their neighbors because very few people dared to do such a thing that was bound to cause a storm in the Fang or even the whole clan, and hardly permitted by the Fang/clan. The clan always replaced the government, silently guarding each family's interests in land, and meanwhile the then government also recognized such a role played by the Chen's clan.

The sale and purchase of land between families were not rare at that time. Some families got so prosperous that needed to purchase some land from neighbors to enlarge their original compounds, while some ones might declined so much that had to sell land for cash. As some land was sold, the families concerned usually did not hire a lawyer to handle relevant issues, but commonly invite the people who had high prestige in the clan, usually the Fang/clan heads, to act as witnesses and together sign the relevant contracts. The entire transaction as well as subsequent construction activities was always completely without notification to the local government and underwent under the clan's acquiescence as long as not violating all kinds of rules, customs, and conventions which were long pursued within the Chen's clan.

When a family intended to purchase some land for the expansion of compound, its neighbors might not be willing to sell their land. The people never easily agreed to sell their land, even just a minor part, unless in urgent need of money. Even if agreed, they would usually ask a high price. For the local people who had been living in the settlement for generations, a piece of land which could be used for housing was always the most reliable guarantee for them, particularly their descendants, to reside and survive. The people who wished to buy land would also have to invite the Fang/clan heads to persuade the neighbors to sell their land, or to bargain for the land

under such circumstances. The heads could not force any sides concerned to compromise in these cases. Their mission was to mediate among the parties, which was often important and indispensable to the land transactions. By virtue of their prestige, they could help eliminate the mutual suspicion and distrust inevitably existing in the communications and negotiations among the families concerned.

As mentioned before, a family should first find buyers within its Fang when intending to sell its own land. This could ensure that the people in the same Fang willing to purchase the land had a right of first refusal, and meanwhile resulted in the fact that the members of a Fang remained residentially concentrated in their Fang-community for rather a long time. However, the seller could sell his land to the buyers from other Fangs who bid higher than those from the same Fang with the seller. (Appendix p91-92, 97) Therefore the situation of residential concentration of Fang members was gradually broken after hundreds of years of evolution. The people from different Fangs had already lived together in the settlement (Fig. 5-4). But the whole settlement was still a closed world. In addition to the members of the Chen's clan, most of whom were engaged in farming as before, very few people with other surnames settled in Furong Village (Appendix p117).

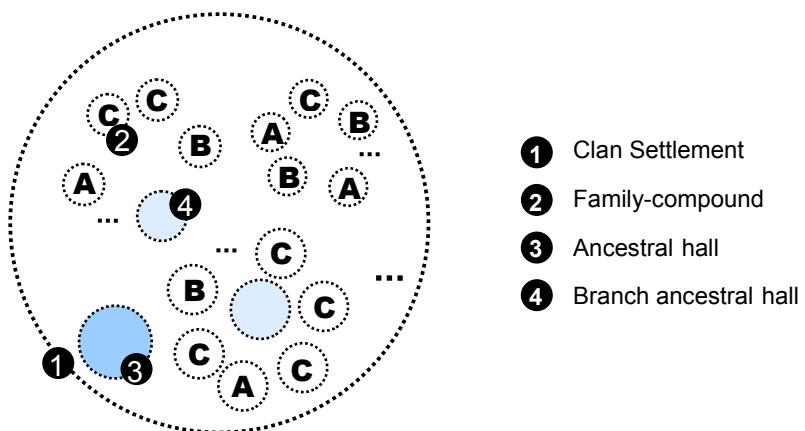


Figure 5-4: The Spatial Structure of a Contemporary Chinese Clan Settlement

### 5.1.2 Decline of the Chen's Clan

The Chen's clan began a dramatic transformation after the establishment of the PRC in 1949. It was no longer a kind of legal organization. The clan land was confiscated and equally distributed to all the clan members. Meanwhile, the clan and

Fang heads lost their previous governance rights over the clan members. These rights were transferred to the village head and the village Party secretary selected from the Furong villagers by the higher level of government. The Chen's clan was originally composed of six Fangs (Appendix p109). Most of clan members belonged to the first three ones which had a roughly equal number of people and the population of the other three Fangs was obviously fewer than that of the first three ones. Although the first Fang was poorest among the three biggest Fangs, poverty was considered as a symbol of the oppressed class in the early years of the CPC's regime and the poor people were the main target that the Party united and relied on. So, the village Party secretaries as well as most of the communists in Furong Village were from the first Fang whose members were most consistent with the political demands of the Party. As the village heads and other cadres were responsible for the daily affairs of the village, they needed a certain level of education and amount of social knowledge which the poor people usually lacked, and then these positions were often occupied by those from the second and third Fangs (Appendix p118).

The revision of genealogy books had to be broken off in the context of the CPC's completely negating and comprehensively criticizing the value of the clan organizations and the related patriarchal clan culture. The Chen's clan failed to conform to tradition to record its lineage in the late 1950s on time, thirty years after the last time the clan revised the genealogy books (Appendix p91). Furthermore, the ancestral halls, as the symbols of the whole Chen's clan and its Fangs, respectively, were not the places for offering sacrifice to the ancestors anymore. The ancestral halls of the Fangs were mostly used as warehouses while the one of the whole Chen's clan was successively used as a fertilizer factory and a mat factory (Appendix p119). However, the theatrical stage in the ancestral hall was still playing its original function because the villagers had regarded watching opera performance in every year as an essential part of their lives. Furong Village continued to invite a troupe to perform traditional operas on the stage located in the previous ancestral hall on every February 2 of the Chinese lunar year, without any sacrificial activities at the same time but only for entertainment (Appendix p116).

Furong Village was eventually divided into two production brigades roughly with the Ruyi Street as a boundary in the process of establishing the people's commune.

The residents, living north of the street and about two-thirds of the total population of the original Furong Village, formed one brigade named Shang (Upper) Village and those, living south and about one-third, the other named Xia (Lower) Village (Appendix p110). Such a separation of the village administration did not result in the patriarchal clan relationships torn apart, but they were still as tight as before.

The brigades replaced the clan to manage the whole village. They behaved in conformity with the law rather than the past clan rules when dealing with the criminal acts happened in the settlement. Some punitive measures might be made by the brigades on their own, but were no longer as cruel as before. For example, even though to steal grain still was a relatively serious offence in the settlement at that time, the brigades usually asked the stealers to pay out of their own pockets for showing open-air movies instead of throwing them into prison. The movies were shown right at the grain-sunning ground in the center of the settlement and the other villagers were free to watch (Appendix p128).

Anything related to the patriarchal clan culture or even the traditional Chinese culture were considered to be decadent and reactionary and deserve a relentless and thorough elimination as the nationwide ideology struggle was gradually out of control during the Cultural Revolution. The lives of the Furong villagers underwent dramatic changes under the huge political pressure. Many actors of the troupes were terribly persecuted and even thrown into prison for performing traditional operas in the past so that it was impossible for Furong Village to invite a troupe to come to perform on February 2 of the Chinese lunar year even if such performances already had nothing to do with the ancestral sacrifice (Appendix p116).

Meanwhile, no one would have the courage to revise the genealogy books anymore and it was even dangerous to preserve the original ones. During the “Destroy the Four Olds” campaign (1966-68), the Furong village Party secretary received an order from above to instruct the village cadres to search for and seize the genealogy books of the Chen’s clan and hand over them to the commune where they were all burned up together with those from other clans. Since the genealogy books of the Chen’s clan had not been recompiled for decades, plus the clan activities had been suspended for a long time, many clan members, particularly those who had become the Red Guards, were no longer able to understand the significance and

importance of the genealogy books. So, most of the genealogy books, about dozens of volumes revised in the late Qing Dynasty and the period of the Republic of China, respectively, and originally preserved in different families, were searched out and ultimately burned up. However, perhaps still knowing the significance of the genealogy books, the village Party secretary did not fully comply with the order, but secretly asked someone to preserve some books. Additionally, another clan member named Chen Shiyao (陈时耀) took a risk to keep some other ones by himself while the confiscated books were left unattended before being handed over to the commune.

It could be said that the organization of the Chen's clan was broken up under the shocks of frequent political movements. Nevertheless, the original patriarchal clan relationships did not thus completely disappear and the people still often based their distribution of benefits on these relationships. For example, those wishing to join the Party must obtain the recommendation of some Party members according to the CPC's regulation, but the Party members usually tended to only recommend their immediate family members or relatives from their own Fangs. It made the Furong village Party secretaries all come from the first Fang (Appendix p117). Additionally, the cohesion of the Furong villagers, formed on the basis of the patriarchal clan relationships, was still very strong, not completely weakened by the people's commune system. This was clearly reflected in the large-scale clan fight between the Chen's clan in Furong Village and the Lu's clan in adjacent Xi'nan Village in 1966. The fight was caused by land ownership disputes among several households living at the junction of the two villages, just confined to these households at the early stage. However, they did not intend to rely on law to resolve this matter but in traditional manners, assembled their respective relatives and continued to attack each other. It eventually resulted in a fierce clan fighting in which almost all the families of the two clans were involved. All day long the people of the two villages did almost nothing but fight or prepare to fight. Even they had no time to attend to farming so that had to ask the local government for food to maintain their lives. The local government, already tired with organization of political movements, had no alternative but to let matters drift in the face of such a large-scale clan fighting. The people used all kinds of weapons they could obtain, including firearms, and totally over three people were killed and a dozen wounded in each clan as a result of this clan fighting which lasted nearly two

years, without ending up until the energy of both clans was completely depleted (Appendix p122-123).

The CPC government wished to forcibly eliminate the gap between rich and poor through the establishment of people's communes throughout the country and the unified distribution of all means of production. Unfortunately, however, it failed to achieve common prosperity as expected, but eventually only led to a common poverty. The residents of Furong Village were thus unable to execute construction activities in a presentable way in the settlement before the end of the Cultural Revolution (Appendix p120). Furthermore, the layout of the settlement in general showed the same pattern as before since there was no obvious change in local population size.

### **5.1.3 Changes of the Settlement Spaces after the Revival of the Chen's Clan**

- The Revival of the Chen's Clan

The people's commune system gradually collapsed in the late 1970s and China turned to concentrate on economic reform, which not only let the Furong villagers say goodbye to the cruel, chaotic ideological struggles, but also remove the shackles on the Chen's clan. The villagers began to conduct some sacrificial activities among which the revision of genealogy books was the most important for the Chen's clan and becoming urgent because it had not been done for over half a century since the last time and the lines of descent already became somewhat confused. Therefore, the Chen's clan started to revise the genealogy books under the impetus of the Furong Association for the Elderly in 1981, only three years after the end of the Cultural Revolution, and spent nearly three years to complete. The whole cost of the revision was shared among all the clan members. (Appendix p110-111) Additionally, some other clan activities resumed, especially the ceremony on February 2 of the Chinese lunar year in which a troupe would also be invited to perform traditional operas in the ancestral hall. (Appendix p116)

Furong Village was still divided into two parts, Upper and Lower Village, each of which had a complete, independent village committee and Party branch even after the

collapse of the people's commune. The two leading bodies seemed not to oppose the maintenance of such a situation. Some people in the leading bodies would thus lose their present positions, after all, if the two parts were combined together. The villagers also had little objection to the situation because the two leading bodies were always able to maintain so high a degree of agreement in the village administration that the lives of the whole clan had not suffered any substantial impacts from the current administrative division. The inhabitants of the two villages still counted themselves as belonging to Furong Village and the Chen's clan.

The village cadres including the village Party secretary are responsible for the village affairs on formal occasions now. The village head is no longer appointed by the higher level of government but elected by the villagers because villages have long been identified as the basic units of self-government community by the new Chinese constitution promulgated in 1982. However, the patriarchal clan relationships can directly influence the result of the election of the members of the village committee and even the power structure within the village. In Upper Village, for example, the second and third Fangs have roughly the same number of members, and they are so larger than the other four Fangs that the position of village head is always occupied by the members of them. The former village head came from the third Fang. However, the members of the second Fang were more united in the election of 2006, and then made the candidate they preferred win. Even so, relying on the backing of the third Fang, the former village head successfully became the accountant in the village committee, in charge of the finances of the village (Appendix p118). The position of the village Party secretary is always held by the first Fang since most of the Party members in Furong Village came from the first Fang in the early time and usually preferred to recommend those from the same Fang to join the Party (*ibid.* p117).

