

2014

Religion, Heritage, and Power : Everyday Life in Contemporary China

Asan Xue
Edith Cowan University

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Life in Contemporary China

Asan Xue

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**Religion, Heritage, and Power:
Everyday Life in Contemporary China**

Asan Xue
Master of Communications

A Dissertation Submitted in Conformity with the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Communications

School of Communications and Arts
Edith Cowan University

June 2014

Abstract

Based on an ethnographic study of the religious life of ordinary people in the town of Dongpu, this research explores the relationships between: religion and state power; Chinese ritual (*li*, 礼/禮) tradition and Christian culture; and religion and intangible cultural heritage in contemporary China.

This research found that both the practitioners of Chinese rituals and the Christian community deploy tactics to resist and negotiate with the hegemonic official culture through spatial and religious practices in their everyday life. Chinese ritual practices dedicated to deities and ancestors are defined as idol worship in the doctrine of Christianity and denigrated as feudal superstition in the official discourse of scientism, materialism and atheism. The contrast between Christianity as an orthodox religion and Chinese ritual practices as feudal superstition contributes to the religious hegemony of Christianity over the Chinese ritual tradition, thus rendering most Chinese rituals as lacking in status, although some Chinese rituals have gained legitimacy as intangible cultural heritage. The practice of intangible cultural heritage in contemporary China is subject to the global heritage movement spearheaded by UNESCO and China's domestic political, cultural and economic agendas. Ordinary people deploy tactics to negotiate with the local/state power in response to the practice of top-down imposed intangible cultural heritage, thus gaining the legitimacy of practicing these rituals.

This research presents a poetics of ordinary people's everyday life. The religious life of ordinary people is foregrounded and exerted as a self-evident entity and heterogeneous culture. This study demonstrates that everyday life can become a cultural experience of alternative modernity and an arena of cultural autonomy. Religious life is never simply equivalent to the homogenising ambitions of any power, such as capitalism, atheism or materialism. The practice of intangible cultural heritage is a process of selecting the 'heritage in perception' (i.e., heritage identified and safeguarded based upon UNESCO's *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*) from the 'heritage in essence' (i.e., heritage as the self-evident foundation of ordinary people's everyday life). The safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage channelled from top-down may give rise to cultural hegemony due to the classification of intangible cultures into superior and inferior resources according to the official discourse of developing an 'advanced culture' and the principles of a market economy.

The expert-centred mechanism of intangible cultural heritage identification rules out the cultural autonomy of genuine inheritors of intangible cultural heritage. Additionally, the identification of the intangible cultural heritage as a narrowly understood territorial property causes conflicts between nations and regions. This may stop the transmission of cultures among ordinary people and undermine UNESCO's initial agenda of promoting the cultural diversity around the world.

Freedom in religion consists in the establishment of a civil society in which the autonomy of people's cultural practices and religious life is achieved through democratic negotiation between the ruling government and the masses. It is until then that religious culture can be practised and transmitted as a self-evident ordinary culture and intangible cultural heritage by ordinary people in their everyday life.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- i. incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;
- ii. contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of this thesis; or
- iii. contain any defamatory material.

Signed

Acknowledgments

This dissertation can be attributed to the extensive support and assistance from my supervisors, Christopher Kueh and Rod Giblett. I would like to express my gratitude and sincere appreciation for their guidance, valuable advice, supervision, encouragement and kindness to me throughout this study. My thanks also go to Christopher Crouch and Dean Chan for their guidance and support during the writing of my research proposal. I also would like to express my gratitude to Clive Barstow, Danielle Brady and Jo McFarlane for their support and assistance. My gratitude is also expressed to professor Wu Zongjie and his PhD students in the Institute of Cross-Cultural Studies, Zhejiang University.

I owe my deepest gratitude to Zhejiang University of Media and Communications and Edith Cowan University for granting me a ZUMC-ECU Scholarship without which this project could not have been completed. I would like to express my thanks to colleagues and leaders in Zhejiang University of Media and Communications for their support and understanding during my leave of absence from my teaching position over these years.

I am most indebted to my wife Lyu Qingxia for giving up an opportunity for her to undertake PhD study in London and supporting me throughout this journey. This dissertation is particularly dedicated to her. I also thank my lovely son Xue Yuezhong. He has always been my inspiration and motivation on this journey of discovery. My gratitude also goes to my parents, brother and sister, my grandma and uncle for their unconditional love and support.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the people of the town of Dongpu. Mr He, Mr Chen, Mr Wang, Pastor Quan and Christians in the church of Dongpu all gave me immense support, without which this project could have been impossible.

Last but not least, my heart-felt thanks go to: my fellow PhD student Long Hai, Li Qi and Chen Li; my friend Edward, Thomas and Nancy. My particular gratitude goes to missionary Peter Cruise and his wife Branda for their prayers to God for my peace and my family. Special thanks also go to Elite Editing for proofreading my whole thesis. My thanks also go to those whose names I may have forgotten to mention.

Contents

Use of Thesis	<i>i</i>
Abstract.....	<i>i</i>
Declaration.....	<i>iii</i>
Acknowledgments.....	<i>iv</i>
Contents.....	<i>v</i>
List of Figures.....	<i>viii</i>
<i>Part One</i>	<i>1</i>
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 The Personal is Political: Origin of This Research.....	1
1.2 Background and Research Focus	2
1.3 Significance	6
1.4 Structure of the Thesis	7
Chapter 2: Literature Review	11
2.1 Introduction.....	11
2.2 Research on Chinese Rituals and State Power	11
2.2.1 Rituals (<i>li</i> 礼/禮) in Chinese Culture.....	11
2.2.2 Chinese Rituals (<i>li</i> 礼/禮) in the Discourse of Religion.....	15
2.2.3 Chinese Rituals under the State Power	17
2.2.4 Review of Relevant Research	21
2.3 Research on Chinese Rituals and Intangible Cultural Heritage.....	24
2.4 Research on Christianity and State Power	29
2.4.1 Historical Background.....	29
2.4.2 Review of Relevant Research	31
2.5 Conclusion	33
Chapter 3: Conceptual and Theoretical Framework	35
3.1 Introduction.....	35
3.2 Culture and Hegemony Theory.....	35
3.3 De Certeau's Theory in The Practice of Everyday Life.....	37
3.3.1 A Poetics of Everyday Life.....	37
3.3.2 Resistance	39
3.3.3 Spatial Practice	41
3.4 Conclusion	42
Chapter 4: Methodology and Methods	43
4.1 Introduction.....	43
4.2 Methodology	43
4.3 Data Collection	45
4.4 Data Analysis	47
4.5 Town of Dongpu	48
4.6 Conclusion	51
<i>Part Two Religion and Power</i>	53
Chapter 5: Rituals in a Household Guanyin (观音) Shrine	53

5.1 Introduction	53
5.2 Back ground.....	53
5.3 Spatial Practice of Guanyin Shrine.....	56
5.4 Celebration of Guanyin's Birthday.....	60
5.5 Treatment with Rituals	64
5.6 Wish and Efficacy.....	69
5.7 Conclusion.....	71
Chapter 6: Ancestor Rituals in Everyday Life	73
6.1 Introduction	73
6.2 Back ground.....	73
6.3 Ancestor Ritual, from Traditional Tang to Modern Living Room	74
6.3.1 Tang as a Ritual Space	74
6.3.2 Ancestor Rituals in the Living Room.....	76
6.4 Practice of <i>Xiao</i> (Filial Piety) at Tombs	82
6.4.1 Practice of <i>Fengshui</i> as <i>Tianli</i>	82
6.4.2 The Public Cemetery as a Space of Commodity.....	86
6.5 Functional Transformation of Chen's Ancestral Hall	88
6.5.1 The Ancestral Hall as an Educational Space	88
6.5.2 The Ancestral Hall as Office and Warehouse.....	91
6.5.3 The Ancestral Hall as Leisure Centre and Cultural Heritage	92
6.6 Conclusion.....	94
Chapter 7: Christian Faith in a Family-Based Church Community	97
7.1 Introduction	97
7.2 Spatial Practice in the Christian Church of Dongpu Town	97
7.2.1 Before the Maoist Period	98
7.2.2 During the Maoist Period	99
7.2.3 During the Post-Mao Period	100
7.3 State Power and Religious Practice in the Church	104
7.3.1 Party Indoctrination versus Christian Faith	104
7.3.2 Escape without Leaving	109
7.4 Conclusion.....	111
Chapter 8: Hybridity in a Christian Funeral	113
8.1 Introduction	113
8.2 The Christian Funeral	113
8.3 Funeral in Two Cultures	118
8.4 The Chinese Rites Controversy	122
8.5 Funeral and State Power	129
8.6 Conclusion.....	133
Part Three Religion and Heritage.....	137
Chapter 9: Shaoxing Zhufu (绍兴祝福) and Intangible Cultural Heritage	137
9.1 Introduction	137
9.2 Back ground.....	137
9.3 Zhufu: The Practice of Festival Ritual in Everyday Life	139
9.3.1 The Ritual Procedures	139
9.3.2 Contingent Sacredness in Time-Space.....	142
9.4 The Heritagisation of Zhufu	144
9.5 Safeguarding Zhufu through Performance	149
9.6 Conclusion.....	154

Chapter 10: Jiuxian Temple Festival (酒仙庙会) and Intangible Cultural Heritage	157
10.1 Introduction.....	157
10.2 Background	157
10.3 Jiuxian Temple Festival in Everyday Life	159
10.3.1 Jiuxian Temple Festival Before 1949	160
10.3.2 The Sacred and Secular	161
10.4 Revival of Jiuxian Temple Festival	162
10.4.1 Revival as Cultural Festival of Shaoxing Rice Wine	164
10.4.2 Innovation as Intangible Cultural Heritage	164
10.5 Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage	173
10.5.1 Jiuxian Temple Festival from Practice to Performance.....	173
10.5.2 Problems in Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage	175
10.6 Conclusion	182
Part Four Religion, Heritage and Power	185
Chapter 11: Religion as Heritage and Everyday Life	185
11.1 Introduction.....	185
11.2 Findings	185
11.3 Contributions.....	187
11.3.1 A Poetics of Everyday Life	187
11.3.2 Religion, Heritage and Power	188
11.4 Reflections on the Theory in The Practice of Everyday Life	195
11.5 Limitations and Prospects	197
References	199
Appendices.....	209
Appendix 6.1 Book of Ancestral Rituals	209
Appendix 8.1 Pastor's Sermon during the Funeral Service	210
Appendix 8.2 Pastor Quan's Sermon on the Funeral Farewell Ceremony	211
Appendix 8.3 Pastor Quan's Family Got Converted to Jesus Christ.....	213
Appendix 10.1 Temple Festivals in the Town of Dongpu before 1949	214
Appendix 10.2 Legend of Long Kou Temple	215
Appendix 10.3 Narratives about the Origin of Jiuxian	215

List of Figures

Figure 4.1 Location of the Town of Dongpu.....	48
Figure 5.1 The Location of Guanyin Shrine	57
Figure 6.1 The ‘中’-shaped Layout of a Traditional Chinese House	75
Figure 6.2 The ‘田’-shaped Layout of the Modern Apartment	78
Figure 6.3 The Chen’s Ancestral Hall in Dongpu	89
Figure 8.1 Tomb of the Deceased Christian.....	117
Figure 9.1 The Setting of the Sacrifice in Zhufu	140
Figure 11.1 The Relationships between Religion, Heritage and Power	189
Figure 11.2 The Relationship between Heritage in Essence and Heritage in Perception	192

Part One

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The Personal is Political: Origin of This Research

This research originates from my childhood memory concerning the ritual practice of my own family and of our Christian neighbour during the 1980s. The family that lived next to us believed in Jesus Christ. I did not know who Jesus, what he had done or why our neighbours believed in him. I remember they had a picture on their door of a red cross, similar to that in the hospital, with a man nailed to it. This was my only impression. In my innocence, I did not feel any difference between my family and our neighbours.

In that poor age at the beginning of China's reform and opening up, ordinary rural families were barely subsisting. With more than one child to raise, almost all families had a tough life. My grandparents (on my father's side) had both passed away before I was born, while my other two grandparents (on my mother's side) cared for my uncle's three children. My parents, without help, had an extremely difficult life. My father worked in the railway station and mother had three children to raise. However, as a Chinese saying goes, close neighbours are better than far relatives. Sometimes, when my parents had to go to work together in the field to grow and harvest rice, our neighbours would help to look after my siblings and me. In return, my father, who was good at fishing and made some extra money selling his catch at the market, would give our neighbours some fish.

I did not realise the religious difference between my family and our neighbour until one night when Mother was doing the ritual to our ancestors. As usual, she prepared a table of food, lit the candles and incense, bowed and spoke to my grandparents and great grandparents. As an innocent pupil, I had the vague feeling that it was good to believe in something. Therefore, I asked my mother out of curiosity and doubt: 'Old Mother¹ believes in Jesus. What do we believe then?' Mother hesitated for a second before responding: 'We believe in superstition'. Yes, 'superstition' was the word mother used to refer to our practices towards our ancestors. I was confused by mother's

¹ Old mother was the mother in the neighbour family. She was older than my own mother; therefore we called her this way.

reply because we had been taught at school that we must believe in science and fight against ‘feudal superstition’. My family also practiced rituals on special days around the year, such as Qingming Festival, Zhongyuan Festival (also named Ghost Festival), birthdates and deathdates of our deceased ancestors and occasional visits to deities in the temples. I became aware that our neighbours never did these rituals. However, the difference never outweighed what we had in common. The ritual and beliefs of our two families did not become a barrier in the interactions of our everyday life. We still went to each other’s houses; I cried bitterly at Old Mother’s funeral.

This childhood experience established in me a vague understanding of belief. Later, I would learn more about the meaning of this word in the set phrase ‘communist belief’ when I became a member of the Young Pioneers of China² in primary school, a member of the Communist Youth League of China³ in middle school and finally a member of the Communist Party of China in college. Reflecting on my schooling of about 30 years, I have identified that *Dialectical and Historical Materialism* and atheism underpin education in China. ‘Feudal superstition’ is still a commonly used phrase to refer to the traditional Chinese rituals. However, the real life of ordinary people seems detached from the grand narrative underlying these ‘isms’. I do not mean that their everyday life escapes the total domination of state or Party ideology, but rather that there may exist a reasonable and charming logic in the life world of ordinary people. My motivation is to discover and understand that logic hidden beneath the religious practices of those ordinary people in their everyday life.

1.2 Background and Research Focus

China is a country with a time-honoured religious culture and tradition. In contemporary China, the state-sanctioned religions include Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, Buddhism and Daoism. In addition, the vast majority of ordinary people practise popular religion/belief. However, religious practice has lost its self-evidence in people’s everyday life since China started its modernisation process in the middle of nineteenth century. Cultural autonomy was particularly affected by the May Fourth Movement at the beginning of twentieth century and during the Cultural Revolution of 1966–76.

² The Young Pioneers of China is a mass youth organization for children aged six to fourteen in the People's Republic of China. It is run by the Communist Youth League, an organization of older youth that comes under the Communist Party of China.

³ The Communist Youth League of China, also known as the China Youth League, is a youth movement of the People's Republic of China for youth between the ages of fourteen and twenty-eight, run by the Communist Party of China. The league is organized on the party pattern. Its leader is its First Secretary and is also member of the party's Central Committee. The Communist Youth League is responsible also for guiding the activities of the Young Pioneers (for children below the age of fourteen).

Arguably, religious practice did not escape the net of power. However, since the reform era in the 1980s, there has been a revivalism of Chinese rituals and unprecedented growth in Christianity (Chau, 2006. p. 1; Poceski, 2009, p. 249, 257). Increasing numbers of ordinary people are becoming involved in all kinds of religious practice and events (Chau, 2006. p. 1).

There has been a global movement to protect intangible cultural heritage practice under the framework of UNESCO's 2003 *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. After becoming a State Party joining UNESCO's 2003 *Convention* in 2004, China implemented its nationwide identification and protection of intangible cultural heritage, with an increasing number of rituals and events, such as temple festivals and state-level ancestor rituals, having been put on the list. However, a division still exists, both in official discourse and in actual religious practice, between superstition or evil cults and religion in Chinese rituals, and between official Christian churches and underground churches. Further, while rapid economic development and a relative democratisation of private everyday life expands the space of religious practice for ordinary people, in the meantime the power from the ruling Party maintains the constant 'surveillance gaze' on people's everyday religious life.

Chinese religious practice has long been a prominent research area, at home and abroad. A literature review of past research reveals a wealth of studies on Chinese rituals, Christianity and intangible cultural heritage. However, contemporary studies on Chinese rituals have tended to be conducted from a macro and sociological perspective. Research on ordinary people's actions in response to state power in their everyday life has not been given due attention. From the perspective of the relationship between Chinese rituals and heritage, present research has not granted enough critical attention to the impact of heritage practice on Chinese rituals and the religion as a whole. Moreover, in terms of Chinese Christianity, related ethnographic research needs to be enriched. In summary, there has been a lack of cross-disciplinary religious studies from a grassroots perspective.

This research, which takes the religious practice of ordinary people in their everyday life as its starting and concluding point, explores the relationships between religion, heritage and power in everyday life in contemporary China. To achieve this, the theoretical framework of Michel de Certeau's (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life* is employed. Specifically, this study investigates the relationships between religion and power; between Chinese ritual tradition and Christian culture within the domain of religion; and between religion and intangible cultural heritage.

Ordinary people in this thesis is used as a general word in contrast to the power and the representor in the sense of “Everyman”, “nobody” or “anyone” in Michel de Certeau’s *The Practice of Everyday Life*.

The “anyone” or “everyone” is a common place, a philosophical topos. The role of this general character (everyman and nobody) is to formulate a universal connection between illusory and frivolous scriptural productions and death, the law of the other. He plays out on the stage the very definition of literature as a world and of the world as literature. Rather than being merely represented in it, the ordinary man acts out the text itself, in and by the text, and in addition he makes plausible the universal character of the particular place in which the mad discourse of a knowing wisdom is pronounced. He is both the nightmare or philosophical dream of humanist irony and an apparent referentiality (a common history) that make credible a writing that turns “everyone” into the teller of his ridiculous misfortune. But when elitist writing uses the “vulgar” speaker as a dis-guise for a metalanguage about itself, it also allows us to see what dislodges it from its privilege and draws it outside of itself: an Other who is no longer God or the Muse, but the anonymous. The straying of writing outside of its own place is traced by this ordinary man, the metaphor and drift of the doubt which haunts writing, the phantom of its “vanity,” the enigmatic figure of the relation that writing entertains with all people, with the loss of its exemption, and with its death.

(de Certeau, 1984, p. 2)

Ordinary people can refer to Chinese people, young or old, male or female, little-educated or well-educated, who practice Chinese traditional rituals, such as paying a visit to Guanyin and ancestor tombs, as well as practice Christianity by going to the church on Sundays. Instead of exploring the differences in ordinary people’s attitudes to Chinese traditional rituals and Christianity, this thesis explores how ordinary people interact with the state power and the dominant official culture in their everyday life. Thus, demographic variables such as age, gender, educational background and occupation background are not particularly scrutinised.

Religion in this research specifically refers to the Chinese rituals and Christianity in the town of Dongpu in Shaoxing City, Zhejiang Province, east of China—the field of my ethnographic research. A brief introduction is given in Chapter 4. The specific contents of Chinese rituals are equivalent to what the term ‘Chinese popular religion’ denotes in contemporary scholarship; however, a discussion is given on why the term ‘Chinese rituals’ is preferred for this research in the literature review in Chapter 2. As far as this case study is concerned, Chinese rituals involve the rituals performed to the

local deities such as Guanyin as well as ancestors by local people in Dongpu. Christianity refers to Protestantism in this research.

The term ‘power’ is used primarily in the sense of the local/state power from the ruling government under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. Power in this sense usually means the sovereign power. However, it also involves power in the Foucauldian sense, whereby ‘power is diffuse rather than concentrated, embodied and enacted rather than possessed, discursive rather than purely coercive, and constitutes agents rather than being deployed by them’ (Gaventa, 2003, p. 1). Power in society relates to the type of dominant knowledge at the time and to the types of discourse used.

‘Heritage’ in this research refers to intangible cultural heritage, as initiated by UNESCO in its 2003 *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. According to Article 2.1 and 2.2 of the UNESCO Convention, the intangible cultural heritage means:

the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith—that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage’ (that is) ‘manifested in the following domains: (a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; (b) performing arts; (c) social practices, rituals and festive events; (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; (e) traditional craftsmanship.

(UNESCO, 2003)

Specifically, two rituals, Shaoxing Zhufu and Jiuxian Temple Festival, are investigated in Chapters 9 and 10, respectively. These rituals represent officially identified intangible cultural heritage. As the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage is a top-down project initiated by the central government, the practice of heritage is virtually the exercise of state power. Therefore, the investigation of the relationship between religion and intangible cultural heritage actually involves the exploration of the relationship between religion and power; and the relationship between heritage and power.

De Certeau does not view contemporary society as a total panoptical society dominated by technocratic rationality that completely reduces the inherent complexity and diversity of the world to homogeneity or sameness, thereby denying the right of ‘otherness’ to exist. Instead, he views everyday life as a sphere of resistance, full of creative tactics developed by ordinary people to respond to power. A detailed introduction to this is given in Chapter 3. Based on de Certeau’s theoretical concepts of

strategy/tactics, dominance/resistance and spatial practices, this research attempts to inquire into these questions:

- 1) How do ordinary people interact with the state power in their everyday life?
This involves the investigation of the strategy of power and the tactics of ordinary people.
- 2) What possible interaction exists between the Chinese ritual tradition and Christian culture?
This involves the investigation of how the Chinese Christian community look at the practitioners of Chinese rituals and address Chinese ritual tradition.
- 3) How are two rituals (Shaoxing Zhufu and Jiuxian Temple Festival) identified as intangible cultural heritage? What does the practice of intangible cultural heritage mean to the ritual tradition and state power?
This involves the investigation of the roles played by heritage stakeholders, particularly the local/state power, in the mechanism of heritage practice in contemporary China under the framework of UNESCO's Convention.

1.3 Significance

This research argues that ordinary people's practice of religious life exercises resistance to the hegemonic official culture forced upon them by the Communist Party of China. Power relations exist not only between religion in the town of Dongpu as a whole and the state, but between Christian culture and Chinese ritual tradition. The practice of intangible cultural heritage in contemporary China is the result of the combined power of the global heritage movement spearheaded by UNESCO and China's domestic political, cultural and economic agenda.

This research's significance is two-fold. Firstly, it largely follows de Certeau's agenda to present a poetics of ordinary people's everyday life in which 'everyday practices, "[ways] of operating" or doing things, no longer appear as merely the obscure background of social activity' (de Certeau, 1984, p. xi). By this research, the everyday life of ordinary people is foregrounded and exerted as a self-evident entity and heterogeneous culture. This study demonstrates that everyday life can become the cultural experience of alternative modernity and the arena of cultural autonomy, which is never simply equivalent to that which might seem the homogenising ambitions of any power, such as capitalism, atheism or materialism. Everyday life can be an arena for cultural survival and revival and the reconfiguring of specific traditions under the domain of the modern.

Secondly, this study provides an overall perspective of the relationships between religion, heritage and power. In terms of addressing the relationship between religious culture and official culture, China's ruling government can only gain its cultural leadership based on voluntary recognition by the majority of people through non-violent means such as democratic negotiation, rather than through forced submission to the hegemonic and monochromatic values and governing policies of the ruling Party. In terms of dealing with the relationship between Christianity and Chinese indigenous ritual tradition, mutual respect and understanding are needed. The principles of 'harmony in diversity' and 'don't do unto others what you don't want others to do unto you'⁴ need to be applied as the golden values to establish a harmonious society. The practice of intangible cultural heritage is a process of selecting 'heritage in perception' within the contemporary heritage framework based upon UNESCO's Convention from 'heritage in essence' that permeates in ordinary people's everyday life. The identification of the intangible cultural heritage as a narrowly understood territorial property has caused conflicts between nations and regions for the sole guardianship of intangible cultural heritages. This may stop the transmission of cultures among ordinary people between nations and regions, thus undermining UNESCO's initial agenda of promoting the cultural diversity around the world.