When a dispute occurs, the people concerned usually ask the village cadres to deal with, rather than resort to law in that to resort to law might inevitably take them a lot of time and energy to go through the whole rigmarole. Therefore, for the villagers, to make the people of the same Fang become village head can obviously help them achieve a guarantee of protection of their own benefits when needed. This does not mean that they will use their special relationships with the village cadres to infringe on the interests of others who come from different Fangs. All of them belong to one common clan and still living together in the same settlement, after all.

The Furong villagers make no bones about telling the important role that the patriarchal clan relationships play in the elections of village cadres. The cadres always come from the first three Fangs and those of the other three Fangs have few opportunities to have real power in the village. This may be an inevitable result of implementing the democratic system under the current social reality of Furong Village. The formation of the power structure has fully demonstrated that the patriarchal clan relationships are one of the unavoidable key factors affecting the Furong social relations, not only in the past, but also in nowadays without any substantive changes.

- The Association for the Elderly and Its Influence on the Settlement Spaces

The Association for the Elderly in Furong Village was spontaneously formed by the local old people in the 1980s, utilizing a small building which is attached to the clan's ancestral hall as its office. Only when discussing matters will the association members gather there. And in most of the time, many people who actually are not the association members go there to watch TV, chat, or play cards, having almost transformed the place into a club. Although the village has been administratively divided into two parts, the two parts share only one Association for the Elderly. Those at or over age sixty, both male and female, are all eligible to participate, but it in fact is mainly composed of men. In addition to this association, there are no other ones such as for children, women, or any kinds of professions in the village (Appendix p126).

Besides the village committee and Party branch, the Association for the Elderly also has a certain influence that cannot be ignored over the villagers. The elders always had high status in the village, which was determined by the traditional Chinese patriarchal hierarchy, that is, the elders needed to discipline themselves to set an example to the younger generation and the younger generation, in the meantime, were required to maintain necessary respect for the elders and comply with them. Such a relationship between the older and younger people, to a large extent, has survived from the past without a fundamental alteration in spite of the introduction of the new type of social system and culture. The elders still has so much authority in the village that the other villagers, even including the village cadres, often are willing to or have to listen to their words. These elders are very conscious of their special status

and, therefore, always show a relatively strong sense of responsibility to the village affairs, such as the mediation of disputes, the maintenance of village order, and the protection of common property. In short, the Association for the elderly is in fact just born out of the group of elders who occupied leadership roles in the traditional patriarchal clan, and by virtue of their authority based on the remaining traditional patriarchal clan relationships, the elders continue to influence the Furong villagers, the members of the Chen's clan.

The Association is of strong independence, usually independent of the village committee or the village Party branch to handle village affairs, including those of the village construction. One of the issues of most concern to the Association is to improve the Furong village infrastructure. In the late 1980s, the Association ever mobilized the members of the Chen's clan to donate money for paving the way with stones from the Che Men to the main road outside the village to replace the original dirt one. It received a positive response from the clan members so they soon scraped together enough money to purchase the materials needed. Afterwards, under the organization and management of the Association, the clan members paved the whole road without asking for any money (Fig. 5-5). The Association rewarded these people in the traditional way, that is, engraved their names on a stone tablet as a souvenir. (Appendix p114) It was the most recent time that the Association organized the Chen's clan members to construct communal facility, the pavilion named Zhaohui Pavilion (朝晖亭) (Fig. 5-6), outside the south of the village in 2007. Since this region abounds with rain, pavilions are often constructed around the settlement, especially near the entrances to the village, for passers-by to shelter from rain. The Zhaohui Pavilion was first



Figure 5-5: The Road Constructed under the Mobilization of the Association for the Elderly

built as early as the Yuan Dynasty, and destroyed by natural disasters. The Association raised a fund among the clan members once again in order to restore this pavilion and also engraved the names of the donors and their respective donation amounts on a tablet standing beside the pavilion. (Appendix p18)

The Association intended to develop tourism in Furong Village in the late 1980s and early 90s, which arose from a field survey conducted by Chen Zhihua

(陈志华) and Lou Qingxi (楼庆西),

professors at Tsinghua University, who devote themselves to the research and protection of traditional Chinese settlements. When arriving at Furong Village, the professors found that the whole settlement not only was in a good state of preservation, but also had a high historical and cultural value, and thus talked with Chen Shiyao, a Furong villager who served as their guide, about how to protect the local architectural heritage through developing tourism. Chen Shiyao, as a member of the Furong Association for the elderly, told it to the other members. It was hard to say whether the Association really understood the significance of protection of the architectural value of their settlement, but it was obviously profitable for them, after all. Then the Association quickly made a decision, perhaps very simple, that is, planning to attract tourists to visit their settlement and make money by selling tickets. (Appendix p113)

After several times of repeatedly lobbying the Yongjia government, the Furong Association for the Elderly finally obtained the permit to charge the tourists for tickets. The members of the Association took turns selling tickets and could share 30 per cent of ticket sales. The remaining 70 per cent was used for financing activities of the Association (Appendix p114). However, as the tourism industry began thriving in the whole region of the Nanxi River and became an important pillar of the local economy, the county government decided to centralize the management of all tourist spots. The



Figure 5-6: The Restored Zhaozui Pavilion

village committee thereupon replaced the Association to manage the tourism in Furong Village (Appendix p84). Furthermore, after Furong Village was appraised as an important cultural relic site under province-level protection in 2005 and under state-level protection in 2006, respectively, all kinds of construction activities in the settlement must be approved and supervised by relevant government agencies, such as the Land Bureau, the Planning Bureau, and the Real Estate Management Bureau (Appendix p120). All of these made the Association on behalf of the elders have less and less voice in matters of settlement construction and the Association even has gradually been marginalized.

Overall, the elders still have some influence on the village, but compared with the past, their status and role has obviously been so seriously weakened that they, under the pressure from the outside changing world, are increasingly unable to dominate other villagers or to deal with all kinds of village affairs in the traditional manner. The traditional Chen's clan based its economy on considerable land, but all such common properties fell under the management of the clan heads as well as the elders, which subsequently gave a material guarantee for these people's authority. Meanwhile, by virtue of their genealogical position, the elders naturally acted as the spokesmen of the deceased ancestors and thus had an unchallengeable moral advantage over the younger generation. And moreover, the clan rules and national laws provided an institutional guarantee for the authority of elders. These factors made the younger generation have to comply with the words of elders. But these factors no longer exist in modern rural society. In terms of law, the old villagers cannot enjoy more power than the young just because of their age. And when having a problem, people now seem to expect more village cadres than elders to solve the problem in accordance with the procedures based on law rather than clan rules. And in terms of morality, although young people still should maintain proper respect for the elderly, it does not mean that there is any social hierarchy between them, that is to say, the former do not have to obey the latter's words as before. Additionally, the local people have not enough land to feed themselves due to a continuous population growth in the Nanxi River basin. So many young people have to go to cities for jobs that the Furong Village residents are mainly the elderly and children (Appendix p101), which destroys the cohesion of the Chen's clan fundamentally. Although some clan activities are held again under the impetus of local elders, the Chen's clan does not revert to a tightly

organized group. Local people more often regard themselves as the villagers of Furong than as the members of the Chen's clan. Therefore, the Association for the Elderly can only try to make full use of the residual or revived patriarchal emotions and relationships to maintain its influence and try to establish harmonious relations with the village cadres who, after all, are the official administrators in the village now. The Association will entertain the village cadres on the Double Ninth Festival in order to make friendly contact with them (Appendix p115).

- Changes of the Communal Places

The Che Men and the Furong Pond are still the most important communal places in Furong Village. And it can be easily found that men and women frequently form separate circles in these communal places. In this regard, the men deny that they intentionally exclude the women. The fact is that women actually often join in when men get together to chat. But the men and women have so few common topics that the women will soon feel bored and then go away (Appendix p128). Actually, it is not easy for the men and women to find common topics. Even though their lives have undergone great changes, the men and women in Furong Village still have a relatively clear division of labor: the men work outside home and the women inside. It inevitably makes them interested in different topics.

The Che Men is almost an exclusive male world just like before, and all day long there are people going there to chat with others (Fig. 5-7). As the scope of lives of the Furong villagers has been greatly expanding outward, people pass through the Che Men more frequently than in the past and thus make the Che Men always a busy place. More than this, the Che Men has become an information exchange center where people share news not only of Furong Village, but also of other villages. There are usually some tricycles waiting outside the Che Men (Fig. 5-8). The tricycles, in several various forms, are essential for local people travelling to the other villages.



Figure 5-7: The People Chatting in the Che Men

If there are no passengers, the tricycle drivers will often chat with the people staying in the Che Men and tell them the latest news what has happened in the other villages. The news is conveyed by these tricycle drivers at so rapid a speed that just in one or two days after it happens, the Furong villagers will know. Listening to news is one of the main reasons why the Furong villagers like to stay in the Che Men. Some vendors come to the village now and then and usually park their pick-up trucks in front of or behind the Che Men to sell their goods. At this time, it results in a small market there.

The Furong Pond is the place where women wash clothes (Fig. 5-9). Most of the local women are not willing to use washing machine because they feel the clothes washed cleaner by hand. They gather there chatting with each other while washing, so that doing laundry is no longer a boring chore for them. In addition to the Furong Pond, the women also gathered by the canals in the settlement, similarly, to chat while washing clothes (Fig. 5-10). In the Furong Pavilion, another place most favored by the Furong villagers to stay for spending their leisure time, there is a different atmosphere, not so much noisy as in the Che Men and since it is located at the centre of the Furong



Figure 5-8: The Tricycle Waiting outside the Che Men  
one of the main reasons why the Furong villagers like to stay in the Che Men. Some vendors come to the village now and then and usually park their pick-up trucks in front of or behind the Che Men to sell their goods. At this time, it results in a small market there.

Photo by Lu, Yongshun (卢永顺)



Figure 5-9-1 (middle),-2 (bottom):  
Women Washing Clothes by the Furong Pond



Figure 5-10-1 (top left), -2 (top right):  
The Women and Children by the Canals

Figure 5-11 (bottom):  
The People Resting in the Furong Pavilion



Pond, people can feel more comfortable there (Fig. 5-11). Both men and women are willing to go there to stay for some time, but the women have to go home on time to cook, unlike the men who have almost nothing to do in the slack season. Chatting is always an important part of the daily life of the villagers from the past to the present without any obvious change. Many people will go to the Che Men or the Furong Pavilion even after dinner, getting together to talk till it gets dark. These people always seem to be able to find topics for chat. In fact, the most important thing for them is not what they are saying, but to maintain close and constant communication with each other.

The Che Men and the Furong Pavilion have been well maintained. When they need repair, the clan plays its role. The Chen's clan members will always enthusiastically respond to the call of the elders at this time to provide the necessary human and material resources because these two places have been inextricably linked with their lives. In this respect, they will not do too much waiting for the government's help because, before they get it, they usually have to pass through the complex bureaucratic procedures making the government action rather slow.

As the settlement's main street, the Ruyi Street is basically the same as usual. No one will casually stack things in this street to encroach on its space, which is actually an old habit formed under the strict supervision of the Chen's clan. Some households on the Ruyi Street now put boulder strips in front of their houses as steps (Fig. 5-12). It is said that such an act would be forbidden as soon as seen by the elders in the past because it made the width of the street smaller. Nowadays, the elders as well as the Association for the Elderly are apparently not willing to consume their remaining authority in such a small thing (Appendix p130).



Figure 5-12: The Boulder Strips in front of the Doors

Compared with the Ruyi Street, the other streets in the residential area are always changing because of either inevitable expansion of some family-compounds or intentional encroachment by some other ones on the street spaces. The latter, in theory, has seriously damaged the communal nature of the streets, but as mentioned in Chapter 3.3.4, the streets actually have specific ownership. Commenting on the manner in which Chinese people use space, Hassenpflug (2010, 26, 35) has remarked that "for the Chinese, the space beyond the places enclosed by walls and fences in which they live and work and teach and learn, the space beyond family and community, is still primarily a 'non-space' or 'non-place', ...which at best has a functional meaning, for instance as traffic space. We define this space as open space. Open space is a space that needs to be traversed or passed in order to enter another meaningful space 'out there'. ...If family space intervenes into open space ...extends its dominion into it, and overwhelms it, then this indicates that community and



Figure 5-13: Chen Guangdi and Chen Shicong's House

society can be interpreted as in a state of incomplete separation. At best, we can speak of a stage of proto-publicness."