In summary, this research is of value in promoting the mutual understanding between cultures, not only between Chinese ritual culture and Christian culture, but also between religious culture and official culture.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

With the inquiring theme of the relationships between religion, heritage and power in the everyday life of ordinary people, this thesis comprises four parts. Part One consists of four chapters, including this introduction, which present and explain the literature review, conceptual and theoretical framework, and methodology and methods. Part Two is composed of four chapters under the sub-theme of religion and power. This part investigates how ordinary people interact with the state power in their everyday life and how Christian culture interacts with Chinese ritual tradition. Part Three, under the sub-theme of religion and heritage, is composed of two chapters that mainly explore how the household ritual of Shaoxing Zhufu and communal ritual event of Jiuxian

⁴ 'don't do unto others what you don't want others to do unto you' comes from *The Analects*. The original Chinese is: 子貢問曰：有一言而可以終身行之者乎？子曰：其恕乎！己所不欲，勿施於人。(Zi Gong asked, saying, 'Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life?' The Master said, 'Is not RECIPROCITY such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.' See <http://ctext.org/analects/wei-ling-gong>.

Temple Festival are identified as intangible cultural heritage through the joint forces of heritage stakeholders. Consideration is also given to how the practice of intangible cultural heritage affects the ritual tradition under the state-led heritage practice. A brief introduction to all chapters, excluding the present chapter, now follows.

Chapter 2 sets the background for this research and reviews the literature in the area of Chinese ritual studies, heritage studies and research on Chinese Christianity. Emphasis is placed on the location of the knowledge gap that this research attempts to bridge.

Chapter 3 discusses the conceptual and theoretical framework for this research. This chapter begins with a discussion of culture as defined by Raymond Williams and the concept of hegemony by Antonio Gramsci. It then proceeds to introduce Michel de Certeau's theory in *The Practice of Everyday Life* and some key analytical concepts informing this study.

Chapter 4 discusses ethnography as the methodology of this research. It then presents an introduction to the town of Dongpu, the field of this ethnographic research, and explains why this town was chosen for this study. Finally, this chapter articulates the specific methods used for the data collection and analysis.

Chapter 5 analyses how ordinary people practice rituals in a household Guanyin Shrine. By presenting how the Guanyin Shrine is contextualised in the living space and how the rituals are practiced during Guanyin's birthday, the chapter finds that the Guanyin Shrine is a lived ritual space created by ordinary people who tactically evade the surveillance and domination of the state and local power. Binary concepts such as sacred/secular and superstition/science do not work properly to explain the logic underlying the ritual practice of everyday life.

Chapter 6 uses a dynamic perspective to investigate how the ancestor rituals are practiced in three ritual spaces: home, ancestor tomb and ancestral hall. The focus is on analysing the transformation of these ritual spaces and the ways in which people adapt the rituals to the modern lifestyle.

Chapter 7 investigates how the Chinese Christian Community has interacted with the local/state power in their spatial practice from the Maoist era to the contemporary reform era. It is revealed that, in their religious practice, the Christian Community has exercised opportunistic tactics against the state power to gain autonomy in their space of religious practice.

Chapter 8 explores the hybridity in a Chinese Christian's funeral featuring a compromise between the Christian culture and the Chinese ritual tradition. The

negotiation in the funeral also embodies the conflict between the two cultures, dating back to the long history of the Chinese Rites Controversy. The funeral also suggests the tension between ordinary people's observance of funeral tradition as inheritors of Chinese ritual culture and funeral reform as part of governmentality under state power.

Chapter 9 interprets how the festive ritual Shaoxing Zhufu is practiced in the everyday life of ordinary people and analyses how the traditional festival is represented and appropriated by heritage managers and local government to serve economic and political purposes. The way Zhufu is practiced by ordinary people in their actual life world is different to both the cultural performance of Zhufu as a tourist attraction and the discursive representation of Zhufu in the official ideology as a ritual for nationalism and patriotism. This difference suggests the resistance of ordinary people to the representation of their ritual practice by the force of political economy.

Chapter 10 describes how the Jiuxian Temple Festival was celebrated in the town of Dongpu in the past and analyses how it has been revived since the reform era. This ritual tradition has been revitalised as the Cultural Festival of Shaoxing Rice Wine and intangible cultural heritage of Jiuxian Temple Festival. Multiple heritage stakeholders participated in the production of intangible cultural heritage, during which cooperation replaced resistance between ordinary people and the local power. Heritage practice brings an opportunity to the revival of temple festivals, but also contributes to the categorisation of cultural forms into superior resources (precious traditional culture) or inferior resources (wasteful feudal superstition).

Chapter 11, the conclusion, summarises the findings achieved in the main chapters and specifies the contribution of this project. This chapter also contains a reflection on Michel de Certeau's theory and discusses the limitations of and potential for furthering this research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

As clarified in Chapter 1, this research explores the relationships between religion, heritage and power in the everyday life of ordinary people in contemporary China. In accordance with the research focus, the literature review is composed of three sections: a review of the research on the relationship between Chinese rituals (popular religion) and power; a review of the research on the relationship between religion (Chinese rituals) and heritage; and a review of the research on the relationship between Christianity and power.

The review begins with the literature on Chinese rituals, with a focus on the status of the rituals in the official discourse of the Chinese state from the beginning of the twentieth century. Following this is a discussion of the recent research on heritage studies, particularly as regards the relationship between Chinese rituals and intangible cultural heritage. This relationship is important because intangible cultural heritage does not include the state-recognised religions such as Christianity in contemporary Chinese heritage practice. The relationship between religion as a whole and heritage is not discussed as part of the literature review, but will be investigated in the analytical chapters and in the conclusion. The final section of this chapter offers a brief account of the development of Christianity against the background of China's religious policies since 1949. The relevant literature on the study of Chinese Christianity and the research on the relationship between Chinese ritual tradition and Christian culture is also reviewed in this section.

2.2 Research on Chinese Rituals and State Power

This section explicates Chinese rituals in the context of Chinese culture. It then proceeds to discuss Chinese rituals in the discourse of the Western model of religion. Finally, this section reviews the literature on the relationship between Chinese rituals and power.

2.2.1 Rituals (*li* 礼/禮) in Chinese Culture

Li (礼/禮) is the rules or norms that govern the society (Wu & Hu, 2010). The exact meaning of *li* has a definite relation to the understanding of Chinese culture. According to Francis Wei, it has a very comprehensive meaning, pertaining 'not only to

the sacrificial, court and social ceremonials and the rules of personal conduct, but also to social and political institutions' (Wei, 1947, p. 59). Feng Youlan added: 'The meaning of the word "li" signifying then, in addition to its usual present-day definition of "politeness" or "courtesy", the entire body of usages and customs, political and social institutions' (Feng & Bodde, 1952, p. 68).

Wu and Hu's (2010) 'Ritual Hermeneutics as the Source of Meaning: Interpreting the Fabric of Chinese Culture' explored the epistemological foundation embedded in *li* 禮 as activities and proposed to understand ritual by way of bodily and situated interpretations in Chinese tradition. In Wu and Hu's work, ritual in Chinese culture is proposed as analogous to the notion of reason or rationality (*li* 理) in the West. Based on the 'ritual hermeneutics' proposed by Kern (2005, p. vii), these authors developed the interactive interpretation between 'ritual structure of textual composition and the textuality of ritual practice' (Wu & Hu, 2010). Ritual hermeneutics as the somatic and situated understanding of one's social roles, interpersonal relationships, family and state, heaven and earth through bodily action is beyond the educational knowledge and propositional indoctrination in the reasoning language. Ritual is not about didactic teaching and 'feudalistic' regulation, but about the individual's 'personal, experiential and transformative form of hermeneutical experience' (Wu & Hu, 2010) through bodily performing, acting and doing. Thus, to understand ritual is to perform it and interpret it accordingly in one's concrete situation. Through ritual performance, one gradually understands what one should and should not do to realise a harmonious relationship with others and the environment.

From the Song Dynasties onwards, there were two pairs of related concepts concerning *li*. One pair is *li* (禮) and *si* (祀). *Si* can be understood simply as religious practice. It was included in the concept of *li*, which referred to a variety of sacrificial rituals to ancestors and anything in the heaven and on the earth. The other pair is *zhengsi* (正祀 orthodox or official sacrifices) and *yinsi* (淫祀 unauthorised sacrifices). The former falls into the category of *li*, while the latter falls under *su* (俗 customs). The differentiation between *li* and *su* suggests the power domination of state ideology over popular ritual practice. However, the distinction between orthodox and unauthorised sacrifices is often blurred. In other words, the relationship between *li* and *su* is dynamic rather than static. In fact, *li* originates from *su* (Li, 2010, p. 100), which suggests that *li* as a systematic tradition of ritual practice is established on ordinary people's practice of experiential customs. The history of Chinese people's religious life in its broad sense of

religion can be traced to the ritual practice of sorcerers in the Xia, Shang and Zhou Dynasties (2,100–700 BCE). These rituals were *su* and were not termed as *li* until they were systematised by the Duke of Zhou under the Zhou Dynasty (1046–256 BCE) and later spiritualised by Confucius (551–479 BCE) and philosophised in Neo-Confucianism during the Song, Yuan and Ming Dynasties (960–1644) (Li, 2010, p. 100).

There is no English equivalent to the character 禮. *Li* has conventionally been translated as ‘ritual’, ‘rites’, ‘customs’, ‘etiquette’, ‘propriety’, ‘morals’, ‘worship’, ‘rules of proper behaviour’, ‘ritual action’ and ‘ritual propriety’. Properly contextualised, each of these English terms can render *li* on occasion. The character 禮 regularly carries all of these meanings on every occasion of its use, with the particular situation determining the emphasis. *Li* is often considered the core concept in the agnostic Confucianism of the elite, which takes a negative stance towards any form of deity worship.⁵ To the ruling elites, *li* delivered more of a sense of reverence than of deity worship. In Xunzi’s (313–230 BCE) chapter titled ‘Treatise on Nature’, one passage reads:

Why is it that it rains after people have offered sacrifice for rain? Xunzi said: ‘There is no reason for that. It is the same as if there had been rain without praying for it. When there is an eclipse of the sun and the moon, we make demonstrations to save them. When rain is deficient, we pray for it. And when there are important affairs, we divine before we reach any decision. We do these things not because we can thereby get what we want. They are simply a sort of decorum. The superior man considers them as a sort of decorum, while ordinary people consider them as having supernatural force. One will be happy if one considers them as a sort of decorum; one will not, if one considers them as having supernatural force.’⁶

(Feng & Bodde, 1948, p. 150)

As analysed by Xunzi, what *li* means to the majority of ordinary people compared with the few ‘superior men’ is closest to the original connotation of the traditional Chinese character 禮. The compound character 禮 is an ideograph composed of *shi* 示,

⁵ This can be evidenced in a conversation between Confucius and his student. 樊遲問知。子曰：務民之義，敬鬼神而遠之，可謂知矣。(Fan Chi asked what constituted wisdom. The Master said, ‘To give one’s self earnestly to the duties due to men, and, while respecting spiritual beings, to keep aloof from them, may be called wisdom.’) Or 述而：子不語怪，力，亂，神。(The subjects on which the Master did not talk, were: extraordinary things, feats of strength, disorder, and spiritual beings.)

⁶ Chinese version: 雩而雨，何也？曰：无何也，犹不雩而雨也。日月食而救之，天旱而雩，卜筮然后决大事。非以为得求也，以文之也。故君子以为文，而百姓以为神。以为文则吉，以为神则凶也。

meaning ‘show’, ‘sign’ or ‘indicate’, and *li* 豐, which is indicative of sacrificial vessels (Hall & Ames, 1987, p. 86). According to *Shuowenjiezi*, the character 禮 has been explained as 履 (*lǐ*), meaning offering sacrifices to the deities and receiving blessings.⁷ The character 履 has the connotation of performing or practicing the rituals.

Among the Chinese classics on *li*, three books in particular—the *Rites of Zhou*, the *Book of Rites* and the *Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial*—collectively known as the ‘Three Rites’, guided traditional Confucian understandings of propriety and behaviour. In his *Treatise on Rites*, Xunzi, a representative of Confucianism writing during the Warring period, explained the three roots of *li*:

Ritual principles (*li*) have three roots: heaven and earth are the root of life, the ancestors are the root of commonality, rulers and teachers are the root of order. If there were no heaven and earth, how could there be life? If there were no rulers and teachers, how could there be order? If only one of those three is missing, there is no peace and security for humankind. Hence rituals (*li*) follow the heaven above and the earth below; they venerate the ancestors, and exact rulers and teachers, since these are the three roots of all ritual principles (*li*).⁸

(Wu, [1917] 1985, p. 110)

Xunzi’s thought is regarded as the earliest source of the summary of Chinese ritual practice embodied in five Chinese characters: 天 (heaven)⁹, 地 (earth), 君 (rulers),¹⁰ 親 (ancestors) and 師 (teachers), as began appearing in the family altar in the *tang*¹¹ of traditional Chinese people’s dwellings during the late Ming Dynasty (Steinmüller, 2010; H. Yu, 2012). Here, heaven refers to the moral codes in people’s minds; earth represents the fostering and accommodating of power; rulers (country) reveals the psychological identification of the historical-cultural community; ancestors indicates the great value of consanguinity to the Chinese people; and teachers signifies the time-honoured cultural tradition of teaching and learning. These concepts can be viewed as the religion and

⁷ Chinese version: 禮，履也。所以事神致福也。

⁸ Chinese version: 禮有三本：天地者，生之本也；先祖者，類之本也；君師者，治之本也。無天地，惡生？無先祖，惡出？無君師，惡治？三者偏亡，焉無安人。故禮、上事天，下事地，尊先祖，而隆君師。是禮之三本也。

⁹ It has to be pointed out that the translation of 天 as heaven is merely for the sake of convenience. 天 in classical Chinese is the world. That is, 天 is both what our world is and how it is. For a detailed explanation, see Henry Rosemont, Jr., and Roger T. Ames (2009), *Chinese Classic Family Reverence*, page 85.

¹⁰ Since the 1911 Revolution, the overthrown monarchy rendered the character ‘君’ (ruler, monarch, lord) inappropriate on the altar. The concept ‘國’ country replaced ‘君’ ruler.

¹¹ Tang can be roughly understood as the living room, but definitely different in its cultural meaning in Chinese people’s life-world. Detailed discussion will be given in Chapter 6.

belief of the Chinese people, demonstrating its difference from the monotheistic religions, such as Christianity and Islam (Wang, 2010). Li (2010) argues that the fundamentals of the five characters derives directly from Confucius and his *Analects*. He suggests that the reconstruction of Chinese people's religious tradition can resort to the ritual practice embodied in the five Chinese characters. Although none of them are 'deities', they can all become the object of reverence, worship and devotion. Moreover, the flexible and diverse connotations of the five characters could accommodate the worship of multiple deities in all aspects of the everyday life of ordinary people as well as the spiritual fulfilment, codes of conduct and life goals among *junzi* (superior man).

In this research, the term 'Chinese rituals' is used in preference to terms such as 'popular religion'. Specifically, this research focuses on the rituals to multiple deities and ancestors in ordinary people's everyday life. As necessary, the term *li* is used in place of 'ritual' in some particular chapters, and terms such as 'folk religion', 'popular religion' and 'popular belief' are still used in certain circumstances if necessary, particularly in the following literature review.

2.2.2 Chinese Rituals (*li* 礼/禮) in the Discourse of Religion

Chinese ritual discourses and practices have long been studied in the Western framework of religion. Terms such as 'folk' and 'elite' religions, 'great' and 'little' traditions, 'popular religion/belief', 'local religion', 'popular religious cultures' and so on have been used (Bell, 1988, p. 35). The most widely used terms among Western scholarship are the multiple combinations of 'folk' and 'popular' with 'belief' and 'religion': folk belief, folk religion, popular belief and popular religion.

Under the influence of Western scholarship, Chinese academia conducts their research within this framework of 'religion/belief'. Terms common in English publications (folk belief, folk religion, popular belief and popular religion) are often used interchangeably in Chinese scholarship and translated to refer to *minjian xinyang* (民间信仰), *minjian zongjiao* (民间宗教), *dazhong xinyang* (大众信仰) or *minsu zongjiao* (民俗宗教). However, like most societies before modern times, Chinese culture operated without the notion of religion (*zongjiao* 宗教) and without distinguishing the religious from other aspects of social life (Schipper, 1993, pp. 2-3). As Wang (2005) argued, neither the government nor the scholar-bureaucrats and religious practitioners ever used the term 'folk/popular religion' to describe the beliefs, rituals and symbolic system of the mass of the population in traditional China. Nor did they ever label Buddhism or Daoism as 'elite religions'. This is not because they

rejected these words, but because they did not know the word ‘religion’ and had no folk/elite dichotomy in their mode of thinking.

In an ancient Chinese dictionary, *Shuowenjiezi* (100–121AD), *zong* 宗 means ancestral temple where the spirits of ancestors were worshipped, while *jiao* 教 means the people follow the lords’ behaviours.¹² In modern times, the compound *zongjiao* was first used in an 1869 maritime trade treaty between Japan and Germany to translate the German *religionsubung* and the English phrase ‘exercise of religion’ (Nedostup, 2001, p. 23). Characters such as 宗, 教, 派 or 宗門 were used interchangeably to refer to Christianity, divisions within Buddhism, distinctions between Daoism and Confucianism and different schools of intellectual thought. There was no universal or generic category of ‘religion’ to designate human relations with the supernatural realm (Yang, 2008, p. 11).

Throughout Chinese religious history, there has also been a pervasive predisposition to construct multifaceted and open-ended religious identities that allow individuals and communities to engage in a range of spiritual practices or to worship deities linked with more than one religion (Poceski, 2009, p. 158). Such flexible attitudes towards religious categorisation, affiliation and identity formation contrast with the exclusivist identification with a single religion—typically narrowly defined in terms of particular scripture(s), creeds and institutions—that is characteristic of monotheistic religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Therefore, from the first uses of ‘religion’ (宗教) in China, the notion of religion was closely linked with the notion of Christianity, and more specifically Protestantism, which was taken as the standard and quintessential model of religion (Yang, 2008, pp. 11-12).

Scholars (Fan, 2007; Liu & Wang, 2010) have pointed out that it is logically incorrect in the first instance to account for the social reality in China with the notion of ‘religion’ developed on the Western monotheism. Indeed, the People’s Republic of China has long-defined religion (*zongjiao*) as organised traditions such as Buddhism, Daoism, Islam, Catholicism and Christianity that have their own founders, institutions, doctrine and scriptures. Only these traditions are legally recognised; all else is not religion but is rather ‘feudal superstition’ (*fengjian mixin*), including all popular religious activities (Overmyer, 2001). This determines how the majority of Chinese think of ‘religion’. For a long time, people from other countries have believed that the

¹² The Chinese version is 按《说文解字》的解释, ‘宗’, ‘尊祖庙也’; ‘教’, ‘上所施, 下所效也’。

vast population of China is without religion. Sun (2010) argues that ‘popular/folk religion’ as a Western paradigm has its own history. In China, it is usually associated with certain social groups of lower classes. The term *minjian* (popular, folk) implies an opposition to orthodox and official ritual practice; however, the so-called popular/folk religion is only another side of ‘elite, official tradition’. The concept of popular/folk religion/belief as transformed by sinologists and historians is an ambiguous concept that cannot constitute a satisfactory mode for analysis. Therefore, some scholars tend to avoid this terminology and instead apply more specific terms, such as festivals, sacrifice and divination. In Chinese tradition, there is *fojiao* (Buddhism), *daojiao* (Daoism), but no *minjian zongjiao* (popular/folk religion/belief). For the vast majority of Chinese people, their ritual practice can be summarised with the vernacular term *li*.

2.2.3 Chinese Rituals under the State Power

Rituals have played a dominant role in ordinary Chinese people’s everyday life throughout history. However, ritual practices as part of everyday life have been affected by state power, with the ritual practices of Chinese people having undergone a journey from feudal superstition to popular beliefs and finally to intangible cultural heritage. This section begins by depicting the changing conceptualisation of the ritual practices of Chinese people, from feudal superstition to popular beliefs since the early twentieth century to the contemporary period. Then, it focuses on reviewing the research on the relationship between Chinese rituals and state power. The relationship between ritual practice and intangible cultural heritage is also part of the interaction between Chinese rituals and state power, but this aspect of the literature review is contained in a separate section.

Since the Opium Wars (1839–1842; 1856–1860), when China encountered the imperialist powers, Chinese ritual practices began to be denigrated in the discourse of feudal superstition and backward culture. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, Confucian reformist thinkers such as Kang Youwei, Tan Sitong, Yan Fu and Liang Qichao attempted to expand traditional religious cosmology to accommodate the new Western knowledge of evolutionism that radically altered such basic categories as time, space and the human role in the cosmos (Yang, 2008, p. 3). They transformed a Confucian cosmology that privileged the power of divine forces, to which the ethical sage must attune his efforts at moral self-cultivation, into a more naturalised cosmology, which gave more primacy to teleological direction and human will, rationality and action (Furth, 1998). In the face of the political and economic superiority of the nationalistically oriented Western world’ (Yang, 1961, p. 6), China’s venerable

Confucian culture and religious traditions were found to be ‘backward’ and were radicalised in the nationalism of the May Fourth Movement¹³ of the 1920s (Chow, 1960; Schwarcz, 1986). The freedom of the individual person was upheld in the attack on the authority of patriarchal kinship, gods, elders and ancestors. Significantly, however, this ‘liberated’ individual was at the same time vigorously subsumed to the collective interest of the nation-state, and later to the Revolution and the Party (Yang, 2008).

In response to the threat from the Western imperialist countries, the political and cultural elites, who were under the influence of the theory of social evolutionism and enlightenment knowledge and were burdened with the historic task of ‘saving the dying nation from the imperialism and feudalism’, began a movement of knowledge production that, among other things, defined everyday ritual practices as ‘old custom’ and rendered them as cultural relics (Gao, 2006b). Out of the strong desire to implement the social reform and enlightenment, a vast number of articles by Chinese intellectuals served as the weapon of criticism to define ritual practices as superstition and feudal dross. This, in turn, provided academic support for government law-enforcement departments to demolish temples and statues and suppress religious practices (Wu, 2008). The dominant Chinese intellectual approach to ritual practices following the May Fourth Movement was to define traditional religious culture as a shameful hindrance to modernisation. Chen Duxiu, one of the leading Marxist intellectuals of the New Culture Movement, wrote in 1917:

The written characters that we normally use in society are still [representative of] the bad habits of the imperial age. In the towns, most houses have scrolls such as ‘obliged in gratitude to the northern palace’ or ‘the emperor’s benevolence is without limit’ on their doorframes. In the countryside, people habitually stick a red paper scroll on the walls of the main rooms, with the characters for ‘heaven, earth, emperor, ancestors, and teachers’ on it, and some who are particular about it even have a carved tablet with the same characters. Such corrupt old thinking is rampant in China, and thus if we sincerely want to consolidate a republican polity, we have to expunge all the old thinking that is anti-republican in morals, literature, and

¹³ The May Fourth Movement, also called the ‘Chinese Enlightenment’, was triggered in 1919 when Chinese intellectuals, students, workers and merchants protested against the Versailles Treaty after the First World War, when the Western powers handed over German-controlled Shandong Province to the Japanese. Throughout the 1920s, in public demonstrations and boycotts of Japanese goods, in journals, novels, modern-style dramas and newspapers, these nationalist and modernizing groups castigated traditional Chinese culture and values, especially Confucian culture and popular religions, for their ‘backwardness’ and irrelevance to modernity. See Yang, M. M.-h. (2011). *Postcoloniality and Religiosity in Modern China The Disenchantments of Sovereignty*. Theory, Culture & Society, 28(2), page 36.

elsewhere; and that as thoroughly as possible.

—Chen Duxiu, *The old thinking and the problems of the national polity*,
May 1917

In another article published in the influential journal *New Youth* (新青年), entitled ‘On the Smashing of Idols’ (*Ouxiang pohuai lun*), Chen Duxiu (1918) held forth in a long diatribe that echoed Protestant missionary discourse:

These idols made of clay and carved in wood are really useless things; but just because someone respects them, worships them, burns incense and kowtows to them, and says they have magical efficacy (*lingyan*), ignorant villagers become superstitious of these manmade idols and believe that they really possess the power to reward good deeds and punish evil. . . . All religions are idols that cheat people; Amitabha Buddha is a cheat and a liar, Jehovah is a cheat and a liar, and so is the Jade Emperor. All the gods, buddhas, immortals, and ghosts that are revered by religionists are useless and cheating idols, and they should all be smashed! (p. 99)

Over the course of the twentieth century, the extraordinarily forceful denial of tradition became the hegemonic discourse in China. Confucianism was attacked as ‘the doctrine of li’ (*lijiao*) from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards in an attempt to build a modern nation (Harrison, 2000, p. 96). Slogans such as ‘Destroy the Shop of Confucius’ (*dadao kongjia dian*) and replace it with ‘Science and Democracy’ (*kexue yu minzhu*) were adopted by the communist revolution. Under Maoism, and in particular during the Cultural Revolution, government propaganda, Party campaigns and education attempted systematically to destroy the traditional Confucian moral system, including its popular forms, such as family celebrations.

In analysing the compelling reasons and discursive rationales underlying the ferocity and destructiveness of the anti-religious movements in twentieth-century China—perhaps the most dramatic and systematic in the modern world, and certainly in China’s own 3000-year history—Yang (2008, p. 20) summed up in three words: scientism, evolutionism and nationalism. Although ‘Science and Democracy’ had been the slogan since the May Fourth Movement, it was science, or ‘science-worship’ and scientism, rather than democracy that dominated the discourse throughout the nation during the 1930s and thereafter. Under these circumstances, all phenomena of the universe, including human culture, ethics, and religious and spiritual matters, were considered to be reducible to material aspects of nature and to move according to predictable scientific laws. Anything against science was labelled as superstition. This mode of thinking remains prevalent in contemporary China.

Armed with May Fourth convictions, schoolteachers, professors and students trudged patriotically into the countryside to ransack temples and forcibly convert the rural people to modernity. However, these forays were small in scale compared to the more systematic destruction of religious sites carried out by the modern state. Prasenjit Duara (1991, 1995) has shown that after the collapse of the Qing Dynasty in 1911, the new Republic conducted several anti-superstition campaigns in which soldiers, officials and local gentry captured local temples and smashed idols. The captured temples provided offices and revenue sources for the expanding local governments, as well as classrooms for new schools. In the 1920s, Mao Zedong observed with approval the smashing of temple gods and the appropriation of temple buildings and property by local peasant associations and the Kuomintang (Nationalist Party) local government in rural Hunan Province (Mao, 1965). So great was religious destruction throughout China that by the 1940s it is estimated that well over half the temples that had existed at the time of the emperor's edict in 1898 had been seized, destroyed or diverted from their religious uses (Goossaert, 2006, p. 308). Most of the remaining temples met their fate after the Communist Revolution of 1949, especially during Land Reform (1949–1951), the Great Leap Forward campaign (1958–1960) and the devastating 'Smash the Four Olds' (破四舊) campaign (1966–1969) of the Cultural Revolution.

However, with the economic reform and concurrent relaxation of religious policies after the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), the 1980s onwards saw the ritual practices of Chinese people undergo revitalisation and innovation (Chau, 2011b), with superstition becoming popular beliefs and folk culture and a resurgence and restoration of temple buildings. While the state power has intervened in the construction and management of places of worship and has become ferocious in the name of preserving the intangible cultural heritage, and while, driven by the pursuit of economic growth, temples and monasteries are often exploited as economic boosters in the name of preserving intangible cultural heritage (Guojiazongjiaoshiwuju, 2012), this revitalisation has also seen myriad rural areas and small towns across China revive the old system of ritual territoriality as an expression of local community identity, through the worship of tutelary deities and community rituals (Chau, 2006; Yang, 2004b). This is also the case in the town of Dongpu—the site of this study's ethnographic research. Some festive rituals, temple festivals and folk arts have been restored and even identified as intangible cultural heritage.

This revival is carefully managed and monitored by state authorities at all levels. All religious groups must register with the state and accept the authority of one of the

five relevant official state patriotic religious organisations. This means that some groups never receive official approval, their petitions for permits to build a religious building of worship are not granted and they must lead an ‘underground’ existence. Unregistered underground religious groups are subject to state persecution and places of worship built without government permits—whether temples, churches or mosques—continue to be seized, dismantled or even blown up with dynamite (M. M.-H. Yang, 2004). In some areas, where the local authorities are willing to look the other way, underground religious organisations conduct their activities in the open. From the perspective of the state ideology, the revitalisation signifies a gradual process of the legitimisation of ritual practices from feudal superstition to popular beliefs (Overmyer, 2001). Although ritual practices have not gained complete recognition from the state power, the overall trend is that people have widening space for ritual practices in their everyday life.

The legitimisation of ritual practices is partially indebted to the efforts of academia. Beginning in the 1980s, folklorists started replacing the ideological terminology ‘superstition’ with *minjian xinyang* (folk belief) to desensitise the subject (Mu, 1981). Folklore scholar Wu Bing’an even employed *suxin* (俗信 customary belief) to differentiate ritual practice from superstition (Lu, 1985). From the academic viewpoint, this was an effective strategy to justify ritual practices and establish them as a legitimate object of research. Meanwhile, scholars in the science of history and religion started to use *minjian zongjiao* (民间宗教 folk religion) for ideological concepts such as secret sects and evil cults. Following from the academic strategy, the mass of the population gradually acquired phrases such as *minjian wenhua* (民间文化 folk culture) and *minjian xinyang* (popular belief) to refer to their ritual practices. By the end of the twentieth century, the denigration of folk religion as superstition was largely absent in Chinese academic circles (Overmyer, 2001), although the discourse of superstition remains in everyday life and government policies (Yang, 2008, p. 17).

2.2.4 Review of Relevant Research

Popular religion has attracted the attention of scholars in folklore study, anthropology, ethnology, sociology, the science of religion, social history and political science. Many scholars (Gao, 2007a; Overmyer, 2001; Wang, 2005; Wu, 2008; Zhong, 2004) have reviewed the literature in this study area. Different disciplines have shaped their own paradigms and approaches (Fu, 2007; Goossaert, 2005). Additionally, cross-disciplinary approaches have been increasingly employed by researchers, who tend to combine all possible methodologies and methods at their service. Although it is

sometimes difficult and unnecessary to distinguish what particular paradigm or approach is adopted in a particular study, it is still beneficial to give a brief summary of the main paradigms pervading the present research in popular religion. Specifically, three research paradigms are common in this area: the belief and event paradigm, the symbolic/cultural paradigm and the social process paradigm (Fu, 2007).

The belief and event paradigm is often adopted in studies from the disciplines of folklore, the science of religion and history. It features the description of specific ritual practice and events in a certain place or region, for example, the study of Guanyin (Xing, 1994), the study of temple festivals (Gao, 2000; Yue, 2010; Zhao & Bell, 2007), the study of traditional Chinese festive celebrations (Gao, 2004; Xiao, 2002, 2011) and the study of Chinese funerals (Guo, 1992; Watson & Rawski, 1988). These studies usually place emphasis on the investigation of the historical origin and specific contents and characteristics of popular rituals and folk events. These studies increase the knowledge of popular religion and enrich the popular culture, but they usually ignore the interactions between the popular beliefs and other social actors. The studies mentioned above are all pertinent to my own research, which involves the rituals in a Guanyin Shrine, the celebration of temple festivals in the town of Dongpu and a Chinese Christian's funeral. However, in addition to the description and interpretation of these ritual practices and events, my research also focuses on how ordinary people practice these rituals in their everyday life in response to the power of the state.

The symbolic/cultural paradigm is widely accepted in the discipline of social and cultural anthropology. Research using this paradigm employs ethnography as its methodology and methods, with the emphasis on the symbolic and cultural interpretation of belief and rituals. Typical research includes Fei's (1976) functionalist analysis of local deities in social life and production; Guo's (2000) discovery of how state power and political force construct power structures and meaning systems in the everyday life of ordinary people through symbolic rituals; Arthur Wolf's (1974) categorisation of the spirits in Chinese popular religion into gods, ancestors and ghosts and their symbolic equation to officialdom, family and the amorphous mass of 'strangers'; and Sangren (1987) and Feuchtwang's (1992) demonstration of the existence of Chinese folk religion in particular communities. Research using this paradigm has achieved consensus that there is an interaction between state power and society in ritual practice. However, these studies focus more on the domination, surveillance and manipulation of beliefs and rituals by state power on a cultural level and direct little attention towards the use of and resistance to the state power by

ordinary people. My research attempts to fill this gap by investigating the two-way interaction between the state power and ordinary people.

The social process paradigm, like the symbolic/cultural paradigm, is concerned with people's specific beliefs and rituals. However, it placed a particular emphasis on the investigation of the actions of social actors in these beliefs and ritual practices, with the exploration of state power usually given the first priority. Research in this paradigm tends to address questions concerning the relationship between state and society, the interaction between the state and the mass population and the intricate interactions between state power and popular beliefs and rituals. These studies are typically exemplified in the disciplines of social history, sociology, the science of history and social anthropology.

Zhao (2002) investigated the relationship between the popular beliefs at the grassroots level and state power by studying the temple festivals in north China. Other researchers (Chen, 2001; Xing, 2007; Zhu, 2008) followed Prasenjit Duara's (1988) tradition of incorporating Foucault's discourse analysis of power relations into popular belief research. In addition to the investigations of the intrusion and intervention of state power in local popular belief practice, much research (Gao, 2006a; Jing, 1998; Wang, 2008 ; Yue, 2005; Zhu, 2006) has indicated the collusion and negotiation between the state power and the local communities, particularly in terms of the restoration of temples and temple festivals. Further, anthropologists such as Yan Yunxiang (2003), Wang Mingming (2004) and Zhuang Kongshao (2000) have conducted case studies in small communities within the context of social change and power structure. In exploring the underlying reasons for the revival of popular religion in reform-era China, Chau (2006) presented an insightful case study revealing the more general and widespread cultural logic and sociopolitical processes in rural Shaanbei, north-central China. Yang's (2004) case study in rural Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, southeastern China revealed the intricate struggles in ritual spaces such as temples and ancestor tombs between the local community and the state power. These studies serve as beneficial examples for my research.

Wang's (2000) research on a village god and its ritual in south Fujian province, southeastern China challenged the exclusive dominance of economic rationality and modern civilisation. His study discovered that local cultural ritual heritage is usually invisible in the study of the nation-state with Chinese characteristics and the study of global community and culture, or it is denied as a backward culture contrary to 'civilized and modern' culture. He questioned the linear history of modernisation

through the analysis of how the tradition of village community is continued and reconstructed through the effect of the grand historical transformation of the nation-state. Similarly, Luo (2000) discussed the cultural meaning of time (history) by narrating and analysing the Heilongtan people's ritual of sortition. His research revealed that history as a knowledge resource is not a one-way linear process of development, but rather a process of continuing accumulation and interpretation. The Heilongtan people's ritual correlates their practical social life with historical texts in a metaphoric way. Thus, their thoughts and actions in practical life are of significance in cultural critique. He questioned the historical perspective of linear evolution, thus attempting to actualise the dialogue between different cultures. These two studies are thought provoking in terms of how to view ritual heritage and modernity in contemporary China.

In summary, research on popular religion in contemporary scholarship is increasingly cross-disciplinary. Although different disciplines tend towards certain perspectives and research methods, the boundaries between disciplines are increasingly blurred. The continuous development of new factors and variables in such areas as the power relationship between local communities and the state, the social system, commerce, regional harmony and the construction of new socialist villages require their integration into the research on popular religion. While recent studies tend to combine and employ different social theories, in the past, most studies were conducted from a macro or grand-narrative perspective. In addition, past research did not pay sufficient attention to the interactions between individuals' actions and the state power. Specifically, there has been a lack of research on how ordinary people creatively produce their own ritual space, how the state power and religious policies and regulations are addressed at the grassroots level and how ordinary people exercise their resistance to the state power from a micro-dimensional perspective. To attempt to fill these gaps, my cross-disciplinary research on the relationship between the state power and ritual practices adopts a micro-level perspective to focus on the analysis of the everyday life of ordinary people.

2.3 Research on Chinese Rituals and Intangible Cultural Heritage

Chinese rituals became a heated topic in academia and cultural practice because of UNESCO's *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, issued in 2003, which has largely fuelled a new worldwide heritage movement. As a result, a large number of popular beliefs and ritual practices across China, an integral part of popular culture, have been identified as intangible cultural heritage. Beginning in 2003, the Ministry of Culture of China launched the 'National Folk Culture Protection

Project'. In 2005, following China becoming a state party to the UNESCO Convention in 2004 (Zhongguowang, 2006), the State Council of China issued two documents: the *Recommendations on the Strengthening of the Protection of China's Intangible Cultural Heritage* and *Circular of the State Council Concerning Strengthening the Cultural Heritage Protection*. These two documents launched a process of identifying national-level intangible cultural heritage.

For the first national intangible cultural heritage identification list for 2005–06, a number of applications were submitted concerning temple festivals and other popular beliefs, but only a few items that changed their names were successfully placed on the list. In the subsequent round of submissions, however, the diffusion of the concept of intangible cultural heritage and the nationwide general survey's encompassing of deeper levels of society, meant that rituals of popular belief, such as temple festivals, were openly and proudly admitted on the 2008 intangible cultural heritage list, as well as on the lists of provincial- and city-level intangible cultural heritage. Of concern for this research, the ritual practice of Zhufu was identified as provincial intangible cultural heritage in 2007 and a temple festival called Jiuxian Miaohui was identified as municipal intangible cultural heritage in 2013. Both of these rituals have been performed as tourist attractions.

An increasing number of scholars are investigating the relationship between popular beliefs and intangible cultural heritage. By comparing intangible cultural heritage with folklore, Gao (2007b) argued that the discourse of intangible cultural heritage has provided an unprecedented opportunity for popular beliefs to gain legitimacy in spite of much overlap between the two concepts. More importantly, Gao (2007a) maintains that the knowledge of and respect for popular belief is of great significance to the construction of civil society in contemporary China. In contrast to Gao's positive stance on intangible cultural heritage, some scholars are more critical. Sakurai (2010) maintains that popular beliefs, as a historically inherited tradition, permeate daily life and may not be incorporated completely in the modern concept of 'cultural heritage'. Further, to heritagise popular beliefs, the 'superstition' element is usually eliminated according to official criteria of advanced culture, while the officially deemed valuable 'traditional culture' is often highlighted in local and national application of intangible cultural heritage. Iwamoto (2010) warns that scholars should be alert to the romanticism and nationalism underlying the heritagisation of popular beliefs. He asserts that the standardisation of UNESCO's *Convention* during the heritagisation of popular beliefs may possibly ignore people's feelings towards their

belief practice, thus violating their human rights and freedoms and destroying cultural diversity.

Some case studies have shown the complexities involved in the contestation and cooperation by multiple interests during the heritagisation of local popular beliefs, temples or rituals. In her case study of the Dayu State Ritual¹⁴, Chen (2010) analysed how a disappearing sacrificial ritual of an ancient sage-emperor, Dayu, was reinvented and produced into national intangible cultural heritage. The heritage practice was intertwined with the mutual benefits for the nation's integration, local development and lineage transformation. The process of heritagisation also revealed how the tradition was upgraded from folk culture to local culture and finally to a representation of Chinese national culture. Chen's study concluded that popular beliefs as intangible cultural heritage tend not to be the same religious practices and cultural spaces as they were before the intervention of external political and economic forces. In a similar study, this time of Tanghe Belief in Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, the authors (Qiu & Chen, 2009) revealed that the present heritage ritual was the deconstructed and reconstructed product of the original ritual, whereby Tanghe was transformed into a national hero from a local deity. Tactics such as changing the identity of deities and the meanings of popular beliefs have become widely used in the application of intangible cultural heritage in China. Moreover, scholars' participation and local governments' economic considerations contribute much to the success of the heritagisation of popular beliefs.

¹⁴ Da Yu(大禹 Yu, the Great, c. 2200 - 2100 BC), was a legendary ruler in ancient China famed for his introduction of flood control, inaugurating dynastic rule in China by founding the Xia Dynasty, and for his upright moral character. Few, if any, records exist from the period of Chinese history when Yu reigned. Because of this, the vast majority of information about his life and reign comes from collected pieces of oral tradition and stories that were passed down in various areas of China, many of which were collected in Sima Qian's famous Records of the Grand Historian. Yu and other "sage-kings" of Ancient China were lauded by Confucius and other Chinese teachers, who praised their virtues and morals. Yu is one of the few Chinese rulers posthumously honored with the epithet "the Great".

The Public Memorial Ceremony to Da Yu was initiated in the coalition of Zhejiang Provincial Government and Shaoxing Municipal Government in 20 April, 1995. Thereafter, the Yu mausoleum was designated as one of the national Hundred Patriotism Education Bases by the Publicity Department (formerly the Propaganda Department of the Communist Party of China) and was designated as the precious cultural relics under state protection by the State Council. Since 1995, Shaoxing Municipality has organized minor sacrificial ceremony each year, public sacrificial ceremony every five years and major national-level ceremony every ten years. The ceremony in 2006 was attended by over 3000 sacrificial members and 7000 audience. On 1 March, 2007, the ceremony was upgraded to the national level granted by the Ministry of Culture of China. It was then hosted jointly by the Ministry of Culture and the People's Government of Zhejiang Province and undertaken by the People's Government of Shaoxing Municipality.

The heritagisation of rituals is a global phenomenon and it has drawn the attention of scholars from many countries. One recent significant work is *Ritual, Heritage and Identity: The Politics of Culture and Performance in a Globalised World*, in which the authors analyse the strategies of various agents involved in the politics of the revitalisation and conservation of ritualised traditions. They find that rituals as cultural property are playing an increasingly important role in claiming and defining places and communities as well as in creating alternative modernities and usable pasts (Brosius & Polit, 2011, p. 1). Rituals as intangible cultural heritage not only concern people's lifestyles, but also involve intricate power relations and politics. Rituals have become an arena of contestation for various sociopolitical forces and actors.

As an integral part of heritage practice, the heritagisation of popular beliefs should be investigated in the context of the worldwide heritage practice movement. In terms of heritage studies, there has been abundant research.

Concerning how to understand heritage, Stuart Hall (2005) stated:

[w]e should think of the heritage as a discursive practice. It is one of the ways in which the nation slowly constructs for itself a sort of collective social memory. Just as individuals and families construct their identities by 'storying' the various random incidents and contingent turning points of their lives into a single, coherent, narrative, so nations construct identities by selectively binding their chosen high points and memorable achievements into an unfolding 'national story'. This story is what is called 'Tradition'. (p. 23)

Here Hall explicates heritage as a discursive construction through which the nation-state establishes collective identity, gains political legitimacy and educates the citizenry. Many scholars, both prior to Hall and after him, have addressed heritage as constituted in and through discursive representations and constructions sanctioned by nation-states or other patrons. They probe into how different group interests and ideologies deploy narratives, tropes, knowledge, imaginations, technologies and so forth to make and remake heritage in ways that forge, maintain and perpetuate the relations of power (Ashworth & Larkham, 1994; Brett, 1996; Byrne, 1991; Cameron & Kenderdine, 2007; Fowler, 1992; Lowenthal, 1998; Walsh, 1992; Waterton & Watson, 2010).

Heritage is not an objective entity waiting to be discovered or identified; rather, it is invented and constructed. As critics in archaeology and historiography have shown, there is no objective past or history after the moment it occurred, and the past is always represented and constructed in present social and political contexts for some particular interests (Bond & Gilliam, 1994; Trouilllot, 1995; White, 1973). In other words,

heritage is always 'the past in the present' or, more simply put, 'the present past' (Butler, 2006; Fowler, 1992; Stone & Molyneaux, 1994). As Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) state, 'the present selects an inheritance from an imagined past for current use and decides what should be passed on to an imagined future' (1996, p. 6). However, such selections and other present efforts in dealing with the past may turn it into 'a foreign country':

Every act of recognition alters survivals from the past. Simply to appreciate or protect a relic, let alone to embellish or imitate it, affects its form or our impressions. Just as selective recall skews memory and subjectivity shapes historical insight, so manipulating antiquities refashions their appearance and meaning. Interaction with a heritage continually alters its nature and context, whether by choice or by chance.

(Lowenthal, 1985, p. 263)

As an important constitutive part of a certain culture, popular beliefs and rituals as intangible cultural heritage are increasingly connected to a community's cultural identity. Milton Singer calls attention to cultural events such as rituals, weddings, temple festivals, plays and dances: 'Indians, and perhaps all peoples, think of their culture as encapsulated in such discrete performances, which they can exhibit to outsiders as well as to themselves' (Singer, 1959, pp. ix, xiii). Rituals, ritualised performances and other ritually informed performative events lay the foundations for what is defined and contested as a particular group's past, heritage and cultural identity. Ashworth (2011) explores the threefold relationship between the triad of heritage, ritual and identity and explains that ritual can be taken to either constitute heritage or to be a vehicle through which heritage is communicated, while identity is regarded as a result of the application of heritage. Rituals become an important reference for what people understand as their culture. However, heritagised rituals become a form of cultural capital in the Bourdieuan sense and a resource that can be owned, traded, displayed and consumed in the contemporary commercial world (Brosius & Polit, 2011).

Handler (2011) argues that underlying the close attention to the heritagisation of rituals is a decisive shift in sociocultural anthropology, from the study of culture as a scientific object to the study of cultural objectification as a process. He argues that the objectification of culture is a (re)framing process. For example, local rituals or performances are reframed for non-local audiences for a variety of economic and political purposes. In heritage rituals, actors might treat the framed ritual as a representation of the group's identity. This framing machinery may have been borrowed

from the UNESCO *Convention* or from global media cultures. Handler (2011) calls attention to the keen awareness of the framed and objectified cultural difference and points out that ‘the idea of identity itself, like the idea of god, is a social production brought forth by the now-global network of nationalist and internationalist heritage institutions’ (p. 53).

In terms of the relationship between Chinese rituals and intangible cultural heritage, most present studies tend to be confined within the framework of the UNESCO *Convention*. Little attention has been directed towards a critical reflection on the limitations and impact of heritage practice within this framework. Moreover, the complex dynamics between the rituals, the ritual practitioners and the local/state powers and the possible embedded official ideology in the heritagised rituals have not yet been investigated. The relationship between religion as a whole and heritage in China has not been discussed. This is another gap my research attempts to fill.

2.4 Research on Christianity and State Power

This section begins with a brief background to Chinese Protestant Christianity (hereafter Christianity) under state power in China since 1949. A review then follows of the related literature relevant to this research.

2.4.1 Historical Background

Compared with the relative separation between religion and the state in modern Western civilisation, the religion–state relation in modern China is often characterised by the state’s attempt to integrate, regulate and control religion under the ruling Communist Party. As one of the five state-sanctioned religions, Christianity has been under the surveillance and regulation of the state power since 1949.

In 1950, the government of the new People’s Republic of China established the ‘Three Selves’ policy for Christianity in China: Self-Government; Self-Support; and Self-Propagation. This led to the severing of ties with foreign missions, whose representatives had mostly left by 1952. Independent Chinese churches were also suppressed and some of their leaders were imprisoned. A national Three-Self Patriotic Movement (hereafter TSPM) Committee was established to control church activities. When all Protestant denominations were abolished in 1958, TSPM became the only legal church organisation. However, many Protestants sought to avoid it through unauthorised worship in ‘house churches’ (underground churches) (Daniel, 2008, p. 193). Chinese politics moved to the left through the 1950s and 1960s, and with the Cultural Revolution of 1966–76, the minimal constitutional guarantee of ‘freedom of religious belief’ adopted by the Chinese Communist Party was abrogated altogether in

favour of an all-encompassing vision of the unified masses of ‘new socialist’ men and women, without distinctions of class, race or creed (MacInnis, 1972; Welch, 1972).