The clan usually did not initiatively involve itself in the issues of encroaching on the streets, so that the encroachment of family-compounds on the street space often happened in the residential area. A typical example is the construction of the dwelling house of Chen Guangdi and Chen Shicong, two brothers, in the 1990s (Fig. 5-13). The depth of their house lot could completely meet the requirements for constructing the house, but the lot width was less than two jian— each brother should occupy one jian. The width of one jian is actually unspecified in the design of local dwelling house, but it generally should not be less than the sum of the length of a bed plus the width of a room door, usually not less than 3.3m. Their house eventually encroached upon the alley south of the lot and squeezed the width of this originally very narrow alley to only about 1m (Fig. 5-14). The alley, a spring space, withstands so high extrusion pressures from the two sides that people can clearly perceive an intense sense of constriction when standing in it (Fig. 5-15). At the southwest corner of the lot, the spring space showed its strength great enough to force the southwest corner of the house to be constructed in an arc form (Fig. 5-16), and moreover, part of the wall of the nearby shed— this shed actually belongs to other family— had to be moved backwards a certain distance to ensure people can pass round this corner (Fig. 5-17).

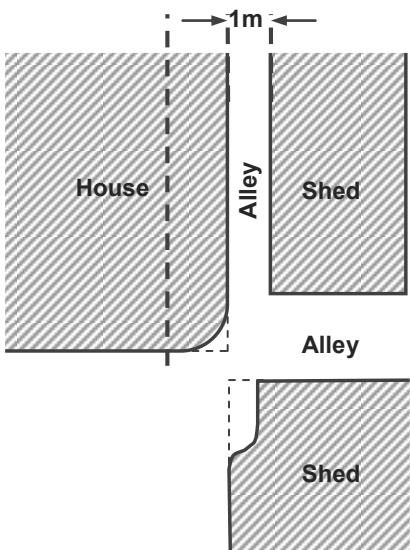


Figure 5-14 (Left):  
The Diagram of the Locations of Chen Guangdi and  
Chen Shicong's House, the Sheds, and the Alleys



Figure 5-15 (right):  
The Narrowed Alley

Figure 5-16 (top):  
The Arc Corner of Chen Guangdi and  
Chen Shicong's House

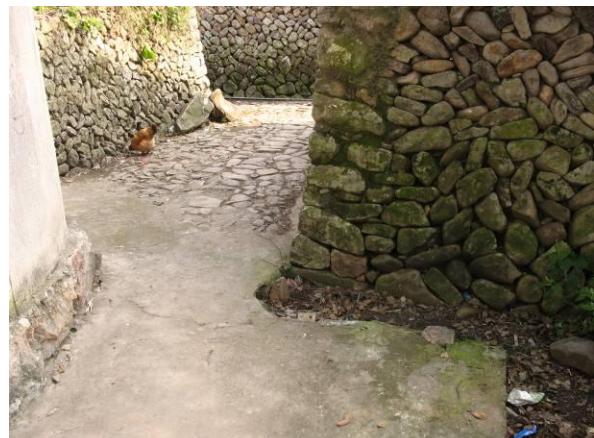


Figure 5-17-1 (bottom left), -2 (bottom right):  
The Backward Movement of Part of the Nearby  
Shed's Wall

In addition to the two brothers' families, several other ones living nearby also need to use this alley. There can be no doubt that, before the brothers did encroach upon the alley, they had to obtain the consent of the other families as well as the cooperation of the shed owner to move the shed wall, and only after this could they set their minds at rest to build the house. They built their house with neither government approval nor supervision, but this does not seem to matter because they actually still based their lives on the patriarchal clan relationships and the relevant rules even though the clan was no longer tightly organized at that time.

History has proved that the clan can well maintain the communal buildings and facilities, protecting them from being damaged even for hundreds of years, but it never does too much to interfere in the private construction activities in the residential area unless the people cannot handle by themselves. Without strict supervision, the family-compounds seem to be located on floating blocks which are always quietly moving and squeezing the middle street spaces (Fig. 5-18). Since it has lasted almost hundreds of years, the territories of the families has already interlaced with each other, making the whole residential area become a big maze. Some people think that the maze of streets as well as the large number of T-shaped intersections in Furong Village in fact was intentionally designed by the Chen's clan at the beginning stage of the establishment of the settlement in order to make the people tending to attack and plunder this village easily get lost in the streets. But this view seems to have exaggerated the clan's ability of settlement planning and lacks reliable evidence, such as the original design drawings or relevant written records. Since Furong Village was appraised as an important cultural relic site under state-level protection in 2006, the local housing construction has been severely restricted by local government and the layout of the streets almost been fixed.



Figure 5-18-1 (left), 5-18-2 (right): The Floating House Lots

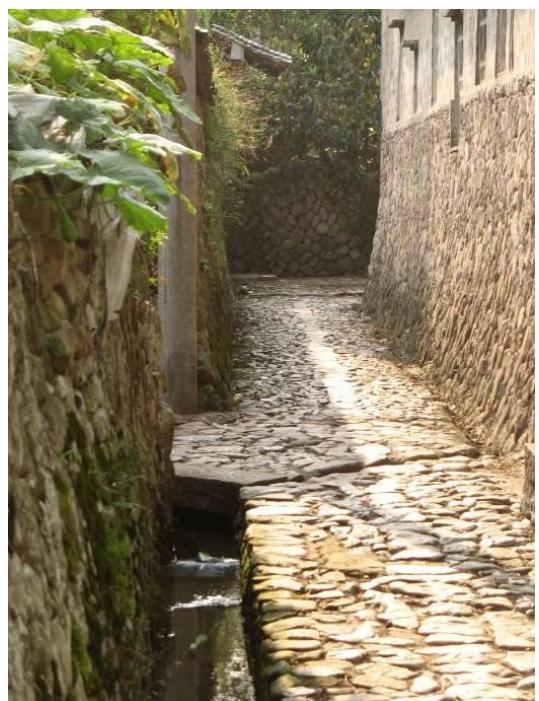
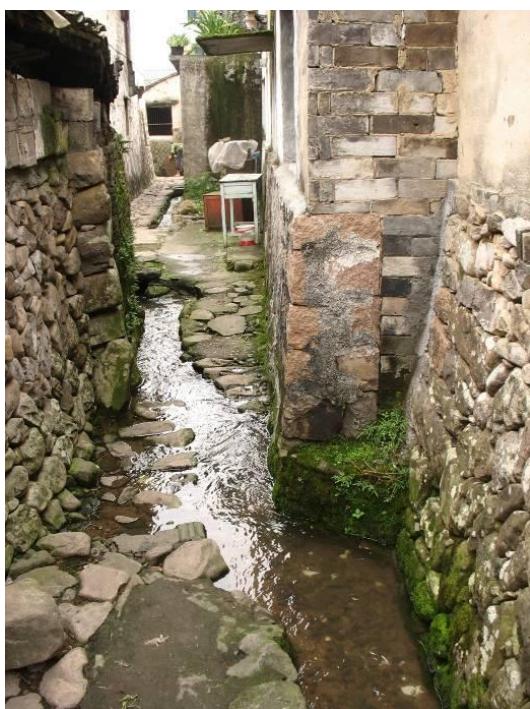
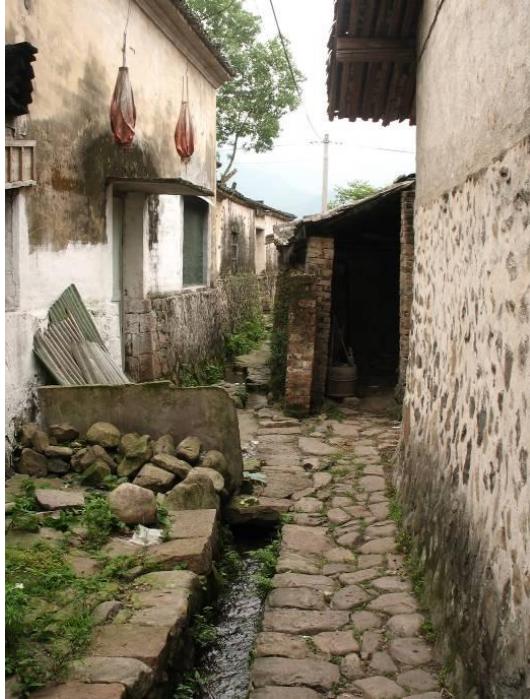


Figure 5-18-3 (top left),  
Figure 5-18-4 (bottom left),  
Figure 5-18-5 (top right):  
Figure 5-18-6 (bottom right):

The Floating House Lots

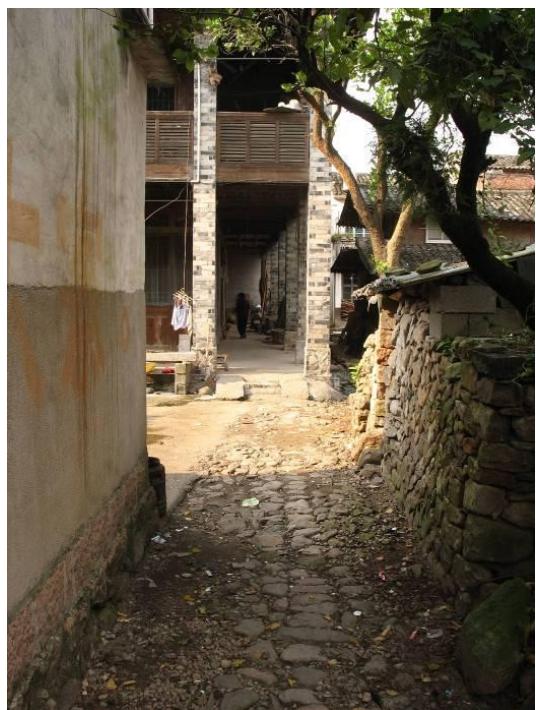
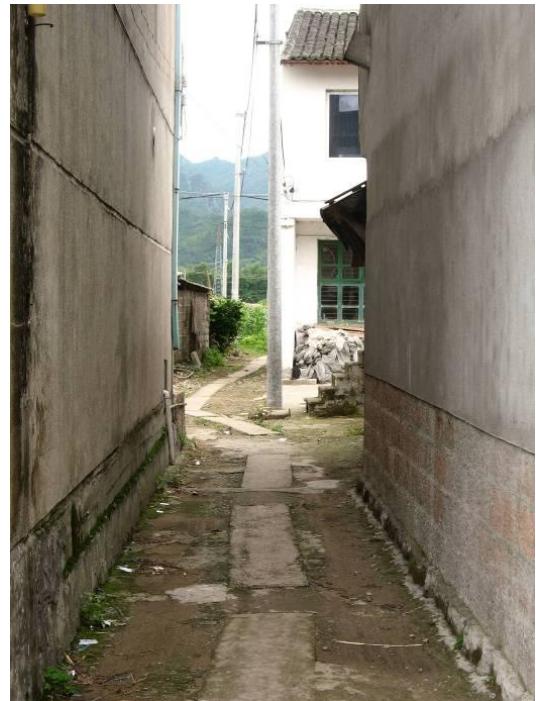
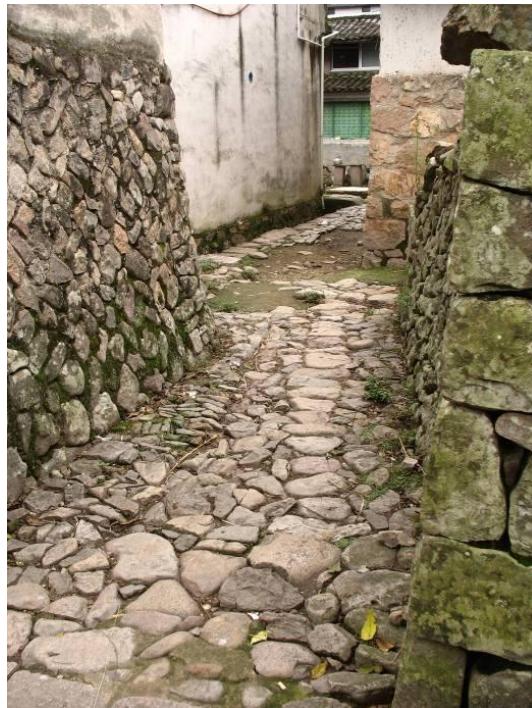