With the end of the Cultural Revolution and start of the reform era, the China Christian Council (hereafter CCC) was founded in 1980 to serve as the official organisation for Protestant churches across China. It was parallel to, but separate from, the TSPM, which was widely perceived to have been more political than religious. In practice, the two structures have had a considerable overlap in function and personnel, but the establishment of the CCC was still a symbolically important sign of the new reality for Christianity in China. In March 1982, the Central Committee released ‘Document 19’ on religion (MacInnis, 1989, pp. 8–26), which laid down the core doctrine that the disappearance of religion is a long-term goal that cannot be forced, and which also defined the aim of the Party’s religious work as ‘unit[ing] all the people ... in order that all may strive to construct a modern, powerful socialist state’. The new policy aimed to correct ‘leftist errors’ dating back to the early 1950s, including, importantly, those on tangible matters such as real property. In 1980, the State Council issued a circular requiring all religious property that had been confiscated since 1949—not just churches and temples and not just those few that had still been operational in 1966—to be returned to the appropriate religious organisations, and for compensation to be paid for the years of occupation (Guowuyuan, 1980).

Surely, the new policy signified the determination of the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party to reverse the wrongs to right. However, as Dunch (2008) argues, the relaxation of state restrictions on religion ‘was intended not so much to restore a lost freedom as to restore effective state supervision over a social area that had flourished outside of state control during the radical period’ (p. 163). In other words, the return to a policy of freedom of religious belief was a statist restoration delivered in the language of retracting the state’s reach (Shue, 1988, p. 6). The Party-state required that Christians be patriotic, as expressed in the core slogan, ‘Love one’s country, love one’s religion/church,’ in the post-Mao period. Meanwhile, to accommodate Christianity to the socialist construction, ‘theological reconstruction’ was carried out in Protestant circles to make Chinese Protestant theology compatible with socialism. In terms of the adaptation of Christianity to socialism, the most authoritative clarification came from Jiang Zemin, who reportedly described it as follows during an important working meeting on religious affairs convened jointly by the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee and the State Council in December 2001:

The adaptation of religion to socialist society does not require religious believers to give up their faith but demands that they love their motherland, embrace the socialist system and the leadership of the Party, respect state laws, regulations and central policies, and serve the people and the nation through their religious activities.

(Dunch, 2008, p. 172)

Since the 1990s, several regulations regarding religion have been released. The most comprehensive legal document to date has been the 'Regulations on Religious Affairs' (Guojiazhongjiaoj, 2004) issued in March 2005, which represented the first comprehensive effort to define the legal rights of and restrictions on religious sites, clergy and religious bodies and their property. The 'Regulations on Religious Affairs' in some respects opened up more space for religion in Chinese society. However, the regulations were the latest stage in the quest to regularise and strengthen the state's management of religious life in China by means of law, a quest given greater urgency by the dramatic rise in sectarian activity since the late 1990s. These regulations' standing as State Council administrative regulations rather than as laws also underlines the fact that their underlying impulse is to strengthen state prerogatives rather than religious citizens' rights (Dunch, 2008, p. 171).

Over the last few decades, there has been a considerable growth in the popularity of Christianity and a notable increase in the number of Chinese who identify themselves as Christians, although accurate data about the number of Chinese Christians is not available. Under the present system of religious management, both the Catholic and the Protestant churches are divided between official churches affiliated with TSPM and CCC, which are closely regulated by the government, and underground or house churches, which lack official status and are occasionally subjected to harassment or repression. In terms of the characteristics of Chinese Christians, Poceski (2009) calls attention to the fact that the majority of believers live in rural areas and have little education (with a large number of them being illiterate). This suggests that the form of Christianity most Chinese people practice is influenced by their local culture and traditional religious practices, and thus differs considerably from the form practiced by urban congregations.

2.4.2 Review of Relevant Research

Little research on Christianity was conducted by Chinese scholars before 1949. The research that could be found was conducted by Chinese Christians from the perspective of history and philosophy. From the 1950s to 1970s, there was an almost

complete halt to religious studies owing to the political turmoil in China. However, since the beginning of reform and opening up in 1978, there has been a revival in studies of Christianity. Mainstream scholars have gained considerable freedom and shown significant creativity. However, as Yang (2005) maintains, most scholars are still ‘dancing under the shadow of shackles’ (p. 33), as religious studies remain a sensitive matter in China. The majority of books about Christianity are translations of Western works and most Chinese research studies are conducted from the perspective of history, philosophy, literature or the science of religion. There are an increasing number of small case studies and surveys concerning the status quo of Christianity in China. However, ethnographic studies of Christianity, especially as concerns the investigation of how Christians respond to the state power and how people practice local beliefs and rituals, have been lacking.

Among the available literature, several studies are particularly noteworthy for their relevance to my own research. The first is Yang’s (1999) work *Chinese Christians in America*. Yang’s study explores how Chinese immigrants attending Christian churches in the United States undergo the construction and reconstruction of their three identities: Christian identity, American identity and Chinese identity (1999, p. 9). His research concludes that the construction and reconstruction of Chinese Christians in America is a process of selective assimilation and conversion that helps to retain an adhesive Chinese identity and Chinese traditional culture in immigrant churches. Yang’s research establishes a valuable model for research on Chinese Christians, especially among the Chinese diaspora, concerning the issue of identity and religion. The issue of Chinese Christian’s identity and their response to the inherent values of Chinese tradition is also discussed in my research. However, Yang’s research does not deal with how Christians respond to state power, which is understandable considering that his research was conducted in the US, which has freedom of religion.

Compared with Yang’s overseas research on Chinese Christians, Huang’s (2003a) work *Church of Four Saints: An Anthropological Study of China Rural Christianity* presents a regional study of how Christianity is indigenised in rural north China and how the Christian culture interacts with the local belief systems and state power. Huang maintains that Christianity in rural China tends to negotiate with and accommodate traditional Chinese culture and values, localising it in the everyday life of ordinary people. At the same time, Huang finds that the Christians in his study harbour a strong sense of religious community that sets them clearly apart from those practising local beliefs and rituals. His research also finds that ‘reform-era China has held a religious

policy of tolerance with restrictions, and that the restrictions have not been very effective in the remote village' (Huang & Yang, 2005, p. 60). In other words, these Christians in the rural north used tactics to keep state intrusions at arm's length in order to provide themselves with an enlarged social space for religious practice. My research also investigates a Christian community, in the town of Dongpu. However, compared with Huang's holistic ethnography, my exploration of this Christian community accounts for only one part of my research. The greatest emphasis of my research is on the specific tactics used by the Christian community to respond to the state power and on how Christians interact with the local belief and ritual system in their everyday life.

2.5 Conclusion

In summary, contemporary studies in Chinese rituals are usually conducted from a macro and sociological perspective. Research into ordinary people's actions in response to state power in their everyday life has not been given due consideration. From the perspective of the relationship between Chinese rituals and heritage, present research has not granted enough critical attention to the impact of heritage practice on Chinese rituals and the religion as a whole. Finally, regarding research into Christianity, related studies need to be enriched, in particular by a grassroots perspective on the practices of everyday life needing to be developed. In light of the above review of the literature in these three research areas, my cross-disciplinary research stands to bridge the gaps in each.

Chapter 3: Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

Religion, or the religious life of Chinese ritual practitioners and Chinese Christians, is the starting and concluding point of this research. This religious life is situated in the everyday life of ordinary people against state power and heritage practices. Here, ordinary people's religious life is viewed as an instance of ordinary culture, or as a way of life in the terms of Raymond Williams. This ordinary culture is viewed in this research as part of popular culture. A tension is recognised between this ordinary culture and official culture (national culture) and is characterised by the dominance–resistance relationship from hegemony theory. How ordinary people resist this dominance is situated within Michel de Certeau's theory as outlined in his book, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. This chapter begins with a discussion of Raymond Williams' categorisation of culture and Antonio Gramsci's hegemony theory. It then proceeds to introduce Michel de Certeau's theory and some of his key concepts.

3.2 Culture and Hegemony Theory

Raymond Williams (1983) calls culture 'one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language' (p. 87). Williams suggests three broad definitions. First, culture can be used to refer to 'a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development' (p. 90). A second use of the word 'culture' might be to suggest 'a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period or a group' (p. 90). Using this definition is inclusive of not just intellectual and aesthetic factors, but also the development of, for example, literacy, holidays, sport and religious festivals. Finally, Williams suggests that culture can be used to refer to 'the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity' (p. 90). According to the definition of culture above, to speak of popular culture usually means to mobilise the second and third meanings of the word 'culture'. Few people would imagine Williams' first definition when thinking about popular culture.

Williams' (2002) assertion that 'culture is ordinary' is also widely accepted. He presents the notion that a society is forged from its members' formation of the collective nature of ideas, language and values. Culture for Williams is not, or should not be, what separates people, but what joins them in community. Culture is not for the discerning few, but for the many. In this sense, ordinary culture means the popular culture among

the majority of people. In view of this, the religious culture considered in this research, that is, the practice of Chinese rituals and Christianity by ordinary people in a particular geographic community, is ordinary and popular culture. Williams' (1983) second definition of culture thus applies, as this culture is 'a particular way of life'; it is the *lived* culture of the community.

In terms of popular culture and state power, the political analysis of the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, and particularly his development of the concept of hegemony, is pertinent to this research. Gramsci (2009) uses the term 'hegemony' to refer to the way in which dominant groups in society through a process of 'intellectual and moral leadership' (p. 75) forge alliances in order to seek to win the consent of subordinate groups in society. Cultural theorists have taken Gramsci's political concept and used it to explain the nature and politics of popular culture. However, hegemony is never simply power imposed from above as it is always the result of 'negotiations' between dominant and subordinate groups, a process marked by both 'resistance' and 'incorporation' (Storey, 2009, p. 81). Hegemony theory can be used to explore and explain conflicts involving class, gender, generation, ethnicity, 'race', region, religion, disability and so on, each of which, at different moments, are engaged in forms of cultural struggle against the homogenising forces of the official or dominant culture (Storey, 2009, p. 11). In general, those looking at popular culture from the perspective of hegemony theory tend to see it as a terrain of ideological struggle between dominant and subordinate classes and cultures (Storey, 2009, p. 10). Popular culture is one site in which the construction of everyday life may be examined. While the point of doing so is partly academic, as an attempt to understand a process or practice, it is also political in order to examine the power relations that constitute this form of everyday life and reveal the configurations of interests its construction serves (Turner, 1996, p. 6). The theory of hegemony facilitates analysis of the ways in which subordinate groups actively resist and respond to political and economic domination. The subordinate groups need not be seen as the passive dupes of the dominant class and its ideology (Edgar & Sedgwick, 2008, p. 156), but as active resisters to both.

In this research, popular culture is used in its broadest sense, with particular reference to religious culture including Chinese rituals and Christianity. Considering the vast popularity of religious culture among Chinese people in their everyday life, it does not narrowly refer to 'folk culture' as is often considered to be practiced by the vast majority of people with little education living in rural China. By contrast, official culture specifically refers to the culture advocated by the Party-state of China. Using

hegemony theory, this research explores the interaction between the religious culture and the official culture in people's everyday life. The interaction does not necessarily mean the violent suppression of people's religious practice by the official culture and state power. It may assume the form of cooperation, negotiation and compromise between the popular culture and official culture. In relation to how ordinary people respond to the official culture and state power, the next section presents a discussion of Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*.

3.3 De Certeau's Theory in *The Practice of Everyday Life*

When referring to the phenomenon of everyday life, the great French sociologist and philosopher Henri Lefebvre was fond of mentioning G. W. F Hegel's maxim 'the familiar is not necessarily the known'. Indeed, while everyday life is a particularly familiar term because it deals with everyone living in this world, it is simultaneously a vague and nebulous concept. Everyday life encompasses all aspects of people's mundane life, including their eating, clothing, housing, traveling and so on. Largely due to its triviality, banality and unimportance, everyday life has only rarely been considered a worthy object of contemplation during the last 2500 years of Western thought (Gardiner, 2000, p. 131). This situation has only begun to change in the twentieth century, in part due to the emergence of social theories and philosophies, such as hermeneutics, phenomenology and Verstehen sociology, which contain the necessary conceptual and methodological tools for a systematic analysis of the everyday life world under the efforts of scholars, such as Max Weber, Walter Benjamin, Georg Simmel and Alfred Schütz (Gardiner, 2000, p. 131).

It is apparent that the last few decades have witnessed a burgeoning interest in the sphere of everyday life, as marked by numerous lines of inquiry established by cultural studies, feminism, media studies and postmodernism (Gardiner, 2000, p. 2). Scholars such as Mikhail Bakhtin, Henri Lefebvre, Agnes Heller, Michel de Certeau and Dorothy E. Smith have written works on everyday life. This section focuses on Michel de Certeau's theory and some of his key concepts that are employed for the analysis of this thesis.

3.3.1 A Poetics of Everyday Life

The Practice of Everyday Life is possibly the most well known and influential of Michel de Certeau's works. This study, later supplemented by a second, collaborative volume (de Certeau, Giard, & Mayol, 1998), had a demonstrable impact on Anglo-American cultural studies (Buchanan, 1997). This study explores the everyday religious

life of ordinary people in terms of their interaction with local/state power, therefore, Michel de Certeau's theory is pertinent to this research.

For de Certeau, studying everyday culture was not about finding new cultural texts to interpret, value and celebrate. Rather, it was an attempt to focus investigation on the way people operate, the way they 'practise' everyday life (Highmore, 2002, p. 147). For de Certeau, the popular culture of everyday life evidences 'ways of using the products imposed by a dominant economic order' (de Certeau, 1984, p. xiii). Everyday life is the scene of use within 'a system that, far from being their own, has been constructed and spread by others' (de Certeau, 1984, p. 17). What characterises the everyday for de Certeau is a creativity that responds to this situation. By 'making-do' with a ready-made culture, while also, crucially, 'making with' this culture (through acts of appropriation and re-employment), everyday life evidences an 'inventiveness'. In circumstances limited to the material at hand, everyday life witnesses the creative arrangements and re-arrangements of *bricolage*: 'creativity is the act of reusing and recombining heterogeneous materials' (de Certeau, 1997a, p. 49). However, these assemblages are not just the products of an individual's will or actions; they are the products of a culture seen as heterogeneous, of culture in the plural. The heterogeneity of culture asserts itself, not just through the inventive juxtapositions that people make, but also through the stubborn insistence of the body, of childhood memories and cultural histories (Highmore, 2002, p. 148). 'The "resistance" of the everyday (de Certeau's *leitmotif*) is a resistance born of difference, of otherness: [...] traditions that are unlike those being promoted and imaginings that are different from the rationale governing the present' (Highmore, 2002, p. 148).

What de Certeau attempts is nothing less than the production of a poetics of everyday life. Such a poetics (emerging from the practices of everyday life and allowing those practices to become visible and audible) must mark its distance from 'traditional sociopolitical frames of reference' (Highmore, 2002, p. 150). If *The Practice of Everyday Life* is an investigation of 'the ways in which users operate', its object 'is not so much to discuss this elusive, yet fundamental subject as to make such a discussion possible':

This goal will be achieved if everyday practices, 'ways of operating' or doing things, no longer appear as merely the obscure background of social activity, and if a body of theoretical questions, methods, categories, and perspectives, by penetrating this obscurity, make it possible to articulate them.

(de Certeau, 1984, p. xi)

Such a project is possible through the invention of a poetics, or *poiesis*, of the everyday: an inventive language that will register the inventiveness, the *poiesis*, of the everyday. ‘Poetics’ needs to be understood both as an inquiry into the *forms* that the everyday takes and as an inventive activity within language and life. De Certeau reminds us that the etymology of ‘poetics’ is ‘from the Greek *poiein* “to create, invent, generate”’ (de Certeau, 1984, p. 205). It is this inventive language of ‘insinuation’, of ‘ruses’ and ‘poaching’ and of ‘multiform’, ‘tricky’ and ‘stubborn’ ways of operating that should determine the success or failure of de Certeau’s project.

3.3.2 Resistance

Michel de Certeau mentions *The Art of War* by the Chinese author Sun Tzu (1984, p. xx) in his work, but it is not certain that he gains much influence from this high-ranking Chinese military general and tactician. However, it is definitely the case that de Certeau is influenced by Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu, who both discuss power/domination and the practice of resistance in their works. By contrast with Foucault, de Certeau does not view contemporary society as a panoptical society dominated by a technocratic rationality that reduces the inherent complexity and diversity of the world to homogeneity or sameness, thereby denying the right of ‘otherness’ to exist. Rather, de Certeau views everyday life as a sphere of resistance, where resistance means both virtually and actually. However, this ‘resistance’ is not synonymous with opposition. To de Certeau, resistance is closer to the use of the term in electronics and psychoanalysis as it is what hinders and dissipates the energy flow of domination, it is what resists representation (Highmore, 2002, pp. 151-152). Michel de Certeau is more interested in the unsystematic and pluralistic qualities of culture, and with life on the margins as lived by the ‘anonymous’ masses (Gardiner, 2000, p. 165).

Inasmuch as Certeau’s work on everyday life revolves primarily around the distinction between tactics and strategies (Ahearne, 1995, pp. 157-189), it is necessary to investigate these two concepts in more detail. His central premise, one he broadly shares with Pierre Bourdieu, is that the investigation of any sociocultural field requires an understanding of the complex of practices that constitute that field. A practice conforms to a particular logic, a characteristic way of thinking and acting. In the ‘General Introduction’ to his work, he writes:

I call a ‘strategy’ the calculus of force-relationships which becomes possible when a subject of will and power (a proprietor, an enterprise, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated from an ‘environment’. A strategy assumes a place that can be circumscribed as *proper* (*propre*) and thus serve as the basis for generating relations

with an exterior distinct from it (competitors, adversaries, ‘clienteles’, ‘targets’, or ‘objects’ of research). Political, economic, and scientific rationality has been constructed on this strategic model.

I call a ‘tactic’, on the other hand, a calculus which cannot count on a ‘proper’ (a spatial or institutional localization), nor thus on a borderline distinguishing the other as a visible totality. The place of a tactic belongs to the other. A tactic insinuates itself into the other’s place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance. It has at its disposal no base where it can capitalize on its advantages, prepare its expansions, and secure independence with respect to circumstances. The ‘proper’ is a victory of space over time. On the contrary, because it does not have a place, a tactic depends on time—it is always on the watch for opportunities that may be seized ‘on the wing’. Whatever it wins, it does not keep. It must constantly manipulate events in order to turn them into ‘opportunities’. The weak must continually turn to their own ends forces alien to them.

(de Certeau, 1984, p. xix)

From the definition above, strategy is analogous to top-down domination and ideology as the coercer of the symbolic violence and cultural hegemony. By contrast, a tactic is an art of the weak, which ‘boldly juxtaposes diverse elements in order suddenly to produce a flash shedding of a different light on the language of a place and to strike the hearer’ (de Certeau, 1984, pp. 37-38). Tactics are the ‘cross-cuts, fragments, cracks and lucky hits in the framework of a system, consumers’ ways of operating’ that exist in all spheres of everyday life, including housing, clothing, do-it-yourself, cooking, walking, reading and so on.

De Certeau (1984) presents the example of *la perruque* (the wig) to show that tactics of resistance prevail in everyday life:

La perruque is the worker’s own work disguised as work for his employer. It differs from pilfering in that nothing of material value is stolen. It differs from absenteeism in that the worker is officially on the job. *La perruque* may be, as simple a matter as a secretary’s writing a love letter on ‘company time’ or as complex as a cabinetmaker’s ‘borrowing’ a lathe to make a piece of furniture for his living room. Under different names in different countries this phenomenon is becoming more and more general, even if managers penalize it or ‘turn a blind eye’ on it in order not to know about it. (p. 25)

The example of *la perruque* shows, as de Certeau asserts, that the employee uses this tactic to “[put] one over” on the established order on its home ground’. Using this

tactic of resistance, workers can escape the total domination of the established order. Tactics are thus of central significance in social resistance.

3.3.3 Spatial Practice

The issue of space has gained increasing attention in scholarship since the 1970s. In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre (1991) argues that space is a social product or a complex social construction (based on values and the social production of meanings) that affects spatial practices and perceptions. This argument implies the shift of the research perspective from space itself to the processes of its production; the embrace of the multiplicity of spaces that are socially produced and made productive in social practices; and a focus on the contradictory, conflicting and ultimately political character of the processes of the production of space (Stanek, 2011, p. ix). Michel Foucault is also attentive to the imbrication of power and space. Focusing on the increasing logic of preserving, monitoring and managing human life, Foucault theorises modernity as the expanding spaces of ‘disciplinary’ and ‘governmental’ regimes that create enclosed spaces, such as hospitals, prisons, schools, factories and insane asylums, for optimising surveillance, producing individuals and providing care and social services to a population (Foucault, 1977, 1984, 1991). Foucault uses Jeremy Bentham’s panopticon to disclose the power relations.

Spatial practice is the pivotal theme in de Certeau’s theory of *The Practice of Everyday Life*. In the ‘General Introduction’ to his work, he explains:

But our research has concentrated above all on the uses of space, on the ways of frequenting or dwelling in a place, on the complex processes of the art of cooking, and on the many ways of establishing a kind of reliability within the situations imposed on an individual, that is, of making it possible to live in them by reintroducing into them the plural mobility of goals and desires—an art of manipulating and enjoying!

(de Certeau, 1984, p. xxii)

From de Certeau’s perspective, space is an existence in everyday life created by ordinary people. It is exactly in opposition to the disciplinary space in the Foucauldian sense. In terms of spatial practice, he makes a distinction between space (*espace*) and place (*lieu*):

A place (*lieu*) is the order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence. It thus excludes the possibility of two things being in the same location (place). The law of the ‘proper’ rules in the place: the elements taken into consideration are beside one another, each situated in its

own ‘proper’ and distinct location, a location it defines. A place is thus an instantaneous configuration of positions. It implies an indication of stability.

A space exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables. Thus space is composed of intersections of mobile elements. It is in a sense actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it. Space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities. On this view, in relation to place, space is like the word when it is spoken, that is, when it is caught in the ambiguity of an actualization, trans-formed into a term dependent upon many different conventions, situated as the act of a present (or of a time), and modified by the transformations caused by successive contexts. In contradistinction to the place, it has thus none of the univocity or stability of a ‘proper’.

In short, space is a practiced place. Thus the street geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into a space by walkers. In the same way, an act of reading is the space produced by the practice of a particular place: a written text, i.e., a place constituted by a system of signs.

(de Certeau, 1984, p. 117)

Similar to the paired concepts of strategy and tactics, place and space are non-oppositional binary terms. Strategy and tactics represent the powerful and the weak, respectively. The powerful and the weak are often engaged in spatial practice with their strategy and tactics, respectively. De Certeau finds that space in everyday life is often created in two ways: by using everyday language and culture to undermine the dominant power system; and through walking. Here, walking in cities opens up and creates a new space for ordinary people because they can overturn the established order through their different ways of walking.

3.4 Conclusion

Ordinary culture/popular culture, hegemony and official culture serve as the theoretical concepts in this research, while de Certeau’s theory in *The Practice of Everyday Life* provides the analytical framework. De Certeau’s key concepts of resistance, spatial practice, strategy and tactics and place and space are used as the analytical instruments throughout the main chapters.

Chapter 4: Methodology and Methods

4.1 Introduction

As a cross-disciplinary study of religious culture with an emphasis on the power relations between religious culture and state power and between the Chinese ritual tradition and Christian culture in the everyday life of ordinary people, this research adopts ethnography as its methodology. This chapter begins with a brief introduction to the town of Dongpu, the field in which I conducted my ethnographic research. Then, I discuss the methodological foundation for this research, before finally explicating the specific methods used for the data collection and analysis.

4.2 Methodology

In ‘The Analysis of Culture’, Williams (2009) outlines the ‘three general categories in the definition of culture’ (p. 32). Among the three categories, ‘there is the “social” definition of culture, in which culture is a description of a particular way of life’ (p. 32). This definition introduces three new ways of thinking about culture: the ‘anthropological’ position, which sees culture as a description of a particular way of life; the proposition that culture ‘expresses certain meanings and values’ (p. 32); and the claim that the work of cultural analysis should be the ‘clarification of the meanings and values implicit and explicit in a particular way of life, a particular culture’ (p. 32).

The ‘social’ definition of culture was crucial to the founding of culturalism, which was initiated at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (BCCCS) through the efforts of scholars such as Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams, E. P. Thompson, Stuart Hall and Paddy Whanne. The approach of BCCCS was characterised by the following orientations: a primary interest in exploring culture as a site at which power and resistance play out; ethnographic explorations of everyday life, especially of subcultures; an intent to uncover the ways that politics, power and inequality shaped lifestyle and fashion (P. Smith & Riley, 2011, pp. 151-155).

In this research, the practice of Chinese rituals and Christianity is viewed as a particular way of life. Owing to Williams insistence on defining ordinary culture as the ‘lived experience’ of ‘ordinary’ men and women, made in their daily interaction with the texts and practices of everyday life, my research follows the approach of the Birmingham school of cultural studies and adopts ethnography as the methodological principle to explore the religious life of ordinary people in their everyday life.

Ethnography is a popular approach to social research, but the term itself is ambiguous. There are two types of definition. The first views ethnography as a synonym for qualitative research as a whole; this is often called 'big' ethnography. The other considers ethnography as 'field research' or 'fieldwork'; this is often called 'little' ethnography. Both definitions involve not just method but also methodology in social sciences (Brewer, 2000). My research is an example of qualitative research (big ethnography) and involves fieldwork (little ethnography). However, ethnography in this research means as follows:

In its most characteristic form it involves the ethnographer participating, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions—in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research.

(Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 1)

Within ethnography, several branches with their own particular focus, such as autoethnography and critical ethnography, have been developed by scholars. As this research has the political intent to investigate the religion–state power relations from the perspective of ordinary people, critical ethnography has been somewhat adopted as my methodological stance.

Critical ethnography emerged with broad 'critical theory' in the 1960s and 1970s, challenging established social values and power relations. Thomas (1993) gives a wide definition: 'Critical ethnographers describe, analyze, and open to scrutiny otherwise hidden agendas, power centers, and assumptions that inhibit, repress, and constrain. Critical scholarship requires that commonsense assumptions be questioned' (pp. 2-3) . Critical ethnography assumes that the researcher cannot be value-free and should direct efforts towards positive social change.

Critical ethnography begins with an ethical responsibility to address processes of unfairness or injustice within a particular lived domain. By 'ethical responsibility', I mean a compelling sense of duty and commitment based on moral principles of human freedom and well-being and hence a compassion for the suffering of living beings. The conditions for existence within a particular context are not as they could be for specific subjects. As a result, the researcher feels a moral obligation to contribute towards changing those conditions towards greater freedom and equity.

Critical ethnographers explore beneath surface appearances, disrupt the status quo and unsettle both neutrality and taken-for-granted assumptions by bringing to light underlying and obscure operations of power and control. Therefore, the critical

ethnographer resists domestication and moves from ‘what is’ to ‘what could be’ (Denzin, 2001; Noblit, Flores, & Murillo, 2004). Since the critical ethnographer is committed to the art and craft of fieldwork, empirical methodologies become the foundation for inquiry, and it is here ‘on the ground’ of Others that the researcher encounters social conditions that become the point of departure for research (Thomas, 1993). Researchers with critical ethnography as methodology intend to probe other possibilities that will challenge institutions, regimes of knowledge and social practices that limit choices, constrain meaning and denigrate identities and communities. This is also the path I follow in this research.

This research problematises religion–state relations and the relationship between Chinese ritual tradition and Christian culture with the intention of critically evaluating taken-for-granted assumptions and obscure operations of power and control, thus calling for a better understanding and coexistence between cultures. Therefore, critical ethnography serves as a pertinent methodology for this research.

4.3 Data Collection

To collect the primary data, I spent about 10 months doing fieldwork in the town of Dongpu from January to October in 2012. Being a Chinese local in Shaoxing City helped me greatly in conducting my fieldwork. The town of Dongpu was familiar to me, geographically and culturally. Additionally, there was no need for me to learn the local dialect, as I could already communicate with the local people without any difficulty.

The data collection for this research was primarily completed through fieldwork, which consisted of observation, participant observation and interviews. Alongside this, I also collected data through secondary research. This section describes how I obtained both the primary field data and the secondary data for this research.

To investigate the Chinese ritual practices of the local people of Dongpu, I visited dozens of local temples and nunneries, as well as several lineage halls. I also spent two months observing the ritual practices in a household Guanyin Shrine. I interviewed the owner of this shrine, Mr Wang and his mother, as well as several ritual practitioners visiting this shrine. I also interviewed some local folk culture experts, who helped me immensely. In addition, as a local person, I participated in the rituals my mother practiced to deities and ancestors.

To explore how rituals are performed as intangible cultural heritage, I visited several tourist attractions where the heritage ritual Shaoxing Zhufu was displayed. I interviewed the managers of these tourist spots as well as some tourists. I also attended

the Jiuxian Temple Festival and interviewed several organisers and ordinary participants of this ritual event.

To gain an understanding of the religious practice of Christians in Dongpu and for overall information about the church, I spent several months attending church services. I ate lunch with Christians and participated in several church events. I interviewed the pastors in the church as well as ordinary Christians. I also attended a traditional Chinese funeral and a Chinese Christian's funeral. I interviewed several Christians at the funeral and some family members of the deceased.

Complementing the fieldwork, I conducted significant secondary research. In this information age, many social settings are self-documenting. Members of a community are engaged in the production and circulation of various kinds of written materials. At the official level, for example, local government produces abundant paper or electronic documents; while at the grassroots level, villagers in traditional communities may compile their kinship charts or lineage history. These data are important because social contexts involve 'documentary constructions of reality' (Coffey & Atkinson, 2004, p. 62).

During the fieldwork, I collected archival documents on the past and present of Dongpu, such as the *Gazetteer of Dongpu Town* and the *Folklores of Ancient Town of Dongpu*. These materials helped me to obtain a general idea of the field for this research. I also collected several published books about the ritual practices in Dongpu, such as the *Cultural Study of Jiuxian Temple Fair*. Using the Internet, I found official documents and news reports concerning the two heritage rituals for my two case studies. Additionally, I obtained visual data, such as photos and videos, concerning the heritage rituals. Of the two videos I was able to access, one was produced by Shaoxing Municipal Government for the provincial-level intangible cultural heritage identification of Zhufu, while the other was the application video for the National Preservation Base of Traditional Festival—Shaoxing Zhufu.

In terms of preparing the collected data for analysis, a great deal of time was spent on actualising and transcribing the data. Data was conducted throughout the process of fieldwork. When conducting participant observation, I made field notes, took pictures using a digital camera and made recordings using digital video, with the permission of my informants. Most of the unstructured interviews and casual conversations were recorded with digital audio recorder and I kept research diaries, which I completed after each fieldwork day. I re-listened to all of the recorded data and sampled what I needed for the research before transcribing the excerpts. All the data were classified into

categories as text documents, audio files or video files according to the themes of Chinese ritual practices, Christianity and intangible cultural heritage.

4.4 Data Analysis

As introduced in Chapter 3, the philosophical foundation underpinning the understanding of religious culture comes from Raymond Williams' definition and analysis of culture. Therefore, the analysis of the data of the religious culture or Chinese ritual tradition and Christian culture of Dongpu primarily serves to describe the religious culture as a particular way of life. The data analysis thus aims at the clarification of the meanings and values implicit and explicit in this particular culture and particular way of life. This description can be divided into two stages: first-level description and thick description.

First-level description is the description of the scene, the parameters/boundaries of the research group and the overt characteristics of group members (Richards & Morse, 2013, pp. 186-187). It may include demographic characteristics, the history of the population, maps of relevant areas and so forth. The purpose of first-level description is to set the stage by providing background information for the subsequent analytic reporting. First-level description is usually presented in narrative form and supplemented by tables, maps or photographs.

Thick description (Geertz, 1973) arises from researchers processing interviews and field notes on informal conversations and observations to develop theoretical insights from these materials. These materials are then condensed by summarising, synthesising and extracting the essential features or characteristics of the situation (Richards & Morse, 2013, p. 188). At this stage, the strategy of 'progressive focusing' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) is adopted to analyse the data. Specifically, by reading and rereading field notes and transcripts, data are funnelled, selected, reinterpreted and searched for comparisons to refine the interpretation. Although this research is not intended to be a traditional ethnography that presents a detailed and comprehensive description of the lives of members of a group as they are lived, the data analysis in this research still adopts the emic perspective (i.e., the viewpoint of ordinary people in the town of Dongpu). Thick description here focuses on the interpretation and clarification of the meanings and values implicit and explicit in the everyday life of ordinary people in the town of Dongpu.

Further, as this research adopts Michel de Certeau's theory of *The Practice of Everyday Life* as its theoretical and analytical framework, I employ de Certeau's key concepts of resistance, strategy and tactics, place and space and spatial practice as

reference points to analyse the data. These concepts inform the analysis in each of the main chapters. However, there is a difference of focus between the chapters in terms of analysing the data depending on the specific research question to be addressed in the chapter. For example, in Chapters 9 and 10, the analysis of strategy and tactics in spatial practice is not as prominent as in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, as Chapters 9 and 10 focus on investigating the process and consequences of ritual heritagisation.

4.5 Town of Dongpu

The town of Dongpu lies in the west of Shaoxing City, Zhejiang Province, on the east coast of China. It stretches 4.76 kilometres from east to west and 9.94 kilometres from south to north, with an area of 30.78 square kilometres. It sits between Shaoxing City proper in the east and China Textile City¹⁵ in the west (see Figure 4.1 below). Railways, roads and canals run through the town to provide a very convenient and fast network of transportation. There are 32 administrative villages, with 13,059 households and 39,785 residents. It is a typical Han Chinese community with 194 surnames, among which Chen, Hu and Shen are the major ones (Chen, 1998, p. 7).



Figure 4.1 Location of the Town of Dongpu¹⁶

The history of Dongpu can be traced back to the end of the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317–420). It took shape during the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127) and Southern Song Dynasty (1127–1279) (Li & Yu, 1998, p. 149). It was designated as a famous provincial-level historical and cultural town by the State Council of China in 1991. As

¹⁵ China Textile City (CTC) is located in Keqiao, Shaoxing County. CTC is a textile distribution centre of the very largest scale and offers the greatest variety of textile products in China. In addition, it is the largest textile professional market in Asia, and the biggest trade centre worldwide.

¹⁶ This map is obtained from *Google map*.

an ancient town, Dongpu is usually regarded as the miniature of Shaoxing City, which boasts of a history of 2500 years.

The town of Dongpu is closely associated with water in its geography, architecture, economy and culture. The name of Dongpu is the combination of the Chinese characters 东 (*dong*, east) and 浦 (*pu*, river, lake, creek or swamp). It can be said that this town is situated and saturated physically and culturally in the water, with Ansang Lake in the east, Ancient Mirror Lake in the south, Guazhu Lake in the west and Qingdian Lake in the middle. Additionally, rivers, such as the Longheng, Dupu, Changzhuang and Yudu, crisscross through the town. There used to be 72 river branches winding through the white-walled and black-tiled houses built on the riverbanks. Where there is water, there are bridges. There are as many as 216 ancient and modern bridges with different architectural features in Dongpu.

A Chinese saying goes that ‘Those living on a mountain live off the mountain, those living near the water live off the water’. Dongpu, as a water town in the northwest of the Ningbo-Shaoxing Plain, traditionally depends on the economic revenue sources of rice and rice wine production, with supplementation from freshwater agriculture and household handicrafts. Dongpu, the birthplace of Shaoxing rice wine, functioned as the centre of the winemaking industry of Shaoxing as early as the Song Dynasty (960–1279). The Zhouqing brand of rice wine representing Shaoxing wine was entered into the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in California 1915 and won the gold medal. Dongpu is also the birthplace of reputed political leaders, revolutionaries, strategists, men of letters and scientists, among which Lu You (a great patriotic poet of the Southern Song Dynasty), Xu Xilin (a revolutionary martyr in the Revolution of 1911) and Chen Yi (a military leader of the Kuomintang) are still well remembered among local people.

The long history of Dongpu has nurtured its distinctive local customs and religious culture. Buddhism boomed in the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing Dynasties (1616–1911) and there were dozens of temples and nunneries for Buddhists (Chen, 1998). However, during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), these places of worship were pulled down or transformed for other uses, and monks and nuns returned to lay life. Protestantism came into Dongpu in as early as 1944; however, religious activities were stopped during the Cultural Revolution and were not revived until reform in 1978 brought the implementation of religious policy allowing for the practice of state-sanctioned religions, including Protestantism (Chen, 1998). There is now a Christian church in the town and another church is under construction. Since the reform and

opening up, there has been a revitalisation of local customs and rituals in Dongpu. Rituals to deities such as Guanyin (see Chapter 5) and rituals to ancestors (see Chapter 6) are practiced around the year. Some rituals (Zhufu, see Chapter 9) and temple festivals (Jiuxian Temple Festival, see Chapter 10) have been identified as intangible cultural heritage.

I chose the town of Dongpu as the field for my research for the following reasons. Firstly, as this research investigates the relationships between religion, heritage and power, the town of Dongpu served as a wonderful community in which to explore the research questions, as it has all of these thematic elements to a satisfactory level. People in Dongpu practice Chinese rituals in their everyday life. Additionally, there is a Christian community regularly attending services in the church. These religious practices have a long history in Dongpu. They have become a cultural tradition and religious heritage in this community. Moreover, as an ancient town in the process of modernisation and urbanisation, Dongpu experienced the political turmoil that followed 1949 and it is now confronted with opportunities and challenges in addressing the relationship between tradition and modernity. Along with the town's economic development, the local ritual culture is undergoing revitalisation and transformation. While some rituals have been identified as intangible cultural heritage, some beliefs and rituals continue to be seen as 'feudal superstition'. The interaction in the town between the local religious culture and the state power makes the town of Dongpu typical of developing Chinese society. To a large extent, Dongpu can be viewed as the epitome of China in terms of its history and contemporary ecology of local culture. The exploration of ordinary people's intangible cultural practice within the political, economic and cultural context in this particular town will shed light on the relationship between religion, heritage and power in contemporary China so that a clearer idea of how to establish a harmonious civil society can be achieved. Secondly, Dongpu is my hometown. It is more advisable for me as a novice in ethnographic study to conduct research in a culturally and psychologically familiar place rather than to try to immerse myself in an 'Other' world. However, although the town is familiar to me, the familiar is not necessarily the known. With the intention of investigating my own culture and exploring the logic underlying the religious practices in people's everyday life, I believe there is an 'Other' world worth discovering and re-examining. In summary, the town of Dongpu satisfies both my academic and my personal agenda.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter explicated the ethnographic foundation and critical stance of this research. Fieldwork and secondary research combine to serve as the methods for data collection. For the data analysis, an emic perspective in the ethnographic tradition and the theoretical framework and analytical concepts of Michel de Certeau's are adopted.

Part Two Religion and Power

Chapter 5: Rituals in a Household Guanyin (观音) Shrine

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses how a household Guanyin Shrine is contextualised in the lived space of everyday life and how the people in the neighbourhood practice rituals in this special ritual space. The Guanyin Shrine is a lived ritual space created by ordinary people who tactically evade the surveillance and domination of state and local power. The celebration of Guanyin's birthday shows that the household Guanyin Shrine works as a stage on which ordinary people produce ritual events and interact not only with the deity but also with the people in the neighbourhood.

The ritual practices in the shrine serve as an alternative solution to everyday life problems. Binary concepts such as sacred/secular and superstition/science do not apply to explain the logic underlying the ritual practices of everyday life. In reality, ordinary people dissolve state and local power from the knowledge classification between science and religion and science and superstition with their spatial and ritual practice. In this sense, the ritual practices in everyday life exhibit resistance to the strategic discourse of scientism, atheism and materialism.

5.2 Background

Ritual practices are closely connected to specific places of worship (temples, nunneries, ancestral halls, tombs or even household shrines) on specific occasions (the birth date or death date of a specific god, goddess, deity, ancestor or Buddha) for various reasons. Therefore, it is advisable to explore these venues and the deities enshrined in them before inquiring into how ordinary people practice rituals in these places of worship.

According to the *Gazetteer of Dongpu Town* (Chen, 1998), there were as many as 57 public temples and nunneries in Dongpu before 1949. When I did fieldwork in 2012, there were seven temples in operation, and of these, four were commonly in use: Xing Fu Temple (Prosperity and Happiness Temple); Gu Zhaitang An (Ancient Nunnery); Jian Long Temple (Dragon-Viewing Temple); and Long Kou Temple (Dragon Mouth Temple). The following is a brief introduction to the first three of these places of

worship.¹⁷ Long Kou Temple is described in more detail in the case study of a heritage temple festival in Chapter 10.

Legend goes that Xingfu Temple was established in 1795 (during the reign of Qianlong emperor). It was renovated in 1807 (during the reign of Jiaqing emperor), 1848 (during the reign of Daoguang emperor) and 2010. It was a tradition that local people held a temple festival on the seventh day of the lunar July to celebrate the birthday of Tianyi (Heavenly Doctor) Buddha.¹⁸ After about 10 years of discontinuation, this tradition was resumed in 2012. Alongside Tianyi, the Earth Buddha¹⁹ is also enshrined in this temple.

Gu Zhaitang An used to be the study of the surnamed-Quan family during the Southern Song Dynasty (1127–1279) (Yu & Huang, 2005). In the early Ming Dynasty (1360–1390), the descendants of the Quan family turned it into a nunnery. It is unknown when the deities were enshrined in the nunnery; however, Plague Marshall,²⁰ Water Gods,²¹ Fire God, God of Wealth and God of City were enshrined in this place. During

¹⁷ The introduction of these three places was all translated from the oral narration of one of my informants, Mr. He.

¹⁸ The archetype of this deity is Huatuo, who was an ancient Chinese physician who lived in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. Hua is considered a shenyi ('divine doctor') and is worshipped as a medicinal god or immortal in Taoist temples. 'Hua Tuo zaishi' ('Hua Tuo reincarnated') is a term of respect for a highly skilled doctor.

¹⁹ The Earth Buddha, or the Earth God, gains nationwide popularity among the vast population in China. He is usually imaged as a kindly-looking old man with white beard and hair. He is assumed to be the guardian who protects the local land and tombs. Due to his close relation to people's everyday life, especially in the rural area in the agrarian society, the Earth God is enshrined in numerous temples across China. There used to be a temple exclusively for the Earth God in Dongpu. When a person dies, the family members of the deceased would go to the temple to report the death to the God. But interestingly, this temple used to be the family temple of a surnamed-Quan Queen during the Southern Song Dynasty(1127–1279).

²⁰ The archetype of this deity is a legendary poor teacher. He taught the kids in the neighbourhood and also served as a gatekeeper for this place. One night in his dream he was told by an old man that the water in the well of this nunnery got poisonous. He knew people in the neighbourhood often came to fetch water from the well. The teacher got up very early that day and kept a close watch on the well. The neighbours came early for water as usual. He told them what he had dreamt and stopped them from fetching water there, but they wouldn't believe what he had said. The poor teacher then jumped into the well to talk people into giving up fetching water there. Seeing this, those people got him out of the well very quickly. Unfortunately, the poor teacher was already poisoned and died very soon. Since then, the local people never drank the water in that well. They made a statue of this poor teacher and worshipped him. Later, the Jade Emperor knew this story and conferred the title Plague Marshal upon this teacher. Since then, he has been taken as a guardian protecting the local people against the diseases. Interestingly, this marshal is dressed in his usual clothes instead of his battle garments. His only difference from common people is his dark skin due to the poison.

²¹ One Water God is locally called Zhang Lao Xianggong. He used to be a fisherman in Dongpu. Whenever he found someone drown dead, he would get them out of the water and bury them. Usually, fishermen urinated in the sea or river when they went out fishing. But this surnamed-Zhang fisherman never did so. Instead, he advised that everybody stop doing this. In addition, he also called on everyone not to throw waste into the river or the lake. The local people followed his example. As a result, rivers and lakes got very clean. His story was known by Jade Emperor and he became the

the Maoist era, the nunnery was transformed to serve as the office for the farm of Shaoxing County. The previous stage for opera performance and statues of deities were demolished. In 2012, some local adherents renovated the building with donated money and statues of deities and Buddhas were again enshrined in the nunnery. In addition to the abovementioned ones, some new deities were enshrined during the renovation.

Jian Long Temple²² was established in 1792 (during the reign of Qianlong emperor). It was renovated several times and was granted as a venue for Buddhist activity after the implementation of the reform and opening up policy. Alongside several Buddhist statues, a statue of Baogong²³ was also enshrined. On the fifteenth night of lunar June every year, adherents go to this temple to offer incense, and a temple festival is held to celebrate Baogong's birthday in the hope that this deity will protect the local people against evils and disasters and bring a smooth year and a good harvest.

Zhao (2002) argues that what religious activity is carried out in a given temple or monastery can usually be identified by the god worshipped, the ritual practiced and the identity of the believers and clergymen. However, most practitioners in China do not worship a fixed deity in a dedicated Buddhist or Taoist temple; they attend more to the rituals associated with their own local cultural tradition. From the introduction above, none of the three places of worship can be strictly called a Buddhist or Taoist temple. Rather, these places provide for the worship of miscellaneous deities and Buddhas in the Buddhist, Taoist or even territorial tradition. Regarding the territorial deities, these were often deified from historical or legendary figures who were later followed as moral exemplars.

Ritual practices at places of worship are not self-evident religious activities. They are often subject to disciplinary forces, such as oppression from the state power, discursive derogation as 'feudal superstition' and economic exploitation as tourist attractions. Therefore, places of worship actually become an arena of contest in spatiality between the subject of will of the power and the weak.

Water God. There were many fishermen in Qinglong village where the nunnery was located. That's why the local people revered this deity so much and enshrined him in the nunnery. Other two Water Gods were the previous governors of Shaoxing city. One was named Ma Zhen, who built the Mirror Lake. The other was Tang Zhao'en, who built the Sanjiang Sluice. They were killed wrongly although both of them had been very honourable officials. The local people built statues in memory of them.

²² According to Mr. He, this temple was originally built exclusively to enshrine Baogong, but now it mainly serves as a venue for Buddhist activity.

²³ Bao Gong is the household name in China for Bao Zheng. He was a much-praised official who served during the reign of Emperor Renzong of Northern Song Dynasty (1127-1279). Culturally, Bao Zheng today is respected as the symbol of justice in Greater China.

5.3 Spatial Practice of Guanyin Shrine

As the most popular deity among the Chinese people, Guanyin has been regarded as a saviour of all in distress or a bestower of happiness. The worship of Guanyin is the cult of half of Asia (Tay, 1976). Legends represent her as a sage who upholds justice, drives out evil, bestows children on the childless and fortune on the needy, and often appears in people's dreams exhorting them to do good work and abstain from doing evil. Many people believe these stories and enshrine her image in their homes for regular rituals.

The Guanyin Shrine in this chapter was located in an ordinary house belonging to a 90-year-old woman, Mrs Zhou, in the town of Dongpu. Its location is indicated in Figure 5.1 below (in the upper left corner). The building in the upper right corner of the figure was Zhou's warehouse. There were another two households to the east of Zhou's house. With a wall at the east end and a river in the west, these households were isolated from the outside world if the gate (shown in the top middle of the figure) was closed. The Guanyin Shrine was hidden in this isolated private space, but it was well known and visited regularly by Zhou's relatives, friends and acquaintances in the neighbourhood on important days throughout the year. Mr Wang, Mrs Zhou's son, alternated with his sister to care for their mother and the shrine. Managing this shrine was a small business for Mr Wang, who also worked as an electrician in a pharmaceutical factory for Chinese medicine. In his terms, the Guanyin Shrine was the Buddha²⁴ *Tang*. *Tang*, an essential part of the living space and a ritual space in Chinese people's everyday life, is discussed further in Chapter 6.

²⁴ Buddha, in local people's language, virtually equals to all supernatural deities, gods and goddess. People never bother to ask whether they are from Buddhist tradition, Taoist background, or even local cultural origin. As long as people can be protected and blessed, the supernatural are all enunciated Buddha.