Figure 5-18-7 (top left),

Figure 5-18-8 (top right),

Figure 5-18-9 (bottom):

The Floating House Lots

- The Construction of Dwelling Houses

When the Furong villagers build their houses, they need to employ several craftsmen, usually called “masters”(师傅; shi fu), who will be responsible for both the design and construction of these houses. In ancient times, since the layout of a rural dwelling house was usually not complicated, the craftsman could soon determine it according to the lot. The craftsman need not pay too much attention to the façade which was always just clearly and faithfully reflecting the whole structure and the structural members without any special decorations. At that time, the buildings were mostly wooden-structured, so the house owners need only employ carpenters to construct their houses. The so-called construction included the manufacture and installation of all wood structural members. Only skilled and experienced masters could manufacture the wood components, but the installation of these components, requiring more strength than skill, was usually finished by other occasional workmen under the direction of the masters. At first these masters were all apprentices following their masters to learn basic carpentry techniques, and then improved and perfected their skills through a lot of practice with their masters. After leaving their masters, they would begin to recruit their own apprentices and teach them skills. (Appendix p124-125) There were no specialized government agencies responsible for teaching people the carpentry techniques, or for examining and evaluating the techniques of carpenters.

In modern times, there are professional architects responsible for the design of architecture, but the Furong villagers very seldom ask them to design their houses because the design fees are too high for them. The layout of a local house is usually designed by the house owner, and he sometimes asks some experienced people to provide him suggestions on it (Appendix p121). There are often few decorations on the house facades. Furthermore, a house owner never asks a professional construction company to build the house, but employs several masters responsible for bricklaying, carpentry, and roof tiling, respectively (ibid. p121-122). These masters learn their skills still in the traditional manner. For example, the carpentry master employed in the construction of Chen Jianbing’s house (Fig. 5-19~21) was born in the early 1950s, followed his master to learn carpentry techniques at the age of 19,



Figure 5-19: Chen Jianbing's House



Figure 5-20: The Master, Zhou



Figure 5-21:  
Chen Jianbing and His Relatives,  
Constructing the House

worked independently from 22, and has a dozen apprentices now. Even though he actually has no official qualifications or licenses, he is still often employed by local people to do carpentry work and has already become a famous carpentry master in the local villages. Besides the masters, several relatives of the house owner will be asked to do some manual labor; after all, here is still a world of relatives. In a few years ago, a house owner would only need to provide meals to the relatives he asked, but nowadays, has to additionally pay a certain remuneration to them (Appendix p122). In general, the cost is far less to employ masters and relatives than to employ a professional architect and construction staff. It is hard for these masters as well as relatives to guarantee the construction quality. For example, the wall surfaces are often not flat enough and some walls even lean out of the perpendicular. But the

villagers do not seem to mind much because these houses have met their basic requirements, and moreover, they do not have more money to build better ones. The Chen Jianbing's house, one of the newest in Furong Village now, had been not completely constructed until September 2010. The total construction cost of this house is about 160,000 RMB.

In Furong Village, sons often live together with their parents in a common family-compound even after they have already been married. Only after the death of their parents will these sons divide the family property. By then the rooms of the house as well as the lot will be equally distributed among the sons. For instance, the General's House, built by Chen Maoxuan (陈茂宣) in the Qing Dynasty, was divided into four equal parts after Chen's death and his four sons drew lots to allocate these four parts except the central jian still used as a communal hall. In the process of division the brothers took account of everything, including the size, location, and orientation of each room, to ensure that no one would suffer losses. They haggled over every detail at this time and the brotherhood among them seemed to be temporarily placed in a secondary position because they were fighting not only for their own interests, but also for those of their descendants. Sons in fact always pay more attention to the lot under the house rather than the house itself, which is clearly shown by the example of Chen Guangdi and Chen Shicong's house. After a family division, the two brothers got their respective house lots which were absolutely equal in width and depth, but both less than one jian wide to be enough for building houses. Then they tried to find ways to increase the whole lot width even regardless of encroaching on the nearby alley until each lot was as wide as one jian, rather than building a house on the original lot and distributing the rooms equally between the two families. In the former case, each brother has his own house lot and there is no doubt that they have finished the family division. But in the latter case, it would seem that the two brothers actually have not divided their family yet.

After having divided a house lot left by parents, the sons will deal with their respective house property independently according to their own subsequent development and practical conditions. Some people will be still living in the rooms distributed to them, some will dismantle them and then build new houses on the lots, and some will rent or even sold them to other people.

### Example 1: Chen Yongguo's House (Fig. 5-22)

After the family division, Chen Yongguo dismantled his old rooms and built a four-story brick house on the lot, but his brothers who got the other parts of the original house still have not built their own new houses. Since brothers usually cannot keep pace with each other in the construction of new houses, the dwellings, just like Chen Yongguo's house seeming a piece of bread standing on the ground, are quite common in Furong Village as well as in other old clan settlements in the Nanxi River basin.



Figure 5-22-1 (top),  
Figure 5-22-2 (bottom):

Chen Yongguo's House

### Example 2: Chen Yanen and Chen Guanglin's House (Fig. 5-23)

The two brothers inherited a three-jian-wide house from their parents. In the family division, one part of the house, two jian wide, was distributed to Chen Yanen and the other part, only one jian wide, to Chen Guanglin. As Chen Yanen got a larger part of the house, he must pay a sum of money or something else to his brother to make the division fair to both of them. Soon afterwards, his brother built a two-story brick house, but Chen Yanen built his own house much later and the house occupies only half the width of his lot.

Figure 5-23-1 (top),  
Figure 5-23-2 (middle):

Chen Yanen and Chen Guanglin's  
House



Example 3: Chen Wenzhong, Chen Wenlin, and Chen Linping's House (Fig. 5-24)

The three brothers originally owned a five-jian-wide house jointly. In the family division, Chen Wenzhong and Chen Linping got the eastern and the western parts of the house, respectively, both with a width of two jian, and Chen Wenlin got the central part with a width of only one jian as well as some compensation provided by the other two brothers. Subsequently, the three brothers all built their own new houses and the economic strength of each house owner, like in the past, is directly reflected in the house height.



Figure 5-24: Chen Wenzhong, Chen Wenlin, and Chen Linping's House

The family division can result in the fact that a house lot, probably large and owned by one family in origin, will inevitably be divided into several small pieces, each of which will belong to a separate family. The subsequent moves of these floating lots will make the whole residential space structure of the village more and more complicated and become an absolute maze.

Since Furong Village was appraised as an important cultural relic site under state-level protection, the villagers have been requested not to casually transform their original traditional-style houses into modern-style ones. If they do want to dismantle their old houses to build new ones, they must go through certain approval procedures which are always so strict that it is actually very difficult for the villagers to obtain permissions for the transformation of their old houses from the relevant government agencies (Appendix p121). The government wishes to preserve not only the local traditional buildings but also the whole settlement as a precious heritage of traditional Chinese civilization. However, the strict prohibition against dismantling traditional-style dwellings has caused strong resentment among the Furong villagers. Most of the local residents in fact are longing to bid farewell to their old wood houses and live in brick ones which are more durable and can be built higher to get more floor space on their small lots. Such a longing has become more and more urgent along with the population growth in the settlement. Although many local young villagers in fact live and work in other places for most of the year and some even have bought houses and settled in the other places, the people's urgency of building new houses is not alleviated. In the eyes of the villagers, Furong Village is always their root. They still have a strong desire to build new houses in the village because they believe that they will come back to live there someday.

The Furong Association for the Elderly, to some extent representing the remaining forces of traditional Chen's clan, ever actively exploited the values of the traditional architecture in Furong Village in order to increase their income through developing tourism in this village. If they could predict that they might lose their original right of free disposal of these old buildings for this, they would hardly still decide to do so. Now, it seems that there is nothing the Association can do to help the villagers, including the elders themselves, out of their predicament in constructing new dwellings. The Chen's clan could have a crucial voice in the settlement

construction in ancient times in that it was able to block the administrative power of the local government from its internal world. But in nowadays, the administrative power has successfully extended inside Furong Village, and meanwhile the Chen's clan has changed from a tightly organized group with a solid economic base, a stable core of leadership, and a perfected patriarchal clan system to a loosely structured one mainly based on the remained patriarchal clan relationships and emotions. Therefore, with the support of the law, the local government has replaced the Chen's clan to be responsible for managing the planning and construction in Furong Village.

However, it is too early to declare that the new management system of rural settlement construction has achieved a complete triumph now because the remained patriarchal clan relationships and emotions still have a force not to be ignored. The local government has ever forcibly demolished some dwellings built unauthorizedly in Furong Village for several times. Although such action has never caused any riots among the local residents, the government always does not take it lightly. During the most recent action (2008), in order to demolish only a few houses, including that of Chen Yanen, more than 500 policemen were mobilized by the local government to maintain order at the scene because the government knew that the whole clan actually was standing behind these families. Perhaps the clan has seemed loosely organized, but the clan members always automatically come together again by virtue of their patriarchal clan relationships and emotions when faced with a crisis. The present Chen's clan is just like a volcano, seemingly dead but still having so huge energy inside that the government must be careful to avoid activating it. The two sides in fact have engaged in a continuous tug-of-war. While the Chen Yanen's house was rebuilt just less than two weeks after its demolition, the government had to patiently bear it. Once the aroused energy of the clan completely subsides, the government will take another proper opportunity to flex its muscles. The village cadres are usually placed in a dilemma. When the villagers are building houses without permission of the government, these cadres, on the one hand, have the responsibility for implementing the relevant government regulations, but on the other hand, as members of the Chen's clan, they have to take into account their patriarchal clan relationships with the people concerned. Therefore, they usually can neither forthrightly defend the interests of the clan members, nor firmly carry out the duties entrusted to them by the government.

The local government plans to build a new village nearby to meet the housing needs of the Furong villagers. It needs the government to expend great effort to coordinate the interests of all neighboring clans involved in this project. So far, a new residential quarter has been built (Fig. 5-25) and a larger one is in preparation for construction. The keywords for planning the new residential quarter are gross floor area, development density, minimum distance between buildings, etc., rather than descent, generational position, and kinship. Moreover, those going to move into the new residential quarter will hardly be able to change its space structure as freely as before. They will be split off from the original space structure shaped by the patriarchal clan life, and begin a new life shaped by a new space structure.



Figure 5-25: New Furong Village

## 5.2 Cangpo Village

### 5.2.1 The Li's Clan and Cangpo Village during the Republic of China

Similar to Furong Village, Cangpo Village was also under the control of the clan, but Li's clan, during the Republican period. The clan head was responsible for handling all kinds of affairs in the clan and, at the same time, acted as bao zhang (head of a bao), an official member of the national administrative staff in charge of the administration of the village under the baojia system implemented by the KMT government (Appendix p161). The other clan members also acquired a new identity as citizens of the Republic. However, such changes in their titles actually had little substantial influence on their original lives in the patriarchal clan.

The clan activities were regularly held in accordance with tradition. For example, the clan members not only offered sacrifices to the apical ancestor Li Cen, but also invited troupes to perform in the ancestral hall for three days in the first month of the Chinese lunar year, and went to sweep the tombs of ancestors during the Qingming Festival (about April 5, solar calendar). The clan and its Fangs had their respective common land, the incomes of which were used to pay for these sacrificial activities. The Li's clan also attached great importance to the revision of genealogy books as same as the Furong Chen's clan. According to the record of genealogy books, the Li's clan ever revised them in 1896 and not until 1904 did the clan complete it. So the clan, following the usual custom, revised these genealogy books again from 1931 to 1933, and the cost of the revision was shared among the clan members. Since the Li's clan of the neighboring Fangxiang Village was a branch of the Cangpo Li's clan, it maintained a close relationship with the latter. The senior descendant of the senior branch of the Fangxiang Li's clan always went to the ancestral hall in Cangpo Village to conduct an ancestral sacrifice on the lunar New Year's Day (Appendix p146).