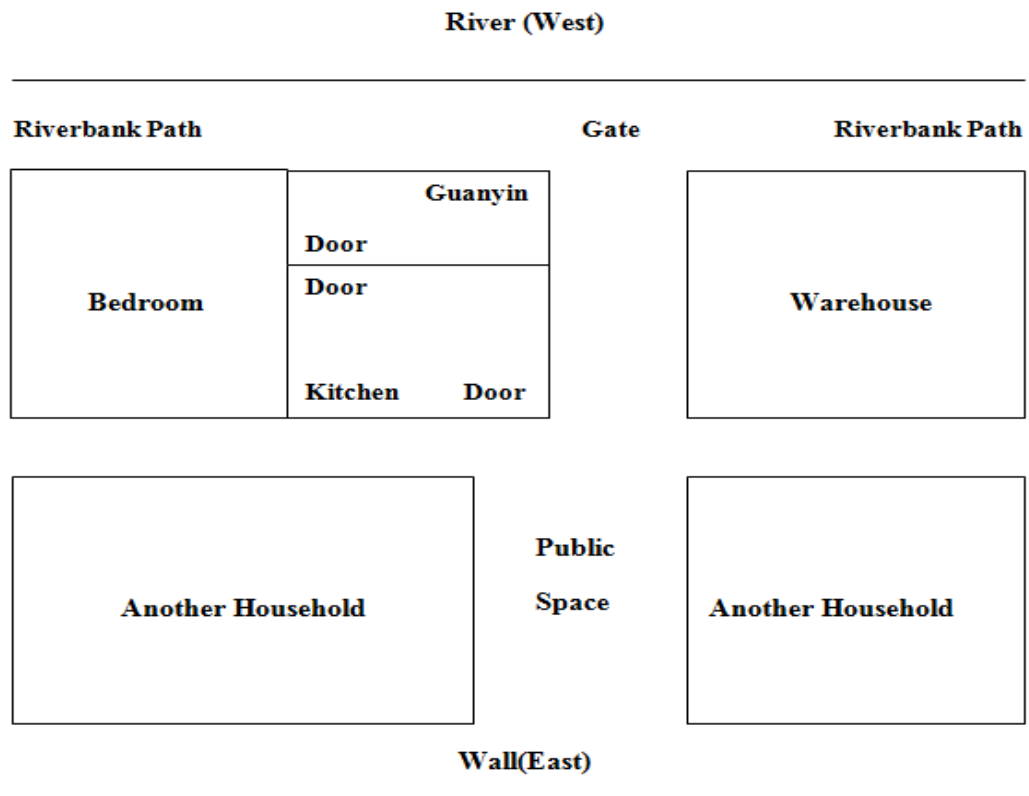


Figure 5.2 The Location of Guanyin Shrine

In *The Sacred and the Profane*, Eliade (1959) claimed that the sacred space is a non-homogeneous space experienced by religious people as the world with a sacred centre. Sacred places were revealed to religious people by means of signs of various sorts recognised as coming from the divine. An obvious example is the church whose door is a threshold between the profane on the outside and the sacred on the inside. Likewise, the Guanyin Shrine is a sacred space manifested through various material components, of which the statue of Guanyin is the most prominent. It is enclosed inside a cupboard in a small room with total area of less than eight square metres. The candleholders, incense burners and a cushion on the ground before the statue all signify the space's difference from the profane setting outside. There were also six round wooden plates on one wall in the shrine, with each carrying a traditional Chinese character of *ling* 靈 (efficacy). A few baskets with red candles and incense were placed in a corner. All these material signs indicated that this was a place of worship, where people came to seek sacred power from Guanyin.

However, differently from temples, churches and nunneries specialised for worship, the Guanyin Shrine is arguably a sacred space immersed in the arrangement of secular living. As illustrated in Figure 5.1, the shrine is but one spatial component of

Mrs Zhou's house. Over the threshold of the wooden door of Zhou's house is the living room, which also functions as the reception room for visitors. There is also a very simple kitchen in this living area, with a simple gas stove and a few china bowls sitting on a cement platform against the window. Mrs Zhou's bedroom is just on the left of the living room and the shrine. Therefore, the boundary between the shrine as the sacred space and the secular living area is blurred. To a large extent, the shrine is the creative arrangements and re-arrangements of *bricolage* and 'the act of reusing and recombining heterogeneous materials' (de Certeau, 1997a, p. 49). Often, visitors to the shrine chat about recent happenings in the neighbourhood while waiting for the practitioners performing the rituals in the shrine to leave.

De Certeau (1984) uses the concepts of strategy and tactics to refer to the corresponding ways of operating in spatial practice of a subject with will and power (authorities) and the consumers (users). The spatial struggle between strategy and tactics exists in ritual spaces such as temples, monasteries and nunneries. It is well known that in today's mainland China, only the five world religions of Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, Buddhism and Daoism are recognised as enjoying 'freedom of religion' (Goossaert, 2005). To implement convenient management, several national religious organisations were established to serve as a bridge between the various religious communities and the Party-state. These are the Buddhist Association of China, established in 1953; the National Taoist Association, established in 1957; the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (for Protestants), established in 1954; the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, established in 1957; and the China Islamic Association, established in 1953. These entities were to facilitate the downward movement of Party directives to local religious leaders and to channel up concerns from the grassroots level to Party leaders (Yang, 2008).

Besides these five world religions, the multitude of local community temples and territorial cult associations formed around gods, goddesses and immortals, along with sectarian traditions, many of which were undergoing transformation into what Prasenjit Duara (2003) has called modern 'redemptive societies' and which were placed in the category of 'superstitions' to be purged from the social body. As Vincent Goossaert insightfully argues, the religious policies of the modern Chinese state, rather than being anti-religious, have amounted to a radical reinvention of the religious field, redrawing boundaries between acceptable, legitimate religion and otherwise unacceptable superstition in an attempt to refashion religion in a way compatible with the modernist nationalist project (Goossaert, 2005). Similarly, Yang (2008, p. 17) suggests that the

reason for the state's approach to religion probably derives from the nationalist elites' unthinking adoption of Christianity as the model for what a legitimate religion should look like with a church-like organisation, an organised clergy and ordination system, a textual history, theological doctrines and scriptures and so forth.

In addition to monitoring and classifying the ritual spaces, the local governments and tourism sectors as power-holders also intervene in the construction and management of these public ritual spaces in contemporary China (Chen, 2013). In the name of preserving intangible cultural heritage and promoting the development of the tourist economy, local governments tend to exploit temples as tourist attractions. The clergymen in the temples are often deprived of management autonomy by the state and local power. Lay religious adherents are sometimes cheated by fake monks and nuns (Chen, 2013).

Under these circumstances, ritual practitioners adopt certain tactics. Although the owner of the Guanyin Shrine may not be clearly conscious of resisting the dominant order mentioned above, the shrine itself reveals the tactics employed by the people in the neighbourhood. The Guanyin Shrine is a self-contained semi-public ritual space created by Mr Wang and shared with his neighbourhood. As is shown in Figure 5.1, the enclosed structure of the house provides an isolated and private environment for the sacred place, and the shrine is hidden and subsumed naturally in the abode of an ordinary old woman. Compared with the conventional and monumental temples, which are defined by authorities as the proper places of worship, the Guanyin Shrine is exempt from the surveillance and interference of state and local authorities. The shrine provides visitors with a more favourable sense of privacy and intimacy due to its location in an ordinary household. The small statue of Guanyin in the narrow shrine room shortens the psychological distance between the Buddha and the visitors. The worship visit resembles a casual meeting between friends and family rather than a serious consultation, such as between a doctor and a patient.

All this is achieved by the creative incorporation of ritual space into the lived space of everyday life. This lived space, or representational space, is the space practiced by the weak as a tactical resistance to the representation of space or conceived space defined by scientists, urban architects, technocrats, social engineers, or simply the will and power of government (Lefebvre, 1991). The way the room of the house is used suggests the tactics of 'making-do' in the sense of de Certeau's resistance. The Guanyin Shrine embedded in the living space shows the way in which spaces with different functions can be combined and transformed.

Tactical spatial practice in rituals prevails in the everyday life of ordinary people. Much research has noted that Chinese residential space is inhabited by multiple deities and spirits (Knapp, 1999; Songnian & D.Johnson, 1992). In a traditional Chinese house, there are typically door gods and kitchen gods. Even in a modern apartment without practical images or statues of these deities, these supernatural gods exist in people's minds. These deities are formless beings, omnipresent in people's everyday life. During the period of the harshest suppression of Chinese ritual practices, private houses became the only secure sacred space free from the intervention of state power (Friedman, Pickowicz, & Selden, 2002). External force could destroy ancestral halls, temples, deity statues and incense burners, but it could not destroy all the households and eradicate the time-honoured tradition of ritual practices.

In negotiating with the Party-state to attain a higher degree of legitimacy, ordinary people in China adopt creative tactics. Chau (2011b, p. 6) terms one such tactic as 'getting into the official fold', which refers to obtaining the status of belonging to one of the five officially recognised religions and becoming an officially recognised 'venue for religious activities'. Gu Zhaitang An, described in Section 5.1 above, is an example of a venue that serves this purpose. As mentioned above, most public temples in China have to register with local authorities under the category of Buddhism or Taoism; otherwise, they are not legitimated. From its former glory as a communal ritual space before falling into disrepair due to the revolutionary campaigns and socialist construction after 1949, Gu Zhaitang An, a nunnery, was renovated as a ritual space in 2012. The six Chinese Characters 南无阿弥陀佛 (*Nāmó Ēmítuófó*) that commonly appear on the wall of Buddhist temples are painted in large black lettering on the external wall of the nunnery. Mr He (field notes, 10 August 2012), a local expert on folk culture and intangible cultural heritage and the inheritor of several folk arts in the town of Dongpu, complained that the building was originally intended for the remembrance of the Quan family and had little to do with Buddhism. Now, however, it is a place of worship for miscellaneous deities and Buddhas. There appears to be a divergent understanding between officials and ordinary people regarding the setting of this ritual space. However, with its superficial linkage to Buddhism, the nunnery has at least obtained nominal legitimacy.

5.4 Celebration of Guanyin's Birthday

Religion is not simply about religious conceptions and symbols; it is also about the ways in which religious activities are socially organised and how people are mobilised to produce these religious activities (Redfield, 1956, pp. 40-59). Folk

traditions, such as Chinese popular rituals, do not simply exist; they need to be continuously produced and reproduced. As the most venerated and visited deity, Guanyin's birthday is often celebrated spontaneously by ordinary people. According to local people, Guanyin has three birthdays, which fall on 19 February, 19 June and 19 September of the Chinese lunar calendar. Believers usually take these occasions to make offerings to Guanyin for different reasons, such as making and returning wishes. This section analyses the celebration of Guanyin's second birthday in the household shrine. In particular, this section investigates the logic of the ritual practice to Guanyin in people's everyday life during this small-scale communal ritual festival.

Chau (2004, p. 40) proposes the expression 'event production' as 'a broader term to refer to all kinds of cultural productions that are set apart from everyday life' and suggests that 'any event production (e.g., a funeral) typically consists of two parallel aspects: the ritual-procedural or liturgical aspect; and the hosting or guest-catering aspect'. His concepts of 'event production' and 'hosting' are applicable to the analysis of the celebration of Guanyin's birthday:

The celebration of the birthday happened on one day, but the preparation was actually started the day before the event day. Mr Wang cleaned the rooms of his house and prepared several coal-burning stoves. Some middle-aged women came uninvited to help clean the cooking utensils, bowls and chopsticks. Other women brought dozens of bamboo chairs and benches. Some people else brought some cooking oil, noodles and rice.

On the morning of the event day, Mr Wang's house and even the neighbour's rooms were packed with people. About 80 scripture-chanting elderly women were sitting around several tables in different rooms and chanting *Nāmó Ēmítuófó*²⁵ repeatedly. Apart from chanting, someone was also striking a little bell. And another was knocking at a 'wooden fish'.²⁶ Others were folding gold and silver paper into the

²⁵ What these elderly women were chanting was only one line that was repeated all day long. The only one line was in Chinese 南无阿弥陀佛. They usually call the chanting nianfo(念佛). Nianfo, is a term commonly seen in the Pure Land school of Mahāyāna Buddhism. It derives from the Sanskrit term *buddhānusmṛti*, which means 'mindfulness of the Buddha.' In the context of Pure Land practice, it generally refers to the repetition of the name of Amitābha Buddha. When chanted, 南无阿弥陀佛 sounds 'Nāmó Ēmítuófó'.

²⁶ The wooden fish (*muyu* in Chinese, *Mu* 木 means wood and *yu* 魚 means fish) is a percussion instrument used in the Mahayana Buddhist tradition - often to start and end a meditation period and for pacing chants and rituals. It is carved from a block of wood into the basic shape of a fish with a wide mouth, and then its interior is hollowed to provide the beautiful resonance when struck. Used by both Buddhist monks and lay Buddhists, it can produce different rhythms to control the pace of the chanting session as well as to keep everybody clear minded. There are many Buddhist legends and stories that involve the fish and how it became important enough to be the animal carved on

shape of ingots, which were further assembled into lotus flowers to be burned later as an offering to Guanyin. In the courtyard, about 10 middle-aged women chatted with each other while cleaning the vegetables with some others busy in the kitchen. Visitors were coming one after another. Most of them lit a pair of candles and several incenses before the statue of Guanyin and prayed to the deity for various reasons such as children's education, family's health, work and business, etc. The host, Mr Wang, walked in and out of the Guanyin Shrine tending on the visitors. Among the visitors, one family invited four folk artists to perform the local opera *Xuanjuan*²⁷ dedicated as an expression of gratitude to Guanyin. With the firecrackers set off, the performance of *Xuanjuan* started. Mr Wang placed a loudspeaker on the highest roof of his house towards the southeast corner of the sky. The performance of *Xuanjuan* resounded afar through the loudspeaker around the neighbourhood.

In the middle of the morning, all people excluding the coming visitors had a bowl of pumpkin noodle. At noon, they sat around the tables and ate a special vegetarian lunch. In the afternoon, the chanting of *Nāmó Ēmítuófó* and the performance of *Xuanjuan* continued until evening. The paper-folded lotus flowers were burned to Guanyin. Before everybody left, all the scripture-chanters and helpers got some souvenir for the event, which Mr Wang called *Jieyuan* (结缘).²⁸ Ten households donated 175 yuan respectively for the purchase of the souvenirs. Every share of souvenir for this year's celebration of Guanyin's birthday included a stainless steel wok, some steamed bread, some coiled noodles, biscuits and so on.

(field notes, 5 August 2012)

According to Mr Wang, the celebration of Guanyin's birthday has been held for many years. It has become an unwritten tradition practiced by the neighbourhood. Although this event cannot compare with large-scale 'religious' events such as temple festivals (see Chapter 10), it is still characteristic of the social organisation of popular religious events, summarised by Chau (2004) as 'volunteerism based on understandings

wooden block. One of the reasons could be due to the belief that the fish which always has its eyes open, never sleeps, thus symbolizing wakefulness and awareness – basic tenets of Buddhism.

²⁷ *Xuanjuan* is a form of folk art that remains popular in rural areas in provinces, such as Zhejiang and Jiangsu, eastern China. This art is usually performed by three or four people in the form of singing and reciting the scripts called 'precious scrolls' on special occasions for ritual practice, such as temple festivals, wedding, funeral and birthday for the purpose of entertaining deities and praying for good. *Xuanjuan* was smashed as 'superstition' during the anti-superstition movement after 1949. Since the reform and open up, *Xuanjuan* has been restored in rural areas and towns. In 2008, Shaoxing *Xuanjuan* was identified as the national intangible cultural heritage.

²⁸ *Jieyuan*, the Chinese pinyin for 结缘, is literally connecting Yuan. Yuan(缘) or Yuanfen (缘分) is a Buddhist-related Chinese concept that means the predetermined principle that dictates a person's relationships and encounters such as the affinity among friends or lovers.

of reciprocity and the division of labor among the helpers and specialists' (p. 41). As an event production, the celebration of Guanyin's birthday was held by the joint efforts of several categories of participants, including: the host and organiser of this event, Mr Wang; the scripture-chanting elderly women; the middle-aged women who volunteered to cook the vegetarian food for morning tea and lunch; and the visitors coming to make offerings to Guanyin for various problems in their everyday life. A division of labour among these participants was evident. As the host of this event, Mr Wang also served as the ritual specialist. The scripture-chanters and kitchen helpers played their own parts, and the visitors added another dimension to this religious event. These participants were all volunteers who assembled to hold this small-scale event out of their shared belief in Guanyin. The celebration of Guanyin's birthday is not only based on the reciprocity between the ritual practitioners and the deity, but also on the reciprocity between the participants themselves.

Chau (2011a) developed five modalities of 'doing religion' in Chinese religious culture:

- (1) discursive/scriptural, involving mostly the composition and use of texts; (2) personal-cultivational, involving a long-term interest in cultivating and transforming oneself; (3) liturgical, involving elaborate ritual procedures conducted by ritual specialists; (4) immediate-practical, aiming at quick results using simple ritual or magical techniques; and (5) relational, emphasising the relationship between humans and deities (or ancestors) as well as among humans in religious practices. (p. 549)

According to these five modalities, the religious activities during the celebration of Guanyin's birthday belong to the relational modality. This modality is exemplified in building temples, making offerings (i.e., feeding ancestors, deities and ghosts), taking vows, spreading miracle stories (i.e., testifying to the deities' efficacy), celebrating deities' birthdays at temple festivals, going on a pilgrimage, imperial mountain journeys, establishing religious communities and forming affiliations between temples and cult communities. This modality emphasises sociality, the bringing together of people through ritual events and festivals, the making and maintaining of relations, and the production and consumption of sociality. 'The key concepts in this modality are "social comings and goings" and social relations, or connectedness' (Chau, 2011a, p. 80).

By celebrating Guanyin's birthday, the participants were attempting to establish a close relationship with the deity. More significantly, a certain relationship was shaped through this communal event. The Guanyin Shrine and Guanyin's birthday provided a

stage for the participants in the neighbourhood to network and socialise. For the scripture-chanters, who are often elderly women with a great deal of leisure time and nothing to occupy them, scripture chanting becomes an opportunity for them to socialise. It can also serve as a way of easing one's mind and exercising the body (Yue, 2010, p. 127). This activity is popular among elderly women, and on occasion elderly men, in rural areas, as it requires no qualifications and brings a range of possible benefits, as mentioned above. In this way, scripture chanting is better understood as a recreational pastime rather than a religious activity.

The relational aspect of this event is also embodied in the giving of a souvenir, which functions as the connecting object between the participants. As Mr Wang explained, the souvenir was 'Jieyuan'. This is a Buddhist term that in common usage can be defined as the 'binding force' that links two persons together in any relationship. In the case of celebrating Guanyin's birthday, all the participants came together because of Guanyin. Therefore, the souvenir served as a material and relational vehicle to bind these people together practically and spiritually. The Chinese character for ritual, 礼, can also mean 'gift'. Gifts often work to build and strengthen the relationship between people. The souvenir is a gift for people who attended the ritual event and it is functionally and culturally similar to the offerings (gifts) to Guanyin in terms of building a relationship. Therefore, to make offerings to Guanyin or to present gifts to people often conveys the dual meaning of ritual practice and ritual propriety. Rituals (礼) in Chinese culture carry these multiple messages, and the relational construction or emotional attachment between people or between people and a deity is often embodied in ritual actions.

5.5 Treatment with Rituals

From a pragmatic perspective, people worship deities and engage in divination for solutions to various problems in their everyday life. In his study in Heilongdawang temple, Chau (2006) summarised as many as 15 reasons for the divination, including business, fortune, marriage date, education, disease and asking for sons. This was similarly observed at the Guanyin Shrine. According to Chau's modality of 'doing religion' cited in Section 5.4 above, the rituals performed to solve the problems in daily life belong to the immediate-practical modality. Examples include divination (e.g., oracle rod, moon-shaped divination blocks, divination sticks and coins), obtaining divine medicine from a deity, using talismans (e.g., ingestion of talismanic water), consulting a spirit medium, calling back a stray soul, begging for rain, ritual cursing or

offering incense. Due to its simplicity and low cost, this modality is the most frequently used by the common people (e.g., peasants and petty urbanites). The key concepts in this modality are efficacy (or miraculous power) and 'to beseech for help' (Chau, 2011a, pp. 76-77). Beneath this superficial pragmatism, however, the practice of rituals is subject to influences from syncretic tradition, which may incorporate elements of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. All of these elements can serve to solve everyday problems. Mr Wang's treatment of his mother's illness with rituals in the Guanyin Shrine provided a case in point:

Two days before the birthday of Guanyin, Mr Wang found his mother's tongue was thickly coated. Working as an electrician in the Chinese medicine factory, Mr Wang knew something about Chinese medicine. He believed that the balance between yin and yang in his mother's body was disturbed and that her spleen and stomach did not function well. Mr Wang first found some motilium tablets and some Chinese patent medicine for his mother. Meanwhile, he realised that he could also pray for a recipe of divine medicine. With this idea, he lit a pair of candles and complained of his mother's situation to Guanyin. He bowed respectfully three times with palms joined, and kowtowing three times with his knees on the cushion and stood up and did another three bows. Then he took two bamboo blocks for divination. The blocks looked like a computer mouse except that they both had one pointy end. If the flat planes of the blocks were joined, they looked like a bamboo shoot. Mr. Wang held the pointed end of the joined blocks with five fingers and circled them around the flame of the candles when he was praying to Guanyin. He paused a short while for thinking about something before he dropped the two blocks to the ground. Mr Wang did the dropping twice, both of which showed that one block's plane was upward and another's was downward. Mr Wang explained that the upward and the downward signified the combination of yin and yang. Having the combination of yin and yang twice, which indicated a desirable balance, Mr Wang did not drop the blocks a third time. He told me what he asked Guanyin: 'If my mother's illness is not serious, then Buddha, would you please show me two auspicious symbols?'

After this, Mr Wang went out and took a bowl from the kitchen in the reception room. He walked in the Buddha *tang* again with the bowl and drew three incenses from the basket. He held the incenses with his right hand and burned them on the flame of the candle. Soon the incenses started burning to ash and Mr Wang quickly caught the ash with the bowl in his left hand. Mr Wang put the bowl in front of Guanyin and poured some hot water in it. When the ash finally sank to the bottom

of the bowl, the water was the very divine medicine for his mother, who took it before lunch.

(Field notes, 4 August 2012)

Mr Wang's treatment of his mother's illness with rituals is obviously influenced by Taoist tradition, which largely features the balanced relationship between humans and nature. The traditional Chinese perspective is that there exists an integral relationship between the world of humans (the microcosm) and the 'other' world (the macrocosm) (Lidin, 1974; Mote, 1971; Wong, 1974). Traditionally, the Chinese see themselves as co-operating with a heaven above and an earth below with humans as a third component in this all-encompassing order. Harmony and order must be maintained at all times: in one individual's psyche; in every aspect of social life; and in the entire cosmos. Everything that exists, including humans, has a correct place in the order of things. When there is an imbalance or disharmony, order and equilibrium must be re-established. Humans are responsible for ensuring this harmony or they risk disaster in the physical and human world (Wong, 1974). The importance of balance and harmony is reflected in the Chinese conception of complementarity within the cosmos, concretised in the conception of yin and yang. Yang is equated with warmth, male, productivity, sunlight and life, while yin corresponds to cold, female, moon, darkness and death. Although conceived as opposite forces, yin and yang are in fact complementary, and are in a process of dynamic interaction. The ideal situation is one in which the two forces are in balance, thus achieving harmony. This is reflected in the ways the forces are believed to work in everyday life (Boyden & Sheelagh, 1981). Mr Wang's diagnosis of his mother's illness by looking at her tongue was a conventional medical practice in Chinese medicine. The reason he gave her mother the Chinese patent medicine was to restore her mother's desirable yin-yang balance. Without exaggeration, the yin-yang theory from the Taoist tradition permeates many aspects of Chinese people's everyday life.

In addition, Mr Wang's story also reveals the way ordinary people look at rituals and modern medical science. Regarding the latter, in *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, Foucault (2003) maintains:

The clinic—constantly praised for its empiricism, the modesty of its attention, and the care with which it silently lets things surface to the observing gaze without disturbing them with discourse—owes its real importance to the fact that it is a reorganization in depth, not only of medical discourse, but of the very possibility of a discourse about disease. (p. xxi)

Foucault's insight uncovered that the birth of modern medicine was not a common-sense movement towards simply seeing what was already there (and therefore a science without a philosophy), but rather represented a decisive shift in the structure of knowledge. The clinical science of medicine came to exist as part of a wider structure of organising knowledge that allowed the articulation of medicine as a discipline, making possible 'the domain of its experience and the structure of its rationality' (Foucault, 2003, p. xvii).

Modern medicine (Western biomedicine) is established on the basis of modern science and technology, which should be recognised as one of the great achievements that human society has made in understanding and treating diseases with modern knowledge. However, according to Foucault, modern medicine as a kind of science is a constructed discipline that exerted its hegemonic power with its scientific discourse over the human body and other traditions' understandings of the human body and means of treating disease. In contemporary clinical discourse, treating diseases with modern medicine (i.e., Western biomedicine) is predetermined as 'scientific' and thus as correct and legitimate. By contrast, other medical traditions, such as Chinese medicine or treatment with rituals, are denigrated as 'unscientific' and thus as wrong and unreliable. However, the distinction between religion and medicine is relatively recent. Even today, ordinary people continue to seek solutions in traditional herbal remedies or rituals alongside modern medicine.

Mr Wang's treatment of his mother's disease by combining Western and Chinese medicine shows the hybridity of influences in medical treatment in China. In practical everyday life, people are adaptive to both Western and Chinese medicine. This is a tactic they adopt to tackle problems in their everyday life. Alongside the Western and Chinese medicine Mr Wang used in the treatment for his mother, rituals also played a crucial role. Mr Wang's embodied actions, composed of prayers, bowing and kowtows, functioned as a medium between secular life and the sacred deity and his divination before Guanyin served as a means for diagnosis. The medicine obtained was divine because of the divinity resultant from the communication between the diseased and the deity through pious rituals.

In considering Mr Wang's treatment of his mother, influences can be discerned from Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism and modern medical science. The central value of Confucianism, *xiao* (filial piety) continues to take the dominant position in Chinese families, and Mr Wang's act can be interpreted as the reification of *xiao*. The notion of yin and yang in determining the health condition of Mrs Zhou and in the divination

derives from the tradition of Taoism, as does the concept of divine medicine, which can be viewed as a simplified example of alchemy in the Taoist tradition. It is important to mention that in the Taoist tradition, the distinction between religion and superstition and science and superstition is especially inappropriate because of the intertwined histories of philosophical and textual Daoism; alchemical and body-cultivation technologies; the complex pantheon of gods, goddesses and immortals; herbal and talismanic healing techniques; and a transcendental cosmology. Being at once magical technology, textual philosophy, self-cultivation, medical practice and collective rituals, Daoism defies the distinction between magic/superstition and religion and between religion and science (Yang, 2008, p. 18). As for the influence from Buddhism, Guanyin is a Buddhist figure. Although she has been transformed since being imported from India to China and has become a sacred deity among the vast majority of Chinese people in the mundane world, her teachings of 'doing good work and abstaining from doing evil' come directly from Buddhism. Meanwhile, Mr. Wang also used western medicine to cure his mother's illness. In the final analysis, elements from religious traditions combined with modern medicine serve the purpose of treating Mrs Zhou's illness.

Alongside the direct treatment of diseases with rituals observed at the Guanyin Shrine, another type of request for treatment for health problems was observed whereby parents came seeking help for their young children. Among the local people, this ritual was called 'registration'. It involved parents registering the names of young children and adolescents, who were often physically weak, with Guanyin. The parents were worried that it would be difficult to raise their children to adulthood and they sought Guanyin's blessing and protection for these children through the registration ritual. Every year until they reach adulthood, these young people, accompanied by their parents or grandparents, come to make offerings, bow and kowtow to Guanyin.

Similar to Mr Wang's treatment of his mother's disease with rituals, registration with Guanyin can be understood as using ritual to intervene in health problems. Resolving health problems here does not merely involve daily nutrition or loving care from parents and grandparents, but also the guardianship of deities. To everyone in the mundane world, life is a never-ending struggle. The conquest of fear from defeat, loss, disease and death requires hope, which can only come from a power stronger than that of mortals. In coping with the world, humans require at least the illusion that they can summon help, and hope requires the accessibility of help. In the worldview of the Chinese, there is a level of reality above the mundane where such power exists and from which it can be tapped. It is at this level that deities become objectified in ways similar

to those found in other cultures. That is to say, divine power becomes anthropomorphised (Thompson, 1978, p. 139).

In summary, science and ‘superstition’ or traditional herbal remedies are not rivals in everyday life in China; rather, they are all at people’s service and are commonly combined (Fei, 2001). In other words, traditional herbal remedies and scientific knowledge are often intertwined and there is no clear demarcation between them in people’s minds. People may trust in science, but this need not replace their traditional values and beliefs. Instead, ordinary people are more likely to dissolve the new ideas into their old frames of reference. To fulfil a purpose, people may select between religion/witchcraft and science or they may choose to use some combination of both. Meanwhile, a syncretic tradition of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism are often combined to influence the everyday life of ordinary people. When we investigate the relationship between religion, traditional herbal remedies and science in human behaviour, we need to associate them with particular social organisation and patterns of culture (Hsu, 1983).

5.6 Wish and Efficacy

In an analysis of the cultural logic and sociopolitical processes underlying the revival of popular religion in reform-era China, Chau (2006) argues against the simplistic explanation that becoming disenchanted with the bankruptcy of Communist ideologies meant that Chinese people felt ‘spiritually empty’ and therefore wanted to return to traditional religious practices (or to seek new spiritual solace, as evidenced by the rapid growth in the number of Christian converts). Instead, he maintained that at the core of popular religious revivalism is the concept of magical efficacy (*ling*), which is conceived of as a particular deity’s miraculous response (*lingying*) to the worshipper’s request for divine assistance (e.g., granting a son, granting magical medicine, bringing rain, resolving a dilemma through divination and granting prosperity). Efficacy has become a fundamental concept in interpreting Chinese people’s ritual observance.

As the prominent character in Chinese people’s ritual practice, efficacy reveals the interactions between the practitioners and the deities (Yue, 2010) through the actions of wish making and wish returning. In its simplest terms, wish making is the ritual centred on practitioners making a desired wish through offerings before the statue of Guanyin. These offerings might include lighting candles and burning incense sticks and offering fruits and other delicacies. During the ritual in the Guanyin Shrine, practitioners prayed, bowed and kowtowed. Sometimes, Mr Wang acted as the intermediary to help to communicate between the practitioners and Guanyin and explain to Guanyin the

problems of the practitioners in their everyday life. The practitioner's name and residential address was also identified during the wish making. The ritual of wish returning, whereby practitioners came to express their gratitude to Guanyin through rituals for her help with a problem, was quite similar to that of wish making. In one example, a middle-aged mother came to thank Guanyin because her daughter had found a very satisfactory job despite fierce competition. However, from my observations it was noted that even when practitioners' problems had not been lessened by previous wishes to Guanyin, they still came to make offerings and additional wishes. For example, a senior high school boy came, accompanied by his mother and grandmother, to return a wish despite his acknowledgment that 'Guanyin did not help me get admitted to my dream high school' (field notes, 4 August 2012). His mother even paid for a team of folk artists to perform *Xuanjuan* to thank Guanyin and express new wishes for the peace of her whole family and their booming business.

It was revealed in the interactions between the practitioners and Guanyin, as well as other miscellaneous territorial deities, that the concept of sacredness in other religious practice, such as in Christianity and Islam, is not suitable to describe the ritual practice of ordinary people in China. The relationship between the practitioners and the deities is reciprocal. Practitioners make offerings to the deities in the hope that they will be protected and helped during times of difficulty in everyday life. Deities take the offerings and give practitioners hope. Thus, the ritual practice of most Chinese people was not in isolation from everyday life; it was an extension of it. Moreover, to some extent, this practice displays a sense of the 'game' feature in the practice and habitus of everyday life (Bourdieu, 1990).

It is also important to recognise that the practitioners were not passive in the ritual practice, but were autonomous and conscious in solving problems in everyday life through rituals. Often, rituals served as an alternative or complement to other practices in solving these problems. Ordinary people would first access conventional remedial resources and solutions, such as doctors when they are sick or private tutors to help children struggling at school. In this sense:

the Chinese, generally speaking, [...] are not a people for whom religious ideas and activities constitute an all important and absorbing part of life; It is ethics (especially Confucian ethics), and not religion (at least, not religion of a formal organized type), that has provided the spiritual basis of Chinese civilization.

(Bodde, 1942, p. 293)

In other words, for most Chinese people, there is no clear distinction between the sacred and the secular because the Chinese cosmos does not make the distinction between the transcendental and immanent or the mundane. Confucians and Taoists, in general, hold that this world and the other world are ‘neither overlapped nor distinct’ (不即不离 *buji buli*). ‘If the Way represents the Confucian “transcendence”, and the everyday life, the “mundane”, we can find these two domains are neither entirely overlapped, nor entirely distinct’ (Yu, 2003, p. 606). Therefore, transcendence in Chinese cosmology does not mean having to leave the worldly world completely—you can seek the Way within it. Yu Yingshi (2003) calls this ‘inward transcendence’, which is in contrast to outward transcendence in Christianity. While the latter has exceeded the experiential capacity of humankind, the former is founded in the understanding of human beings, as it is deeply rooted in mundane concrete life. Therefore, the ritual practice of Chinese people is in essence the means and alternative way to a better everyday life.

5.7 Conclusion

The household Guanyin Shrine was a lived ritual space created by ordinary people. In practice, it tactically evaded the surveillance and domination of the state and local power. The creativity of ordinary people was also exemplified by the celebration of Guanyin’s birthday. This event production provided ordinary people with an opportunity to socialise among themselves and interact with the deity within a small self-contained community. The observed medical treatment with rituals in the Guanyin Shrine among the local people can be viewed as another tactic of resistance to the dominant order of knowledge classification between science and religion and science and superstition (Foucault, 1995; Foucault & Gordon, 1980). The ritual practices in the shrine served as an alternative solution to the everyday life problems of ordinary people.

The creativeness in the spatial and religious practice in the household Guanyin Shrine reveals the validity of Michel de Certeau’s theory. More importantly, it entails a turn of methodology in understanding and interpreting the ritual practices of ordinary Chinese people. Instead of employing terms borrowed from Western scholarship, such as superstition or idol worship or the analytical sacred/secular binary structure, scholars engaged in the study of Chinese ritual practices need to explore the life world of ordinary people and discover the logic and initiative in people’s everyday life. This will help in moving away from the simplistic structural-functional understandings and foreign mappings of Western notions of ‘religion’ in the Chinese context. Instead, ritual (*li* 礼) practices that permeate in the everyday life of Chinese ordinary people can serve

as a better concept to explain this time-honoured cultural tradition. These ritual practices may not be included in the list of intangible cultural heritage in contemporary China, but they are ‘transmitted from generation to generation’ and are ‘constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity’ (UNESCO, 2003). Therefore, these ritual practices are practically the intangible cultural heritage in essence.

Chapter 6: Ancestor Rituals in Everyday Life

6.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates how the rituals dedicated to ancestors have been practiced in three ritual spaces of the home, tomb and ancestral hall, considered from a historical and contemporary perspective. The aim is to investigate how ordinary people have adapted ancestor rituals to accommodate them in contemporary society. For example, *tang* as a traditional ritual space in private houses has undergone a transformation into the living room in contemporary everyday life. Although the power of modernity has changed the physical texture of *tang*, ordinary people still practice ancestor rituals in the modern living room. Similarly, while the tomb as a ritual space for people to practice *fengshui* and filial piety has faced challenges due to the power of modernisation and urbanisation, ordinary people continue to show their veneration to ancestors in renewed ways. The final example for consideration in this chapter is that of the Chen's Ancestral Hall as a ritual and educational space for the Chen lineage in the town of Dongpu. This hall was transformed into an office and warehouse during the Maoist era and it now serves as a leisure centre and cultural heritage site. Although the Chen lineage no longer practices collective rituals to their ancestors, this case shows the creativity of people in using this ancestral hall as a modern café and conventional ritual space. A background to these ancestor rituals is now provided.

6.2 Background

Ancestor rituals hold a place of great importance among Chinese religious traditions, including Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism. As Han people believe in the immortality of the spirit, even after death, veneration of the parents or ancestors must be observed. According to the different locations of ritual practice, ancestor rituals fall into three categories: ancestor rituals at home; ancestor rituals at family graveyards; and ancestor rituals held in ancestral halls and temples by a lineage organisation. These are now discussed in turn.

On ordinary days, people burn incense at home on the first day and full moon of each lunar month, and in the morning and evening every day. More formal ancestor rituals are held during annual festivals, such as Spring Festival, Lantern Festival, Qingming Festival (Tomb-sweeping Festival), Duanwu Festival (端午節 Dragon Boat Festival), Zhongyuan Festival (中元節 Ghost Festival), Zhongqiu Festival (中秋節 the

Moon Festival), Double-Ninth Festival and Winter Solstice, and on ancestors' birthdates and death dates. Usually, an elder member of the family will present and offer dishes to ancestors. Ancestor rituals are also held at family graveyards during Qingming Festival (清明節) and Winter Solstice. As a part of this ritual, people make offerings to their ancestors, sweep the tombs, clear away weeds and add soil to the tombs. Another type of ancestor ritual is held at ancestral halls and ancestral temples by lineage organisations. Usually, there are two large ancestor rituals every year, during spring and autumn. After the collective ritual, people from the same lineage will have a meal.

Ancestor rituals are often termed 'ancestor worship'. However, this expression is greatly disputed in its connotations and hence unsatisfactory. The word 'worship' incorrectly suggests some generally accepted interpretation of the real purport of Confucian *li* comprising ritual services to the ancestors (Thompson, 1969, p. 42). A more accurate term is 'ancestor veneration'. In this chapter, 'ancestor ritual' is used to refer to the specific ceremony or rite to ancestors. 'Ritual' also delivers the connotation of Confucian *li*, as discussed in Chapter 2.

6.3 Ancestor Ritual, from Traditional *Tang* to Modern Living Room

In the traditional private houses of Chinese people, *tang* was the ritual space. However, in modern times, this space, together with the family shrine, exists only in some remote rural areas. Urbanisation and modern lifestyles have contributed to the popularity of Western-style living spaces. This raises the question of whether people still practice ancestor rituals in their private houses when there is no longer any *tang*. This section attempts to explore how ancestor rituals have been affected by the transformation from traditional *tang* to modern living room.

6.3.1 Tang as a Ritual Space

The space for ancestor rituals was systematised as early as the Zhou Dynasty (1046–256 BCE). According to *Liji*,²⁹ (the ancestral temple of) the son of Heaven embraced seven fanes (or smaller temples): three on the left and three on the right, and that of his great ancestor (fronting the south)—in all, seven. (The temple of) the prince of a state embraced five such fanes: two on the left and two on the right, and that of his great ancestor—in all, five. Great officers had three fanes: one on the left and one on the right, and that of his great ancestor—in all, three. Other officers had (only) one. The common people presented their offerings in their (principal) house.³⁰ Specifically,

²⁹ Also known as: *The Classic of Rites* (《小戴禮記》).

³⁰ Chinese version: 《礼记·王制》：天子七廟，三昭三穆，與太祖之廟而七。諸侯五廟，二昭二穆，與太祖之廟而五。大夫三廟，一昭一穆，與太祖之廟而三。士一廟。庶人祭於寢。

ordinary people practiced their ancestor rituals in a particular space in their house called *tang*.

The traditional Chinese house is wood-structured and constructed in the shape of the Chinese character 中, as indicated by Figure 6.1.

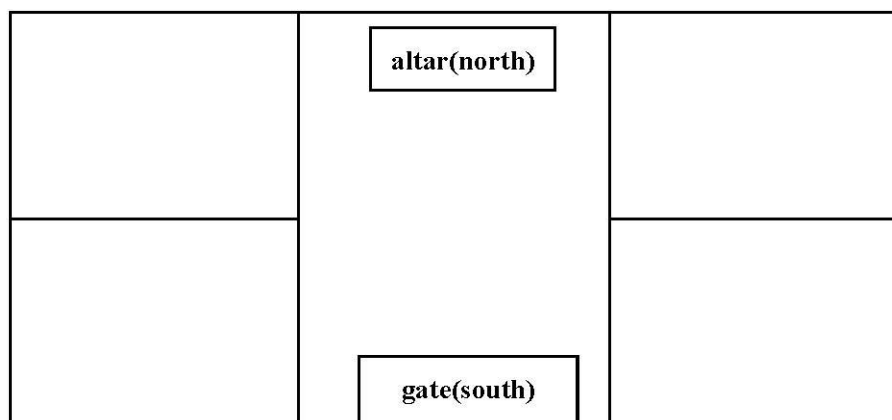


Figure 6.3 The ‘中’-shaped Layout of a Traditional Chinese House³¹

As the figure shows, the middle part of the house is *tang*. On both sides are other rooms serving as bedrooms and a kitchen. Qing scholar 段玉裁 (1735–1815) explained in his *Exegesis of Shuowenjiezi* (1808): ‘The ancient have *tang* in the front and rooms in the back. *Tang* is the space for ritual performances, worshipping family ancestors and deities’. According to the scholar Zhang Lvxiang (1611–1674), families who knew *li* (ritual) would have a vertical carved tablet or a paper scroll with the Chinese characters for ‘heaven, earth, emperor, ancestors, and teachers’ (天地君親師) in the middle of the altar against the northern wall (Zhang, 2002, p. 531). Since the 1911 Revolution, the overthrown monarchy has rendered the character ‘emperor’ inappropriate for inclusion on the altar. The character 國 (country) has replaced 君. Yu Yingshi (2004) traces the origins of the scroll back to the thirteenth century (Che, 1999; Xu, 2006). It can be understood as one element of the spread of popular Neo-Confucianism since the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644). Xunzi’s (313–230 BCE) thought is regarded as the earliest source of the five characters in the family altar:

Ritual principles (*li*) have three roots: heaven and earth are the root of life, the ancestors are the root of commonality, rulers and teachers are the root of order. If there were no heaven and earth, how could there be life? If there were no rulers and teachers, how could there be order? If only one of those three is missing, there is no peace and security for humankind. Hence rituals (*li*) follow the heaven above and

³¹ See Tan, Tongxue. (2010). 板村有道：转型乡村的道德、权力与社会结构 [Bancun has way: morality, power and social structure of Chinese village in transformation]. Beijing: Shenghuo dushu xinzhi sanlian shudian. page 5.

the earth below; they venerate the ancestors, and exact rulers and teachers, since these are the three roots of all ritual principles (*li*).³²

(Wu, [1917] 1985, p. 110)

Parallel to the tablet or scroll, on both sides, the positions of different gods or goddesses (often Guanyin, the goddess of mercy and Zaowang, the stove god) are marked vertically. On the wooden shelf beneath the altar may be placed incense burners, candles, ancestral tablets, pictures of deceased ancestors and statues of deities. Often a square wooden table called the Eight Deities Table is positioned beneath the shrine; it is used to hold offerings and worshipping utensils. In this way, *tang* always represented a ritual space for the syncretic worship of ancestors and deities.

In spite of its heterogeneity as a ritual space, *tang* above all served as the space for ancestor worship. Zhu Xi, a Song Dynasty Confucian scholar, leading figure of the School of Principle and the most influential rationalist Neo-Confucian in China's history, described the offering hall *tang* as a ritual space with the ancestral shrine as its heart. In 'General Principles of Ritual', he elaborated why so much importance was placed on the appropriate construction of this ritual space: 'This section originally was part of the chapter on sacrificial rites. Now I have purposely placed it here, making it the first subject, because its contents form the heart of "repaying one's roots and returning to the beginning," the essence of "honoring ancestors and respecting agnatic kin," the true means of preserving status responsibilities in the family, and the foundation for establishing a heritage and transmitting it to later generations' (Ebrey, 1991, p. 5). The central position of *tang* in ordinary people's houses symbolically implies a categorical moral order. Moving through a space like *tang* in ordinary, everyday life and in ritual, one cannot but draw some moral implications: the centre that is physically recognised in space is also a moral centre, towards which one has to act in certain ways (Steinmüller, 2010).

6.3.2 Ancestor Rituals in the Living Room

Tang as the ritual space was changed after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. The newly established country attempted to 'build a new world' by 'destroying the old world'. The rationale underlying this state-power-driven enterprise was the five-stage evolutionary history of humankind outlined by Joseph Stalin. In 1938, Stalin wrote his *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, in which he synthesised the

³² Chinese version: 禮有三本：天地者，生之本也；先祖者，類之本也；君師者，治之本也。無天地，惡生？無先祖，惡出？無君師，惡治？三者偏亡，焉無安人。故禮、上事天，下事地，尊先祖，而隆君師。是禮之三本也。

ideas of Morgan and Engels and summarised history into five stages or ‘modes of production’: primitive communal, slave, feudal, capitalist and socialist. Stalin’s book became a standard text for Communists the world over and was required reading for all Chinese Communist Party members (Stalin, 1972 p. 300). In the China of the 1950s, the narratives of social evolution were to enjoy the double status of unquestioned scientific Truth and unchallengeable Communist Party doctrine (Yang, 2008, p. 24). Many of Stalin’s ideas, especially this five-stage theory, held sway in China well into the 1980s.

Propounded by this evolutionary historical teleology, the nation embarked on ‘destroying the old world’, in which the ritual practices of everyday life were the major component. This almost total destruction culminated in the Cultural Revolution, during which religious sites and sacred objects were destroyed, religious leaders and followers were persecuted, and public religious rituals were prohibited. All of these aspects were derogated as feudal superstition. The *tang* of ordinary people in the majority of rural areas did not escape the devastation, and Daoist and Buddhist Statues, such as Guanyin, were destroyed. These old icons were replaced by the new icon, the image of Chairman Mao. Eventually, the strategy of ‘building a new world’ as the uniform ideology across the country invaded every aspect of everyday life and thousands of years of individual, local and territorial ritual practices were replaced by the political and ideological worship of the Party leader (Liu, 2006, p. 100).

However, it remained possible for ordinary people to use tactics in their everyday life to resist the dominant strategy. As de Certeau (1984) argues, tactics ‘vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers’ (p. 37). For example, my mother (casual talk, 10 May 2012) told me that people continued to practice ancestral rituals secretly during the harshest years of the Maoist era. Moreover, Tan’s (2010) research showed that even village cadres practiced ancestral rituals on birth dates, death dates and the lunar New Year. When the ancestral ritual was made public, villagers skilfully appropriated the revolutionary discourse of ‘remembering martyrs’. Meanwhile, ancestor rituals in *tang* were sustained under the moral principle of ‘respect the old and love the young’ proposed by the new state power (Tan, 2010, pp. 338-339).

While the state power during Mao’s era exerted a devastating influence on the ritual practices of everyday life, the beginning of reform ushered in a resurgence of the time-honoured religious traditions of ordinary Chinese people (Chau, 2006). It is best to consider this current trend of revivalism and restoration within the context of modernity, which contributes to ritual transformations and reconstruction (Kiong & Kong, 2000).

Modernity here can be understood narrowly as the various socio-historical changes implied by ‘modernisation’, such as urbanisation, industrialisation, technological innovations, modern medicine, mass media, mass education and mass political participation, the decline of aristocracies and social hierarchy, the prominence of nation-states, secularisation and the increasing commodification of goods and human labour (Yang, 2008, pp. 2-3). Modernisation, as a global and national strategy of development, has significantly transformed people’s everyday life. This is best exemplified in the private dwellings of ordinary people and the ritual spaces within.

With nationwide urbanisation, the traditional wood and mud houses with *tang* at the centre can now only be found in some remote, inland rural areas of China (Steinmüller, 2010). Many Chinese people now live in modern Western-style apartments in which the living room dominates the space of *tang*. Compared with the 中-shaped traditional house, modern apartments resemble the Chinese character 田, as indicated by Figure 6.2.