The Li's clan retained the original function of the ancestral hall during this period, as a place used by the clan members not only for conducting sacrificial activities but also for dealing with affairs of the settlement. The KMT government was unable to achieve effective control over Chinese rural society and to supervise the construction activities in the rural settlements in the volatile situation of that time. The Li's clan still maintained and constructed communal facilities of the settlement in the traditional manner. Standing under the banner of the clan, the clan members raised money for the construction of the Taiyin Gong (太阴宫). The Taiyin Gong, located to north of the Renji Temple, was also a temple where the people offered sacrifices to Goddess Chen Shisi (陈十四娘娘). They believed that she could protect the clan's safety and prevent them from all possible misfortunes.

The Cangpo Li's clan was composed of five Fangs named Jiguan Fang (机关房), Santui Fang (三退房), Sanfang Fang (三房房), Wufen Fang (五份房), and Waizhai Fang (外宅房), respectively. Of these Fangs, the Jiguan Fang had the largest population and was the most powerful so that the clan head always came from this Fang. (Appendix p173, 180) The members of these Fangs were residentially concentrated in their respective Fang-communities in the early stage of the Chen's

clan, but those who belonged to different Fangs had already become neighbors in the Republican period just the same as what happened in Furong Village.

### **5.2.2 Changes of the Settlement Spaces during the Decline of the Li's Clan**

Cangpo Village shared a similar fate with Furong Village after the CPC came to power. The village cadres replaced the clan head to administer the village. The Jiguan Fang played a crucial role in maintaining the operation of the Li's clan not only before but also after the foundation of the RPC because its population, approximately equal to half the total population of the Li's clan, was largest in the clan. The higher-level government usually appointed its members village cadres and most of the Party members of this village also came from the Jiguan Fang.

The land originally owned by the clan or the Fangs was confiscated by the government and equally allocated to the clan members during the land reform, but the village still spent money on a variety of traditional ceremonies. For example, the village invited troupes to perform in the ancestral hall for three days as usual in the first month of the lunar year, but no longer for sacrificing to the ancestors. In the period of the people's communes, especially in the Cultural Revolution, the Cangpo villagers were also involved in the frequent political and ideological movements and forced to terminate all the traditional ceremonies as the ideological struggles became increasingly intense. Nobody dared to mention the revision of new genealogy books at this time. Even the previously revised genealogy books were confiscated and burnt with those of other clans. However, Li Chengkuai (李成快), a Red Guard of Cangpo Village, took a risk to take some of the general genealogy books<sup>52</sup> without permission and secretly preserved them in his home (Appendix p178). It made this part of the genealogy books survive from the calamity.

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<sup>52</sup> The genealogy books involve the general genealogy books of the clan recording the descent of the whole Cangpo Li's clan, and the Fang genealogy books more detailed recording the descent of each Fang respectively.

The ancestral hall was pulled down and a modern multi-storey building, part of which was used for offices of the village committee and the else part the Cangpo primary school, was constructed at this site. The Renji Temple as well as the Taiyin Gong was abandoned. And many traditional-style architectural adornments of their façades, having a special meaning of blessing the building's safety, were completely destroyed during the Cultural Revolution just because they were considered as the representation of superstitious and reactionary culture (Fig. 5-26) (Appendix p149). Meanwhile, the dramatically increased population of Cangpo Village had an immediate impact on the layout of the settlement. Many villagers built new dwelling houses for themselves. But the government had not established a system yet to manage these rural construction activities, and furthermore, the clan had already lost its legitimacy of management, so the construction activities were actually conducted without any general plans in this period. The local villagers cut down the trees on the eastern dike and on the western part of the southern dike in order to build their private dwelling houses there (Fig. 5-27, 28). This made the settlement lose the most part of its original beautiful garden from then on.



Figure 5-26:  
The Roof of the Taiyin Gong Whose Adornments Had Already Been Totally Destroyed

The Li's clan no longer relied on the past patriarchal clan system to maintain its interior order. However, when all the members faced a common crisis, they would still automatically assemble under the banner of the clan. It was fully reflected in the fight against the Teng's clan of neighboring Xiami Village (下米村) in 1963. These two clans originally regarded a small hill as a buffer zone between their respective territories. But the Xiami Teng's clan tended to appropriate it to itself and it thus triggered the conflict. The Li's clan spent only one day in the battle to win a decisive victory over the Teng's clan by virtue of the numerical and geographical advantages, and then the hill became the buffer zone again, not owned by either the Xiami Teng's clan or the



Figure 5-27 (top):  
The Private Dwelling Houses on the  
Western Part of the Southern Dike

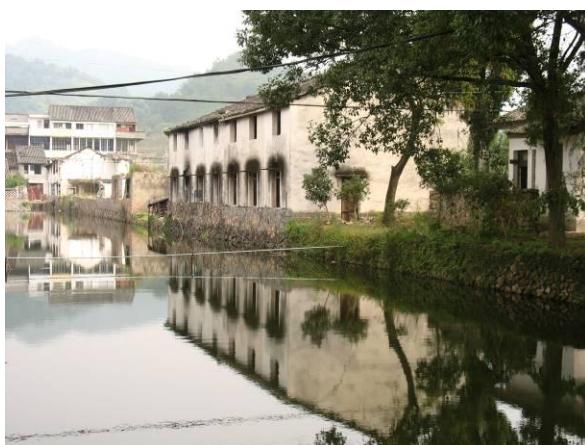


Figure 5-28 (bottom):  
The Private Dwelling Houses on the  
Eastern Dike

Cangpo Li's clan. Throughout the whole process, the two sides both resorted to their respective strength gathered on the basis of the patriarchal clan relationships and emotions rather than to the law or the authority of the people's commune. As a branch of the Cangpo Li's clan, the Fangxiang Li's clan also participated in the fighting and provided strong support for the Cangpo Li's clan. (Appendix p171-172)

### 5.2.3 Changes of the Settlement Spaces after the Revival of the Li's Clan

- The Revival of the Li's Clan

The Cangpo Li's clan revived soon after the initiation of the policy of "reform and opening up" in 1978. Its top priority was to revise the genealogy books in 1982, about half a century after the last revision. In the preface to the newly revised genealogy books, the Li's clan denounced the actions taken to destroy the previous genealogy books during the Cultural Revolution and declared that the revision of the genealogy books would help to enhance the cohesion of the people—it should not be regarded as the dregs of Chinese culture, but an essential part of it. Besides the revision of the

genealogy books, the clan began to unfold various kinds of activities of ancestral worship again, including the theatrical performance for sacrificing to the apical ancestor Li Cen in the first month of the lunar year as well as sweeping the tombs of ancestors during the Qingming Festival.

The male elders in Cangpo Village established their own Association for the Elderly, similar to that of Furong Village. And this Association also played an important role in village affairs, particularly in the construction and maintenance of communal buildings. Since the collective economy of Cangpo Village almost collapsed during the people's commune period, there was so little communal money available for the maintenance of infrastructure and communal facilities in the settlement that the communal buildings, such as the Renji Temple, Taiyin Gong, and Wangxiong Pavilion, were seriously damaged. So the Association sold a big dead tree for lumber and used the money, only 800 RMB, to repair the Renji Temple (Fig. 5-29). Subsequently, it actively raised funds to repair the Taiyin Gong, Wangxiong Pavilion, and streets in the settlement. And furthermore, it not only mobilized the villagers to plant trees and shrubs on the eastern part of the southern dike, but also took strict care of them. A villager was fined 50 RMB by the Association only for casually picking a flower on the dike (Appendix p181-182). The fact that the Association was entitled to impose fines on the villagers seemed able to prove that this group, mainly composed of male elders, still had a powerful influence in Cangpo Village at that time. The village cadres, as the official administrators in the village, did not suppress this kind of influence of

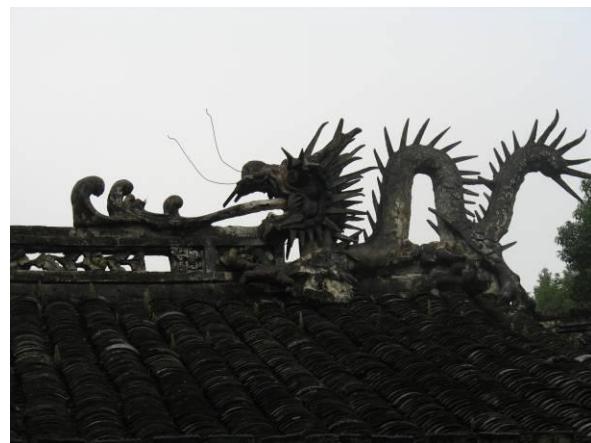


Figure 5-29-1 (top),-2 (bottom):  
Repaired Roof of the Renji Temple and the Restored  
Adornments

the Association because its role was irreplaceable. The Association could rely on the local people's existing patriarchal clan emotions and relationships to call upon them to donate money for the construction activities, but the village cadres could hardly do so. In the local people's eyes, the village cadres should try their best to get funding from the local government rather than ask for money from the villagers. The high-level government began to invest in the tourism in Cangpo Village during the 1990s and established a strict system to supervise and manage the construction activities there. This made the relevant government agencies gradually took over the dominant position of the Cangpo Association for the Elderly in the construction issues. It was similar to what happened in Furong Village.

In fact, many clan members would spontaneously build some communal facilities in the settlement without the mobilization of the clan. For example, Li Sanzhen (李三珍), a Cangpo Li's clan member, raised funds among the clan members to build a pavilion named Shuangxi (双溪) (Fig. 5-30) in the northwest corner of the village in the late 1990s (Appendix p144), and also persuaded the government to allocate nearly 1 million RMB to Cangpo Village for the restoration of the Li's ancestral hall in the name of tourism development in 2001 (ibid. 175). And another clan member named Li Xiuduo (李修多) donate money to build a new pavilion called Guanshang (观赏) (Fig. 5-31) by the north side of the West Pond in 2008. These people in fact lived and did business in other places all the year round. When having accumulated some wealth, they often hoped to leave their traces in the history of the Li's clan through such construction activities.



Figure 5-30: The Shuangxi Pavilion



Figure 5-31: The Guanshang Pavilion

- Changes of the Communal Places

The ancestral hall of the Cangpo Li's clan is well maintained after the restoration and, as an important symbol of the Li's clan, is open to the tourists in nowadays. Meanwhile, the Cangpo village committee and Party branch use two rooms of the ancestral hall as their respective offices, continuing the tradition of regarding the ancestral hall as the Cangpo administrative center. There are so few matters that need to be jointly discussed by the village cadres on ordinary days that the offices are idle most of the time. In fact, the whole ancestral hall is not the place where the villagers often assemble and stay. Normally, only when the Li's clan conducts ancestor worship ceremonies will the villagers, being the clan members at the same time, make the ancestral hall bustle with activity.

The Cangpo villagers have begun to offer sacrifices to the Holy King Pingshui and Goddess Chen Shisi again in the Renji Temple and the Taiyin Gong, respectively, since the end of the Cultural Revolution, but rather less in number than before (Appendix p179). The relevant sacrificial activities are usually conducted in the first or the last months of the lunar year. On ordinary days, the Renji Temple is a scenic spot open to the tourists while the Taiyin Gong is usually locked.

The Che Men, different from the ancestral hall, Renji Temple, and Taiyin Gong, is a place where the Cangpo villagers, especially the male, like to spend a lot of time staying and chatting. Even though it is smaller than that of Furong Village, without stone or wooden benches specifically for sitting, the villagers are still willing to get together there, just sitting on the edges of the stone platform of the Che Men (Fig. 5-32-1,-2). Somebody even produced a special bamboo stool for himself in order to sit there to chat for a long time (Fig. 5-33). If a Cangpo villager was not at his home, it would usually not be wrong to go to the Che Men to look for him.

The garden between the Che Men and the Wangxiong Pavilion was not destroyed for the construction of dwelling houses during the Cultural Revolution perhaps because of the existence of the ancestral hall, Renji Temple and Wangxiong Pavilion. There are many plants there, especially the two old cypresses planted by the ancestor Li Xizhai, adding a precious green color to the appearance of the settlement. From the Wangxiong Pavilion located in this little garden, people can watch not only

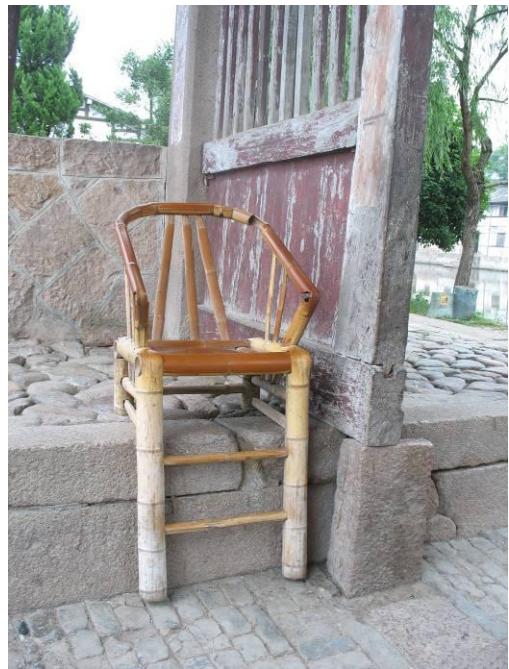


Figure 5-32-1 (top left), -2 (bottom left):

The People Resting in the Che Men

Figure 5-33 (Right):

The Special Bamboo Stool

the nearby elegant facades of the Renji Temple and the Taiyin Gong, the colorful plants or flowers on the dike, and the charming waterscape offered by the East Pond, but also the various absorbing landscape far outside the settlement. So, there will usually be some people to take a walk on the dike, and by the way to sit in the Wangxiong Pavilion for a while. Generally speaking, the pavilion is a relatively quiet place because it is away from the main activity areas of the villagers. However, the pavilion is an excellent place to enjoy the cool and thus will become bustling in the summer since there are no other buildings surrounding it and blocking the wind from blowing into it (Appendix p155). The villagers, still mainly men, often go there after lunch or dinner and spend one or two hours on enjoying the cool as well as chatting (Fig. 5-34).

The Shuangxi Pavilion located at the northwest corner of the settlement was another communal place as important as the Wangxiong Pavilion, especially in the summer because there were no other buildings blocking it and it thus also became a good place to enjoy the cool after its construction was completed. Several years later, however, there was a marked decline in the number of people going there to enjoy

Figure 5-34-1 (top),-2 (bottom):  
The People Resting in the Wangxiong  
Pavilion

Figure 5-34-1: Photo by Lu, Yongshun (卢永顺)



the cool as the new dwelling houses built in the north part of Cangpo Village so seriously blocked the southeast winds in summer from blowing into the pavilion that this place was no longer as cool as before. Since then the Shuangxi Pavilion has even become the place where people sometimes store their odds and ends (Appendix p58). Even though the Guanshang Pavilion was newly built, by virtue of its location between the West Pond and the Brush Street, where people frequently pass by every day, it has soon become one of the most favorite communal places of the Cangpo villagers to stay. The Guanshang Pavilion is more spacious than the Che Men and people can sit on some wooden benches there much more comfortably than on the stone platform of the Che Men, so there are usually more people staying there than at the Che Men in nowadays (Fig. 5-35). The Cangpo villagers can hear news that happened in other villages from the motor-tricycle drivers at the Che Men but they are often talking more about the internal affairs of their own settlement in the Guanshang Pavilion. As most of the women are busy doing housework all day, those usually staying in the Guanshang Pavilion are still mostly men. The communal places belonging to the

Cangpo women always cannot be without water, just similar to the situation in Furong Village. The women often gather by the East Pond, the West Pond, especially the One Spring with Four Wells, and ditches, washing clothes and chatting with each other.

The local government financed and constructed a zigzagging flat corridor bridge over the East Pond several years ago in order to provide the Cangpo villagers with a new communal place and to enrich the landscape which can attract tourists (Fig. 5-36-1,-2). But this place was so far away from the main activity areas of the villagers that the number of people going there to rest a while was far below expected. In fact, the corridor bridge was often empty all day long. Furthermore, it covered the reflection of the distant peaks in the East Pond, which seriously destroyed the original beauty of the waterscape. The



Figure 5-35:  
The People Resting in the Guanshang Pavilion

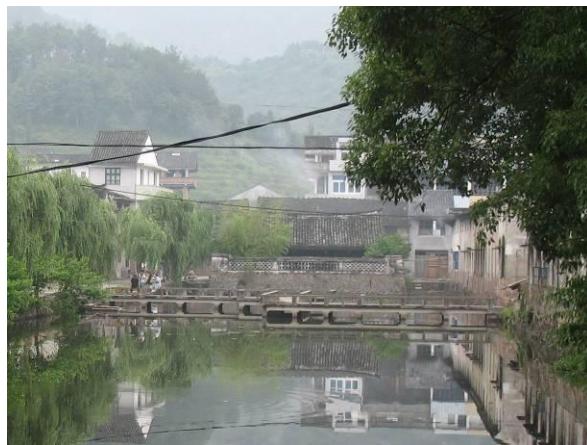


Figure 5-36-1 (middle),  
Figure 5-36-2 (bottom):  
The Corridor Bridge over the East Pond

result was clearly contrary to the original purposes of the government investment, and so it was eventually dismantled by the government in 2008, only about 5 years after its construction (Fig. 5-37) (Appendix p177).

Since the tourism in Furong Village is relatively prosperous, the buildings on both sides of the Ruyi Street are mostly used as hotels or shops. In contrast, the tourism in Cangpo Village is not so developed as in Furong. Most of the buildings on both sides of the Brush Street are still used as dwelling houses and the residents of the Brush Street are basically still living their original street lives. They have already been accustomed to such a street lifestyle and do their work as much as possible in the streets (Fig. 5-38).



Figure 5-37: The East Pond after the Dismantlement of the Corridor Bridge



Figure 5-38-1 (left), -2 (right): The Street Life of the Cangpo Villagers

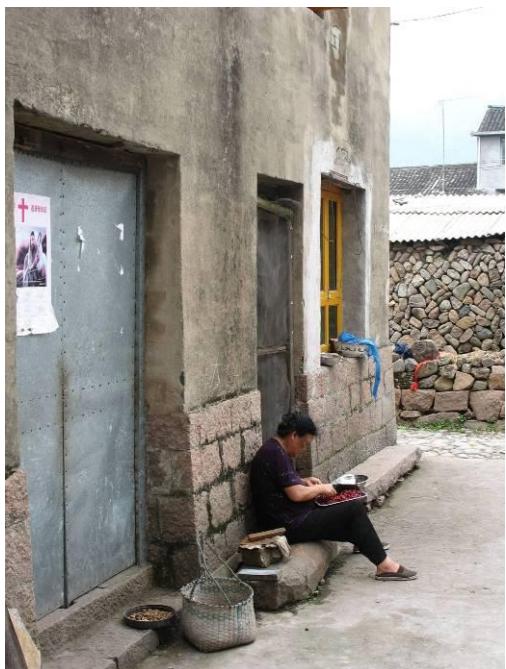
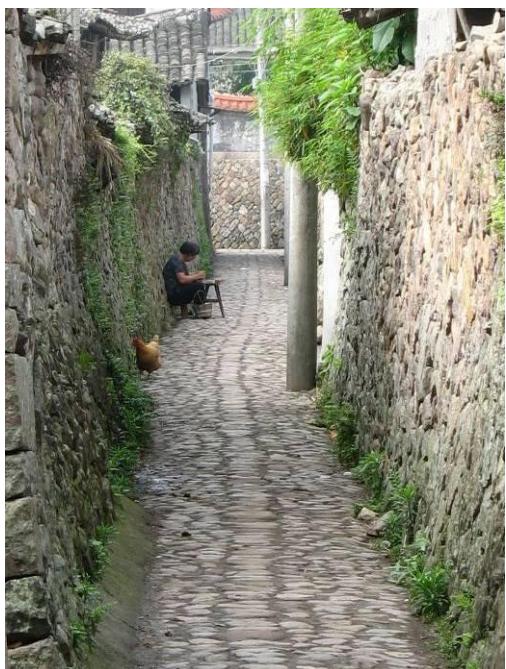


Figure 5-38-3 (top),  
Figure 5-38-4 (middle),  
Figure 5-38-5 (bottom):  
The Street Life of the Cangpo Villagers



Figure 5-38-6 (top),  
Figure 5-38-7 (middle),  
Figure 5-38-8 (bottom):  
The Street Life of the Cangpo Villagers

Why the villagers are more willing to stay outside on the streets? One reason is that it is very dark in the typical traditional Chinese rural house. And moreover, the local climate is so hot in summer that it is rather uncomfortable for the people to stay long inside their muggy houses. But it is more important that the villagers think it will be less boring to stay together with neighbors on the streets than in the houses. At dusk it is the busiest and noisiest time on the streets. While it is not dark yet, the children who have already finished their homework and dinner will have their fling on the streets and the adults will also get together to aimlessly chat with each other to kill the remaining time of the day (Fig. 5-39). The Li's clan has become a loosely organized group now, but still like a big family. And the streets are just like this family's living rooms, though not spacious enough. Only when it gets completely dark will the happy gathering of this big family come to an end and the family members return to their own rooms.



Figure 5-39-1 (top),  
Figure 5-39-2 (bottom):  
The People Resting in the Street

In general, the communal lives of the Cangpo villagers have not changed much now from that in the past and the communal places in the settlement are mostly the architectural legacies left behind by the past Li's clan. Even the new ones were constructed actually mainly relying on the donations of the clan members rather than the government investment or commercial development.

- The Construction of Dwelling Houses

In the 1980-90s the Cangpo villagers continued to build new brick dwelling houses in the north part of the village to meet the growing housing needs. These houses were mostly designed by the local masters and built with the help of the relatives of the house owners and it could not ensure that high construction quality could be reached. As the local government had not yet established a sophisticated system to regulate rural housing construction at that time, the housing construction in Cangpo Village actually in a state of disorder, without any comprehensive and coordinated master plan to follow. The Li's clan could do nothing about it because its power had already been seriously weakened in the early years of the PRC and unable to play the same vital role in the infrastructure construction as in the past. In the past, relying on the clan and Fang land as a solid economic foundation, the clan and Fangs constructed not only a lot of communal buildings, but also a complete network of streets and ditches in the settlement. But now, having lost the economic foundation, the clan and Fangs could merely depend on their remaining influence upon the members to call upon them to reconstruct several most important communal buildings, which was actually far from enough. Many streets and alleys surrounding the new constructed dwelling houses were dilapidated and usually scattered with all kinds of garbage. Such a bad situation continues until the present day (Fig. 5-40).

The government should simultaneously shoulder the responsibility for rural infrastructure construction while attempting to crack down on the rural clan organizations as well as the relevant patriarchal clan culture during the people's commune period. It could be said that the government successfully achieved the goal in the latter aspect but had so far failed to accomplish the mission in the former aspect. Due to insufficient funds, the government could only finance the construction of a few

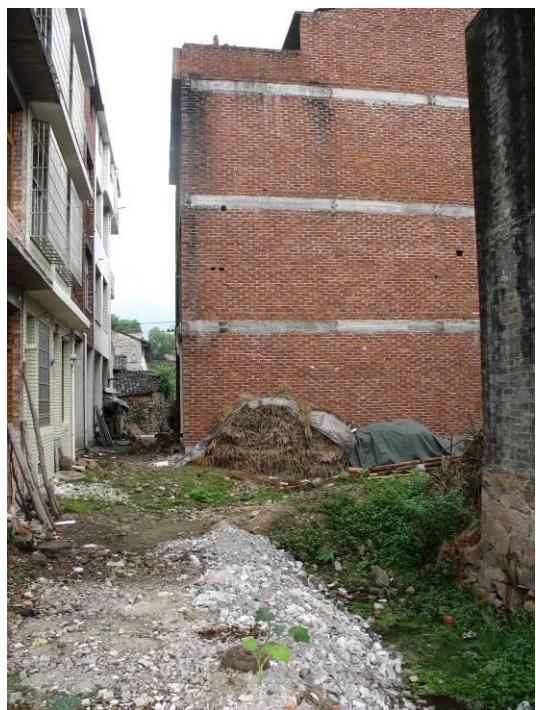


Figure 5-40-1 (top),  
Figure 5-40-2 (middle),  
Figure 5-40-3 (bottom):  
The Local Undesirable Residential Environment



Figure 5-40-4 (top),  
Figure 5-40-5 (middle),  
Figure 5-40-6 (bottom):  
The Local Undesirable Residential Environment

symbolic communal buildings such as the ancestral halls, but unable to construct a complete network of streets as well as of water supply and drainage within the village. The local government began to support tourism development in Cangpo Village to help the local people to get rich and invested more money in its infrastructure from the late 1990s especially after Cangpo Village was appraised as an important cultural relic site under province-level protection in 2005. However, the appropriations for infrastructure of these years could barely meet the needs of the restoration and protection of the Cangpo important communal buildings, still not enough to comprehensively and thoroughly improve the overall living environment of the local villagers. Moreover, the tourism income was not as much as expected. The villagers have begun to queried the government whether it is really suitable for Cangpo Village to develop tourism. The voices of doubt are getting louder and louder especially because the government, in order to protect the local traditional dwelling houses, strictly prohibited the villagers from transforming their houses into modern-style brick ones. The villagers think that tourism has failed to turn their old houses into money-spinners, but cages keeping them in captivity.

Many of the Cangpo villagers have torn down their old houses regardless of the government ban and built new brick ones on the lots without the approval of relevant government agencies. Although they know they have violated government regulations, they do not think they have done wrong because they insist that they can confidently build houses in accordance with their own requirements on their own lots as long as the surrounding neighbors have no objection—they had done so without government intervention for hundreds of years and, in fact, there were no government agencies responsible for managing and approving such matters at all in the past. It is, of course, unacceptable for the now government to tolerate such illegal construction activities, but on the other hand, the owners of the illegally constructed houses and even most local residents apparently will not permit the government to pull down these illegal houses. The two sides thus fall into a confrontation. The house in Figure 5-41 was constructed without government approval and very near completion when the government perceived. Although it was not pulled down, the government forbade the house owner to continue the construction, even including the installation of windows. The government in fact is in a disadvantageous position since it can neither

real-timely monitor the construction activities within the village nor get sufficient help from the village cadres who always have to take into account their patriarchal clan relationships with the villagers concerned. There are still many people in Cangpo Village who unauthorizedly pull down their old traditional-style houses to build new modern-style ones. Many such illegal houses have been completed and seriously damaged the traditional appearance of Cangpo Village. The house in Figure 5-41 is still not completed (Fig. 5-42). However, it is not because the house owner scruples to violate the ban, but because he died in an accident when working outside the



Figure 5-41 (top):  
An Unauthorizedly Constructed Private Dwelling  
House in 2007

Figure 5-42 (bottom):  
The Same Unauthorizedly Constructed Private  
Dwelling House in 2010

hometown (Appendix p184). Faced with these violations of the ban, the government decides to forcibly demolish some illegally constructed houses in Cangpo Village before the situation gets completely out of control. Similarly to what ever happened in Furong Village, the relevant government agencies, under the protection of more than 300 armed police, went to Cangpo Village and destroyed two such houses in October 2010 which are nearly completed (Fig. 5-43). However, such action seems to have little practical effect. The owners whose houses were destroyed do not intend to accept the failure, especially after having won the broad sympathy and support of the other clan members. Only a few days later, they purchased building materials again and called their relatives together to repair the damaged houses.



Figure 5-43:  
The Illegally Constructed Private Dwelling House  
Destroyed by Local Government

In fact, the local government has realized that these illegal construction activities cannot be completely stopped unless the urgent housing needs of local residents were met (Appendix p144). It has invited professional planning staff to carefully plan Cangpo Village for several times and begun to raise funds from the Cangpo villagers to employ professional architects and construction teams to design and build new dwelling houses in the northwest part of the village since the early 2000s. The local government approved Cangpo Village to develop a piece of land to the west side of the village for building a new residential area in order to thoroughly solve the contradiction between housing construction and protection of traditional houses (Fig. 5-44~45). The new multi-story linear houses are arranged in strict parallel, impossible to form a maze in the future. The Cangpo villagers select and buy their own housing units according to their respective actual situations, and they will separate themselves from the original neighborhood relationships to establish new ones, which is actually not difficult for them because, after all, they belong to the common clan and have long been familiar with each other.

Figure 5-44 (top):  
Bird's Eye View of the New Cangpo Village



Figure 5-45 (middle):  
A Close-up of the New Cangpo Village



Nowadays, the local government still seems to believe that developing tourism is the best way for Cangpo Village and thus persuades the people who reside on the eastern dike to move to the new residential area in order to vacated the place for the restoration of Cangpo's original beautiful garden. And meanwhile the relevant government agencies continue to strictly prohibit the residents who now live in the existing traditional houses from unauthorizedly demolishing them, trying to keep the Cangpo Village's original layout and appearance as much as possible. However, a few households living on the eastern dike refuse to move because they are not satisfied with the relocation compensation offered by the government (Fig. 5-46) and those who think it is not worthwhile to buy the housing unit in the new residential



Figure 5-46: Dismantled Houses on the Eastern Dike

area still ignore the government ban to transform their old houses. It is obvious that the government has a long way to go before accomplishing its development goals. There is no doubt that the development of the building construction in Cangpo Village will be full of conflicts as well as negotiations between the local residents and the government, but judging from the previous reality, it can be said that the clan may more and more rarely play a role in this regard. Although there is dissatisfaction among the villagers with various aspects of the government-led village construction and sometimes it is even rather strong, the fact is that the villagers still count on the government to come up with better solutions, rather than turn to build up clan strength again to regain the lost leading position in the village construction affairs.

## **Summary**

Case study in this chapter shows that both the Furong Chen's and Cangpo Li's clans still followed the traditional operation mode in the period of the Republic of China. The new buildings in the settlements were constructed in compliance with the local traditional style during this period. And there were still no specialized agencies set up by the government to approve and monitor the construction activities in the rural clan settlements.

The two clans began a similar dramatic transformation after the foundation of the PRC. This chapter demonstrates its important influence on the settlement spaces of the two clans.

On the one hand, the spatial structures of the two clan settlements are roughly the same as before, and the communal places as well as facilities are also used and maintained in the old manner. Additionally, the villagers still often comply with the principles formed by the traditional clan lives to build their dwelling houses. It has resulted in the formation of "sliced bread like dwelling houses" and mazed spaces of residential areas. But on the other hand, the local government has begun to establish a set of rules and regulations to supervise and manage the construction activities instead of the previous clans in the settlements.

It is still too early to declare that the new management system has achieved a complete triumph now. Nevertheless, the government's administrative power has successfully extended inside the previously closed and independent grassroots society, playing a crucial role in the construction of rural settlements.



## Conclusions

People always assemble themselves together on certain common ground, such as common ethnicity, language, religion, values, interests, and so forth. The ancient Chinese people based themselves on common descent. It resulted in the formation of patriarchal clans. After more than two thousand years of development, Chinese patriarchal clans had become well-organized social groups popularly established in Chinese rural society in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. The compilation and revision of genealogy books, construction of ancestral halls, compliance with clan rules, and clan land management were their four fundamental characteristics. Although the power of Chinese clan organizations was constantly weakened by the central administrative power as early as in the Spring and Autumn period, the role of the clans was still so dominant that the central administrative power failed to further extend itself into the Chinese rural grassroots society even in the Republic of China. The clans always had relatively independent, closed, self-sufficient lives until the foundation of the PRC.

Various factors contributed to the widespread emergence and the long existence of clan organizations in ancient China. Most ancient Chinese people lived by farming land and led self-sufficient lives. Hence they were always bound to their own land. And furthermore, the undeveloped transportation of that time made the settlements in Chinese tremendous rural areas cut off from communication with each other, just like isolated islands in an ocean. It was very natural for the people to develop into clan organizations after several generations of reproduction.

Lots of the facts described in this dissertation revealed that the long clan life greatly shaped the settlement spaces and branded the clan life's characteristics clearly and deeply on them. The findings show that:

- 1) The overall settlement space was introverted, enclosed by walls only with several gates for people passing through.

As achieving a high degree of self-sufficiency, ancient Chinese rural clans inclined to focus themselves on their respective internal worlds rather than the external world, and thus could be called "introverted clans". "Introverted" means

“closed” and can be further extended to “defensive” and “nonexpansive” here. An introverted Chinese clan, on the one hand, would uncompromisingly defend its territory, but on the other hand, had little ambition to expand it.

Such characteristics were faithfully reflected in the settlement space. A clan settlement was enclosed tightly by walls, making the settlement space rather defensive, hard for beasts or bandits to invade it. Furthermore, the space was definitely limited by the visible and touchable walls, always “nonexpansive”. In ancient times, although the continuous increase in population of Furong and Cangpo Villages made the settlement spaces more and more crowded, neither the settlement walls were moved outward a bit, nor clan members moved to live outside of the settlement walls. The settlement walls, besides forming a solid, defensive shell for the settlement space, were playing an important role in distinguishing the identities of the residents living inside the settlement from those outside.

2) The formation and development of the overall spatial structure of the settlement showed a high degree of organization.

The overall spatial layouts of many Chinese clan settlements were not results of natural and casual spatial combination. In fact, the apical ancestor of a clan would carefully select its settlement site. As soon as financial and material resources permit, the clan would invite people to carefully plan the overall spatial structure of the settlement. Under the clan's organization and coordination, basic infrastructures, such as drainage ditches and main streets, were built. The clan also actively mobilized and encouraged the clan members to donate for building ancestral hall, temple, or pavilions to further consummate the settlement space.

The foremost principle which should be strictly complied with by individual families in construction activities was to always place common interests of the clan members in the first place. It implied that the formation or transformation of an individual family's private space must not damage the communal spaces commonly shared and used by the clan members. Under strict protection, the main streets in clan settlements rarely suffered damage even for several hundreds of years. Compared with them, the secondary small ones were not used by all the clan members but only by the families living nearby thus in fact privatized by those families. It seemed to have been encrusted with tradition that as long as nobody raised

objections, encroachment upon such street or lane spaces was not an activity that damaged the common interests of clan members. So, those spaces were changed all the time in the history of the clans, and are named “spring spaces” in Chapter 3.2.4.

3) The spatial structure of a clan settlement’s residential area was the projection of the clan’s internal structure.

A Chinese clan was composed of Fangs, each of which consisted of individual families (Figure 1-1). The residential courtyard of a family was named “family-compound” in this dissertation. The families belonging to the same Fang inclined to be residentially concentrated, and then their family-compounds formed a community named “Fang-community” here. The spatial structure of a residential area, as shown in figure 2-3, was shaped in this manner exactly corresponding to the internal structure of the clan.

Such a correspondence was formed because the two structures actually based themselves on a common ground, i.e. the blood relationships among the clan members. Within a clan, as discussed in Chapter 2.5.3, wealth and interests were distributed in accordance with interpersonal distance of descent. So did the residential spaces. A father’s property was always evenly distributed among his sons. Therefore, an original intact family-compound would often be developed into a cluster of smaller ones owned by the people with close blood relationships and then developed into a Fang-community. If someone wanted to sell his house, his Fang members would be given first priority to purchase. This directly resulted in the steady and long-time existence of the Fang-communities.

As a family had basically achieved self-sufficiency, the family-compound space was also enclosed tightly by walls, as introverted as the settlement space. In a family-compound, houses were arranged to enclose and divide the space into one or several courtyards. Their decorative facades were all oriented towards the courtyards and their back sides towards streets actually could not be counted on facades, but walls of the compound, just like the family members standing around, not back to back, but face to face. Similar with settlement walls, the compound walls limited a concrete range for the family. However, families were in a world of relatives, so the family-compound spaces were not defensive. And because of buying and selling of lots between families, the family-compound spaces were not unchanging.

4) There was a distinct hierarchy between the ancestral hall and the other buildings within a clan settlement.

To descendants, their ancestors were divine. Worshipping ancestors in the clan's ancestral hall was always one of the most important clan activities. A clan's ancestral hall was built with the same layout as a residential compound. However, the hierarchy between the dead ancestors and living descendants resulted in a hierarchy between the ancestral hall and the other buildings in the settlement.

The hierarchy could be perceived from the hierachal difference in building volumes, materials, technologies, and locations. For the construction of a clan's ancestral hall, all members of the clan would be mobilized to raise funds for purchase of building materials as high-quality as possible and engaging the most skilful artisans in local areas. Therefore, the internal spaces of the ancestral hall were not only more spacious, but also more magnificent than those of the other buildings in the settlement. Additionally, the clan would locate the ancestral hall in specific position to further strengthen its superiority in spatial hierarchy.

From the case study of Furong and Cangpo Villages, it could be found that each ancestral hall was located next to the settlement's main entrance, but before the residential area. Such a linear spatial sequence completely accorded with the planning concept of "qianchao houqin" (前朝后寝; placing halls at the front and harems at the rear) The "qianchao houqin" evolved from the primitive residential layout consisting of two parts: the hall in front and the bedrooms at the rear (Yang, Hongxun 1987, 83-85). And, it was generally adopted in the planning of palace-city. For example, the Forbidden City in Beijing was roughly divided into two parts, the front and the rear. The halls used for holding ceremonies were concentratedly arranged in the front part, next to the main entrance, and the harems in the rear.

On ordinary days, clan members actually seldom used the ancestral hall. But, as the ancestral hall was located between the settlement's residential area and main entrance, there was always a large flow of people passing by it. It was occupying the most advantageous position to remind the people its existence and show its magnificence.

5) The spatial development within a clan settlement's residential area showed a high degree of uncertainty.

As mentioned before, a clan never interfered in individual families building their compounds unless the construction damaged the interests of other families. That is to say, in such a process, there were no planning controls but interpersonal interaction rules that the families needed to comply with. It is inevitable that those rules were implemented with a lot of flexibility. This caused a great deal of uncertainty in the spatial development of a residential area. The uncertainty also came from the uncertainty of fates of individual families. In a clan's long development history, some families thrived, but some declined, making family-compounds changed into bigger or smaller ones. Nobody could predict when and where those changes happened in a residential area. Therefore, it was almost impossible for a regular spatial structure to be formed or maintained in the residential area.

It was rather hard for a family to buy pieces of adjacent lots that could be merged into a larger and intact one, because some of the lot owners perhaps refused to sell their lots. Comparing with this, however, it was much easier for a family's originally large lot to be divided into smaller ones because of family divisions. After several generations of family divisions, a large lot might be divided into small pieces owned by individual families, respectively. Along with their irregular shrinkage, expansion, and even subdivision, the whole space of the residential area was constantly mazed.

Traditional Chinese clan organizations and relevant culture suffered devastating blows after the Qing Dynasty was overthrown, especially in the radical social movements during the first three decades of the PRC. The so called "blows" are reflected in the following aspects:

1) Clan members were prohibited from conducting any clan activities. For this reason, they were not only unable to continuously revise their genealogy books, but also required to burn them all. This made the clans lost the basis of blood relationships for uniting their respective members.

2) Ancestral halls were no longer used for holding clan activities, but for other purposes, such as being used as factories or schools. The clans thus lost their most important symbols.

3) Under the push of government, clan land was distributed to the clan members. This seriously destroyed the economical foundation of the clans.

4) New laws and regulations drawn up by the country are replacing the rules by clans themselves. Different from the clan rules, the new laws and regulations are not based on traditional Chinese patriarchal clan ideas. This made the former interpersonal relations founded on hierarchical blood relationships lose their legitimacy and the country's administrative power successfully extend to the grassroots society, which never happened in China's history before.

And 5) the traditional Chinese patriarchal clan ideas, the cultural cornerstone of the establishment of clan organizations, were subjected to a thorough critique. They were regarded as backward, antiquated, and big stumbling blocks that hindered China's progress toward modernization.

By cracking down on clans, Chinese decision-makers wished to liberate Chinese people from their closed worlds, break the barriers shaped by the difference of descent between clans, and unite the people under the banner of nation instead of those of scattered clans. However, during that period, the rural people were still bound to their land, depending on agriculture for their livelihood. As those sharing common descent lived in their respective settlements as before, the links between their social relations and blood relationships were not really cut off. And therefore, clan organizations nearly all destroyed in the social movements of the 1970s soon widely revived in the 1980s.

The revived clan organizations, on the one hand, actively organize all kinds of clan activities again, especially revision of genealogy books, for strengthening the cohesion of the clan members and reconstructing their interpersonal relations based on blood relationships. But on the other hand, the changed social, economic, and cultural environments make the clan organizations unable to go back into the past.

Both of these are reshaping the lives of Chinese rural clan organizations in which something old or new, some unchanged or changed can be found. This exerts a great impact on clan settlement spaces. The relevant findings from the case study of this dissertation are mainly outlined as follows:

1) Clan members are still accustomed to following traditional principles when constructing private dwelling houses, that is, as long as the neighbors have no

opposition, they would decide by themselves to conduct construction activities. So, there is still a high degree of uncertainty and casualness shown in the spatial development of a clan settlement's residential area.

The people always abided by the unwritten rule that sell their houses or lots to their own Fang members. But, some houses and lots would occasionally be bought by those from other Fangs. Nowadays, members from different Fangs have been living mixedly and the original Fang-communities thoroughly combined into a whole which was continuously mazed because of the uncertainable, irregular mutual dislocation of the "floating" residential lots.

2) There have not been much new content added to the lives of the revived clans yet, and the settlement spaces are thus still used for original purposes with few changes, either. In Furong and Cangpo Villages, the ancestral halls have been restored to their original appearances and functions. On ordinary days, villagers get together still in old places, such as the main entrances or pavilions of the settlements, which is exactly the same as in a few decades ago. In short, the basic spatial patterns of the clan settlements are virtually unchanged.

3) Nowadays, more and more strangers emerge in clan settlements, especially in those, such as Furong and Cangpo Villages, which have been opened to visitors. But, the original communal places or spaces in the settlements have not thus been transformed into public ones.

Hassenpflug ever pointed out that a public place should be for strangers, i.e. a place where people can equally stay in regardless where they come from and whether they are acquaint with each other. The communal places or spaces in clan settlements obviously still do not conform to it. In the communal places of Furong or Cangpo Village, a person coming from other places will soon find that he is always regarded as a guest or outsider, and consequently overmuch noticed or neglected by local residents. Those places, just like living rooms of the clans, can hardly be counted as public places.

It can be mainly attributed to the fact that the settlements still exclusively belong to the local original residents. Strangers going there are mostly for a short tour. Only a few of them have rented parts of local land for farming and lived for a relatively long time. Nevertheless, it is hard for them to permanently settle down because of the

constraints of China's hukou system. Therefore, they are always guests, outsiders in the settlements, unable to be on an equal footing with local residents and make the communal places or spaces somewhat "public".

4) A clan settlement space is becoming so extroverted that the settlement walls have greatly lost their previous value and significance.

In Furong and Cangpo Villages, the residential areas have already extended outside the region limited by settlement walls to accommodate the over-expanded populations of the clans. But, the expanded settlement space was not enclosed by new walls, and most of original settlement walls have collapsed due to disrepair or been demolished in expansions of residential areas. The settlement space no longer needs to be defensive because security in the rural areas has been effectively guaranteed by the local government. More importantly, the villagers are no longer able to lead self-sufficient lives. Their lives have been so closely linked with the outside world that they won't enclose themselves in introverted settlement space anymore.

Furong Village is closely linked with Yantou Town by the Yongxian Road. So, its space naturally expanded toward the road without any specific planning. The vacant lot between the road and the settlement wall has been filled with dwelling houses now, and the houses beside the road are no longer hidden behind courtyard walls, but oriented towards the road with their front facades. As local residents are gradually getting used to close contact with the outside world, the settlement space has to be opened in conformance with it. This makes the settlement walls disappearing from now settlement space.

5) China is undergoing massive urbanization and as a result a large number of young rural people have been leaving their settlements to seek employment in cities. The villages like Furong and Cangpo consequently become vacant.

The young people usually return home only in festival seasons. On ordinary days, the residents in the villages are mainly composed of children and the aged, making the villages just like kindergartens and nursing homes. Without young people living in, the settlement spaces seriously lack energy.

However, the rapid growth of local populations makes the living spaces of the settlements become very crowded. Even though a lot of new dwelling houses have

been built, the villagers are still facing a serious housing shortage. It cannot mitigate this reality for young people to go outside to work. Due to the constraints of the hukou system, only in hometowns can they build houses. As a result, it seems ridiculous but true that, on the one hand, the settlement spaces are getting more and more crowded because of the sustained increase in residents, but on the other hand, the spaces are vacant at most of time because a large part of the residents are not really in.

6) The application of new building materials and new building techniques has brought great change to the original appearances of the settlements.

In ancient China, the buildings were mainly made of wood. Nowadays, it can be more economical to use brick and reinforced concrete as building materials. And buildings can not only have more layers, but also be sturdier. Then these materials have popularly replaced the traditional to be used in housing construction. However, artisans in rural areas generally lack formal, systematic professional training, neither completely familiar with the characteristics of these new materials, nor well versed in relevant construction techniques. The quality of newly constructed houses is thus usually at a rather low level. Furthermore, the artisans have not yet developed a mature, stable architectural style. Many new houses in Furong and Cangpo Villages looked just like ugly boxes out of proportion. All of these factors make the appearances of rural settlements often appear to be very dilapidated and disorganized.

7) Chinese government is trying to establish a comprehensive regulatory system to regulate the construction activities in rural settlements.

Then, can a clan still exert a certain influence on shaping the settlement space now? The answer is “yes”. In Furong and Cangpo Villages, Associations for the Elderly, composed of elders who usually might occupy leadership roles in traditional clans, take the initiative to shoulder the responsibility of preserving the former spatial structures of the settlements and maintaining the important buildings or places originally constructed by the clans. Relying on the patriarchal clan ideas remained in the minds of clan members, the Associations for the Elderly actively manage the settlement construction activities in traditional manner.

Is such an influence of the clan as strong as in ancient times? The answer is “no”. Although the Associations for the Elderly in Furong and Cangpo Villages can still

organize the clan members to construct some facilities in the settlements, such activities need approval of relevant government agencies and should be conducted under strict government supervision. The government's administrative power cannot be blocked outside of the clans anymore. Many of the Furong and Cangpo villagers will move to their respective new villages developed by local government. Compared with the old settlements' introverted, mazed spaces, the new are extroverted without any walls or gates and very simple. The keywords for planning the new quarters are gross floor area, development density, minimum distance between buildings, etc., rather than descent, generation position, and kinship.

At present stage, it is still very hard to definitely answer whether the influence of a clan on the settlement space will be increasingly weakened in the future. Now, in principle, villagers have accepted the country's laws and codes to regulate their construction activities. But, in practical life, they are still often following only the principles formed in traditional clan life. The laws and codes have not really replaced those written and unwritten clan rules yet. There will be a rather long transition process, during which the construction activities in clan settlements may seem to be in serious chaos, because villagers in fact might comply with neither the clan rules nor the laws. This will last until the confrontation between the clan rules and laws come to an end.

The present large-scale population movements mainly from rural to urban areas cannot last forever. If it is continually hard for rural people to settle down in other villages, the village residents will always be the same groups as before, sharing common descent, respectively. Nowadays, although not satisfied with the government-led settlement construction, the residents in Furong and Cangpo Villages are still hoping that the government will listen to their views, such as, appropriately relaxing the existing planning restrictions on housing construction and increasing their decision-making power on relevant issues, etc., rather than intending to revive the strength of the clans as a counterbalance to the government. But, it is not impossible for them to unite together once again under the banner of their respective clans, seeking speaking louder in the settlement construction and shaping the settlement spaces mainly according to their own wishes.

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