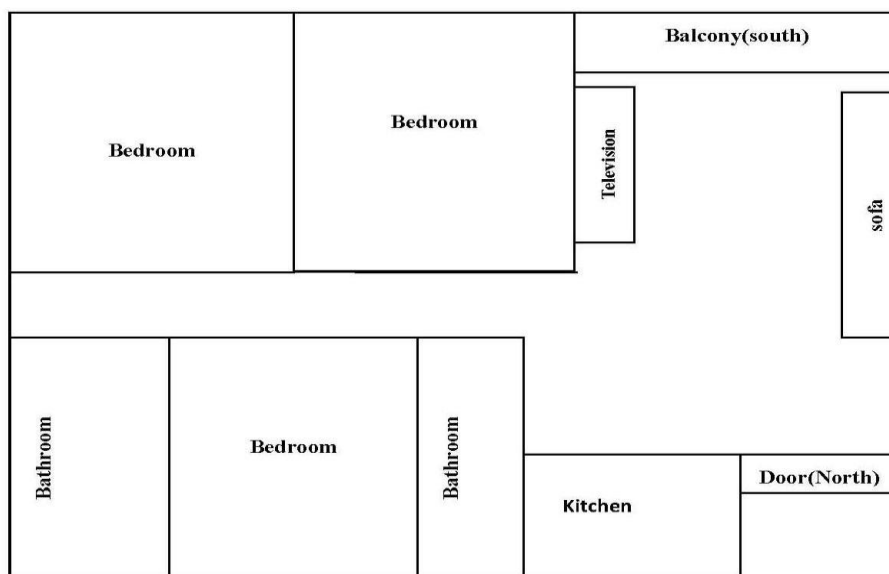


Figure 6.4 The ‘田’-shaped Layout of the Modern Apartment

Figure 6.2 shows the structure of my brother’s fourth-floor apartment in a residential compound. In the living room space is a Toshiba colour television set with a digital set-top box and a hi-fi stereo system. Attached to the wall against which the television set is placed is a paper cut showing two rabbits and the Chinese characters 兔年吉祥 (auspicious in the year of rabbit) and 平安是福 (Peace is blessing). In the upper left corner of the room stands a large air-conditioner. Against the wall opposite the television set is a blue leather sofa, above which hang three cross-stitch pictures that

were embroidered by my sister-in-law. The three pictures show lilies, calla lilies and tulips in glass vases.

Compared with a traditional house, the modern apartment is characterised by its loss of centring and the replacement of *tang* by the living room. The television set and its related technologies have taken the position of the altar, while the static pictures of the ancestors, deities and vertically written characters have been substituted by the flowing, changing, colourful pictures of the television. According to Goethals (1981), modern Chinese people practice the television ritual, worshipping at the video altar. Further, the 田-shaped layout of the modern apartment signifies the decentring, marginalisation and disappearance of the ancestor shrine in household spatial practice in urban areas. This transformation has been associated with a weakening of ancestor rituals.

However, despite this change in the shape of Chinese people's houses, the traditional cultural fabric persists inside the living space, as demonstrated by my mother's tenacious observance of ancestor rituals. As Mueggler (2001) has noted, houses accommodated many transformations in material and social relations with time, but they were also 'resistant and enduring' for 'the histories and dispositions sedimented into them inflected every social transformation' (p. 53). Indeed, many ordinary people practice rituals in their apartments. In my memory, while my family changed houses three times, from the small, shabby wooden and brick structure of my childhood to our three-storied brick and concrete house of the 1990s and then to our present apartment, the ancestral rituals have been practiced year after year, with only minor modification.

My mother remembers every important date for the ancestral rituals at home (see Appendix 6.1).³³ Our ancestors are divided into three groups: my parents' grandparents and earlier ancestors, my father's deceased parents and my mother's deceased parents. Offerings are made to each group separately. Ten different dishes are placed in the middle of the table with four bowls of rice on the four corners of the table, 10 cups of rice wine on three sides of the table and candles and incense on the remaining side. Although all of the offerings for each group are identical, they have to be changed for each session because they have been 'used'. The ritual usually lasts about 15 minutes for each group so that they can enjoy the meal slowly. During the ritual, my mother bows to the table with her hands joined, whispering something. She prays to the

³³ One of my informants Mr. He told me that those prestigious and wealthy families used to have a book of ritual dates in case the descendants mistake and forget the rituals due. There is no such a book in my family, but it exists in my mother's mind and I make a note of it. It is shown in the appendix.

ancestors, using words roughly translated as: ‘all the ancestors, please enjoy this meal. Hope you can bless your children, and children’s children. Wish everything goes well with the senior’s work and progress in the junior’s study. Health and peace in this family’. At the end of each group’s meal, mother burns some spirit money and Buddhist script paper to our ancestors.

However, with the accelerating pace of life and the changed ritual space, my mother has modified the rituals by joining all the sessions into one. Instead of placing 10 dishes on the Eight Deities Table, she instead places 20 dishes (double 10 items) on a larger round table. The rice, wine and candle offerings are all doubled. My mother calls the feast ‘the big family reunion dinner’. It was also necessary for my mother to modify her practice of burning joss paper when we moved into an apartment. When we lived in a house, my mother would burn the joss paper on the ground inside or outside. However, now she uses an iron bin with two rings on either side so that we can still offer paper money to our ancestors without making a mess on the floor of the apartment.

My mother’s adjustments to the ancestor rituals can be understood as contingent tactics and inventions of everyday life in resistance to the industrial modernity, which is revolutionising the lifestyle of ordinary people. Here, resistance is equally an activity born of inertia and the result of inventive forms of appropriation:

On the one hand, there are slowly developing phenomena, latencies, delays that are piled up in the thick breadth of mentalities, evident things and social ritualizations, an opaque, stubborn life buried in everyday gestures that are at the same time both immediate and millenary. On the other hand, irruptions, deviations, that is, all these margins of an inventiveness from which future generations will successively draw their ‘cultivated culture’.

(de Certeau, 1997b, pp. 137-138)

The ‘thick breadth’ of ‘opaque, stubborn life’ goes together with inventive ‘deviations’ in this picture of everyday life. Raymond Williams (1977) distinguished between the ‘residual and emergent’ cultures that are differentiated from dominant cultures (pp. 121-127). If the dominant urban culture was brought about by modernisation, then the ancestor rituals are the ‘residual and emergent’ culture. It is the ‘residual’ or ‘opaque, stubborn life’ of ordinary people.

The specific way of performing ancestor rituals may change with time, but the core value of filial piety in Confucianism remains in the embodied rituals. Confucius thought one should offer sacrifices to one’s ancestors devoutly and sincerely as if they

were still alive. One should offer sacrifices to gods devoutly and sincerely too as if they were present.³⁴ The Confucian classic *Liji* explains what it means to be filial by sacrifice:

It is by sacrifice that the nourishment of parents is followed up and filial duty to them perpetuated. The filial heart is a storehouse (of all filial duties). Compliance with everything that can mark his course, and be no violation of the relation (between parent and child)—the keeping of this is why we call it a storehouse. Therefore in three ways is a filial son's service of his parents shown—while they are alive, by nourishing them; when they are dead, by all the rites of mourning; and when the mourning is over by sacrificing to them. In his nourishing them we see his natural obedience; in his funeral rites we see his sorrow; in his sacrifices we see his reverence and observance of the (proper) seasons. In these three ways we see the practice of a filial son.³⁵

(Legge, n.d.)

Based on Geertz's (1973) concept of culture as text that can be read and interpreted in many different ways, Bray (1997) developed the inner space of a house as a text, 'interweaving hegemonic Confucian social values with popular ideals into a strong and flexible fabric' (p. 57). Even when the ancestor shrine does not exist in the modern living room, the sacred space soon appears provided the ritual starts with bodily gestures and verbal communication between the living and ancestors. Indeed, this bodily and verbal expression is all that is required for the creation of sacred space. The sacred space then becomes a spiritual void space rather than a physical entity. In this sense, the sacred space always displays its flexibility and adaptability, enabling the continuation of ritual practice despite transformation from outside forces.

In summary, *tang*, as the ritual space in the private houses of ordinary people, may change over time under the strategy of modernity; however, the rituals will be sustained as long as the cultural memory is retained among ordinary people. It is best to see *tang* (the living room) as a heterogeneous space with no clear distinction between the sacred and the secular. Modern people practice their everyday life in this space, watching television, playing cards, eating and even washing their feet. In this sense, this space becomes a genuine lived space for everyday life.

³⁴ Chinese version: 《论语·八佾》第十二章：祭如在，祭神如神在。

³⁵ Chinese version: 祭者，所以追養繼孝也。孝者畜也。順於道不逆於倫，是之謂畜。是故，孝子之事親也，有三道焉：生則養，沒則喪，喪畢則祭。養則觀其順也，喪則觀其哀也，祭則觀其敬而時也。盡此三道者，孝子之行也。From 《祭統 - Ji Tong》, also known as 'A summary account of sacrifices'.

6.4 Practice of *Xiao* (Filial Piety) at Tombs

In addition to being a space for ancestor rituals, tombs are best understood as the ritual space or landscape that embodies the practice of Confucian values in everyday life. The practice of these values is achieved through *fengshui*. However, urbanisation has led to the relocation or reduction of graveyards, affecting the ritual practice performed at tombs. This section aims to explore how Confucian values are embodied in ancestor rituals at tombs through the practice of *fengshui* and how tombs as a ritual space have been transformed in the contemporary production of space as a commodity within the context of modernity.

6.4.1 Practice of *Fengshui* as *Tianli*

As mentioned in Section 6.1, ancestral rituals at tombs are practiced during Qingming Festival and Winter Solstice. The Genealogy of Chen Lineage in the town of Dongpu records how the ritual was practiced during Qingming Festival and includes some information about the importance of *fengshui*:

The ritual on Qingming Festival (Tomb-Sweeping Day) does not only involve simply visiting the tombs. It includes the cutting of thorns around the tombs, planting pines and cypresses and adding soil onto the tombs. Look around carefully. If some parts of the tomb have collapsed, then they should be fixed. If there are wolf's lairs and badger's holes hidden in the trees and grasses, then they should be filled. If wild trees and roots grow and creep around the tombs, they should be eradicated. All should be taken good care of. We must comfort our ancestors' souls. This will not change.

Trees planted in residences and at tombs are like decently dressed men who arouse the respect of other people. Green and luxuriant trees are often associated with prosperous families and lineages, while fell and withered trees are the manifestation of the decaying fortune. *Fengshui* specialist says tall bamboos and thick woods can tell the sign of the wax and wane. It is of great importance to the residence, and even much more to the tombs.

(Chen, 1916, pp. 33-34)

The two Chinese words that constitute *fengshui* mean wind and water. This is usually translated as geomancy. However, the term is used here in transliterated form because the term cannot really be equated with any Western concept. *Fengshui* constitutes a system of divination for determining the auspicious siting of human dwellings for either the living or the dead. The rationale is that humans may help to improve their own fate by determining the workings of nature and then bringing their

own actions into accord with them. The theories of *fengshui* purport to explain what the pertinent natural processes are, and the practices of *fengshui* are designed to bring about the desired results (Thompson, 1969, p. 21).

As a key to understanding the way of thinking, cosmology and *cultural* psychology of Han Chinese people, *fengshui*, particularly the practice of *fengshui* concerning ancestors' tombs, has been the focus of continuous research in the Western world and by Chinese researchers. Typical perspectives are the mechanic school of Freedman (1966) and the automatic school of Ahern (1973). The former school asserts that ancestors, or more precisely the skeletons of ancestors in the tombs, are passively manipulated by descendants for the pursuit of their blessings; the latter school argues that the ancestors have their own will and feelings that determine the fortune and misfortune of descendants. These perspectives have been debated extensively among researchers. Chinese anthropologist Lih Yiyuan (1976), in his study in Taiwan, argues against the mechanic perspective, saying that Chinese ancestors are not puppets. Rubie S Watson (1988) states that *fengshui* offers a set of terms in an unspeakable political rhetoric that is employed by descendants to serve for their own benefit with their ancestors' blessing. Taiwanese scholar Ye Chunrong (1999) provides a more valuable perspective, arguing that it is *tianli* (the principles in heaven) rather than *fengshui* that influence the auspiciousness of descendants. In other words, it makes no difference whether the skeletons of ancestors are passive or automatic; *fengshui* only serves as the means of karma.

The discussion above reveals that the central theme pertaining to *fengshui* is the causal relationship between the tomb of ancestors and the benefit of descendants. This raised the question of the real meaning of *fengshui* to ancestors and descendants. The Genealogy of Chen Lineage in the town of Dongpu gives an answer:

The ancient funeral for great officers lasted three months and for ordinary officers one month. People wore their mourning clothes and ate mourning food and did not change them unless the funeral was completed. This is a manifestation of deep grief for the death of their loved ones. However, the deceased should be buried as soon as possible in case the body was drowned by rain and scorched by the sun. The ancient buried their deceased loved ones in the only hope that they would not be eroded by the wind and water, bitten by the insects, cut by the plough or buried under the city walls, pools and paths. The skeletons of ancestors would never be used as the source of descendants' well-being. The ancient created the theory of *fengshui* because they were worried that their descendants would delay the funeral.

It was thought that descendants buried their loved ones hastily due to their greed for wealth and reputation. But surprisingly, descendants were obsessed with the auspicious land for the ancestor tombs and consequently delayed the funeral. How could they forget the ancients' teaching: tombs are in the heart, not on the hills? Zhu Zi says: 'You have the field in your heart first, and then you will have the blessed land.' He also says: 'You have to know *tianli* (天理, the principles in heaven) first, then you can know *dili* (地理, the principles on earth)'. How can people have the blessed land without a good field in their heart? Surely, there is no such principle.

(Chen, 1916, p. 33)

Thus, the purpose of creating the theory of *fengshui* by the ancients was not to benefit the descendants, but to cultivate their reverence for ancestors in order to prevent the erosion of the deceased's body by wind and water (*fengshui*). More importantly, this paragraph explicates the priority of *tianli* over *dili*. *Dili* can be understood as the mechanism of *fengshui*; for example, positioning ancestors' tombs in a good physical place will bless the descendants, while putting the tomb in a bad location will bring misfortune. However, as argued by Ye Chunrong, *dili* is best understood as the means of showing the workings of a higher principle; that is, *tianli*.

In the translated excerpt above, Zhu Zi is quoted referring to Zhu Xi, the Song Dynasty Confucian scholar and leading figure of the School of Principle. *Tianli* in the School of Principle refers to the moral values in Confucianism: 'consummate person or conduct' (*ren* 仁), 'appropriateness' (*yi* 義), 'ritual propriety' (*li* 禮) and 'wisdom' (*zhi* 智). These values are all muted by a sustained focus upon family reverence (*xiao* 孝) as the root from which the entire tradition grows (Rosemont & Ames, 2009, p. 22). Simply put, when family reverence is functioning effectively within the home, all is well within the community, the polity, and indeed, the cosmos. Family reverence is the root, and as Analects 1.2 states explicitly, 'the root having taken hold, the proper way (*dao* 道) will grow therefrom'. These other terms that define the Confucian tradition have relevance only within the context of the flourishing family (Rosemont & Ames, 2009, pp. 22-23). Thus, the rituals that take place at tombs are the practice of the central value *xiao* (孝, family reverence, or filial piety) in Confucian tradition.

In describing ritual practice and its connection to moral cultivation, Xunzi incorporates somatic and affective aspects that are often overlooked in contemporary philosophical discussions of ethics. He believes that ritual practice shapes, transforms

and orders our cognitive and affective responses to our environment. Ritual practice has this effect because, through ritual participation, people come to embody the rites. Not only does the individual internalise the conceptual categories and ideals expressed symbolically in the ritual order, the practitioner's gestures and movements become ritualised as well. Part of this process of transformation, or ritual cultivation, takes place because of the somatic experience of ritual participation, an experience that enables a person to embody concretely the ideals and virtues he or she finds expressed in the ritual order (Hall & Ames, 1987, p. 195). Through ritual practice, the individual comes to understand and participate in the Dao, the harmonious patterns of individual, social and cosmic interaction created by the Confucian sages. Ritual practice or participation plays a central role in enabling people to become fully human and to live a good human life. Therefore, the ancestor ritual at tombs is not only intended to show respect to, and remembrance of, ancestors by descendants; it also serves to cultivate humanity and desirable order among family members and in extended social relations.

Returning to the specific ritual described in the translated quotation at the beginning of this section, note that special attention is paid to the planting and tending of trees, such as pines and cypresses, around ancestors' tombs. Trees are often considered an indispensable component of the landscape of tombs. Pines and cypresses are evergreen trees that carry the symbolic meaning of longevity in Chinese culture. From the pragmatic perspective of *fengshui*, green and luxuriant trees are the manifestation of a good sign of *fengshui*, which can bring good fortune to descendants. Good *fengshui* can be achieved in a certain manner. However, *fengshui* serves more as the means to show how the Confucian values are embodied in the practice by the descendants, as revealed in the following:

The ancients planted mulberry and catalpa trees and were very respectful to them. If these trees cultivated by ancestors are felled with recklessness and eventually disappear, and little respect is given to the deceased in the tombs, then it is not only the sign of decline, but also the dishonour of filial piety.

(Chen, 1916, pp. 33-34)

Therefore, trees at ancestors' tombs can be understood as an indicator of the filial piety of the descendants. Additionally, trees may be associated with the whole lineage in its symbolic sense. Tombs and their surrounding elements function culturally as a space of moral cultivation. Rather than objects of dread designed to segregate the dead from the living, the cemetery and the grave are an intimate part of the family's sphere of emotional expression and virtue perfection. However, ordinary people do not

necessarily have knowledge of this. Rather, they act according to the Confucian way unconsciously because it has become a ritual tradition and custom in their everyday life. Thus, the moral cultivation in the space of ancestors' tombs is achieved in an implicit manner and *tianli* is internalised as the dominant moral value through embodied ritual practice among people.

6.4.2 The Public Cemetery as a Space of Commodity

China's growing population and the urbanisation of rural areas has led to tension in land use between living spaces and graveyards. An example is the reconstruction of my home village, which resulted in the relocation of the graveyard from the hill at the centre of the village to another hill half an hour's drive away. The graveyard on the village hill was a self-contained and unplanned place for the burial of deceased villagers. Grass and trees grew around the tombs. Much attention was paid to the practice of *fengshui* by villagers in the siting of tombs and maintenance of the landscape around the tombs, including the tending of trees. Moreover, the location of the old graveyard at the centre of the village meant that villagers could simply walk up the small hill and perform rituals at their ancestors' tombs.

By contrast, the new public cemetery is organised and standardised. All tombs are lined up precisely in straight rows, with all graves pointing in one direction. This has reduced the significance of *fengshui* principles in the siting of graves. Further, each small tomb is identical, distinguished only by the carvings on the stone tablet. With little space between them, these tombs are suggestive of the cubic apartments in dozen-storied residential buildings. A plot in this graveyard is also expensive. It was only through a financial subsidy from the village that every family could afford to buy a small piece of land to relocate their ancestors. Otherwise, plots cost as much as 10,000 RMB per square metre.

In analysing spatial practices, de Certeau (1984) makes a distinction between space (*espace*) and place (*lieu*):

A place (*lieu*) is the order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence. It thus excludes the possibility of two things being in the same location (place). The law of the 'proper' rules in the place: the elements taken into consideration are beside one another, each situated in its own 'proper' and distinct location, a location it defines. A place is thus an instantaneous configuration of positions. It implies an indication of stability.

A space exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables. Thus space is composed of intersections of mobile elements. It

is in a sense actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it. Space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities. [...] In contradistinction to the place, it has thus none of the univocity or stability of a 'proper.' (p. 118)

In view of de Certeau's theory of spatial practice, the graveyard on the village hill can be equated with space and the public cemetery with place. As analysed in the previous section, the unplanned graveyard on the hill functioned not only as a place for ancestor rituals, but also as a semantic and symbolic space for performing Confucian values through the practice of *fengshui* and embodied ritual action, such as bowing and kowtowing. The tombs, combined with their surrounding elements, trees in particular, constituted a meaningful landscape that connected the living and the dead. By contrast, the public cemetery excludes all the heterogeneous ingredients, thus polishing and smoothing out the graveyard into a neat and orderly place for the fulfilment of basic ritual functions only. In Merleau-Ponty's terms, the public cemetery is a 'geometrical' space ('a homogeneous and isotropic spatiality', analogous to de Certeau's 'place'), while the graveyard on the hill can be called an 'anthropological space'.

Meanwhile, with deepening urbanisation and modernisation, the public cemetery has been developed as lucrative housing for the dead, similar to real estate for the living. As Henri Lefebvre (1991) argues, space in its entirety enters the modernised capitalist mode of production, there to be used for the generation of surplus value. The earth, underground resources, the air and light above the ground—all are part of the forces of production and part of the products of those forces (p. 347). Like other commodities, the production of space has led to the fragmentation and homogeneity of spaces dominated by the principles of repetition and reproduction. The production of a public cemetery is thus completed at the cost of multiple spatial perception (the cultural meaning of *fengshui* practice). Consequently, the public cemetery as a strategy on the part of urban planners exists more as a calculated space of commodity.

As with the ancestor rituals in *tang*, the rituals performed at tombs are adjusted by villagers in response to the changing situation. Whereas in the past, people walked to visit their ancestors' tombs, they now drive. Further, while some parts of the ritual practice can no longer be performed, such as adding soil to the tombs and tending the trees, people still make food offerings, burn joss paper, bow and kowtow and hold short conversations with ancestors on seasonal festivals.

Compared with the tangible graveyard, the ritual practice is intangible. The graveyard as the ‘proper place’ is in the hands of the subject of will and power and changes at its disposal. By contrast, the intangible ritual practice is maintained by the weak, who, while they may not have a place, do have tactics that depend on time. In this sense, people can create their own space through ritual practice. Thus, the ritual space exists in time and is the victory of time over place.

6.5 Functional Transformation of Chen’s Ancestral Hall

Ancestral halls are often the largest and most elaborate buildings in a Chinese village. They serve as sites for collective rituals and festivals, during which people make obeisance to their ancestors with offerings of food and other material items. Weddings, betrothals, funerals, lineage feasts and meetings of lineage elders may also take place at lineage halls. Ancestral tablets embodying the ancestral spirits are organised by seniority, and ritual items such as incense burners, divination blocks, statues and souvenirs from visits to related-lineage halls typically clutter one or more square tables placed in front of the altar and various rectangular tables to the sides. There were more than 10 ancestral halls in the town of Dongpu before 1949. All these halls, except the Chen’s Ancestral Hall, were either destroyed or secularised to function as offices or warehouses during Land Reform in the 1950s and the Cultural Revolution of the late 1960s.

In this section, I discuss how the Chen’s Ancestral Hall has been transformed historically and functionally. Before 1949, the ancestral hall served as the ritual and educational space of Confucian values. During the Maoist-era, socialist revolution and construction as a national strategy exerted an all-encompassing power on everyday life and the ancestral hall became an office and warehouse serving a political and economic purpose. Since reform, the Chen’s Ancestral Hall has been recognised as a cultural heritage monument. It currently functions as a leisure centre for the elderly. The functional transformation of the ancestral hall reveals how state power has intervened in people’s everyday life through spatial practices. However, this example is given to show that the combination of traditional ritual practice and modern ways of living rejuvenated the ancestral hall. In this example, creative spatial practice worked as a tactic against the strategy of the state power.

6.5.1 The Ancestral Hall as an Educational Space

The Chen’s Ancestral Hall as shown in Figure 6.3 below also functioned as a ritual space dedicated to ancestors in the past, which is similar to the *tang* and ancestor

tombs discussed in the previous sections. To avoid repetition, this section focuses on the ancestral hall as an explicit educational space for Confucian teachings.



Figure 6.5 The Chen's Ancestral Hall in Dongpu³⁶

From an interview with Mr Chen, editor of the *Gazetteer of Dongpu Town*:

The Chen's Ancestral Hall in Dongpu, was established at the end of the Ming Dynasty and the beginning of the Qing Dynasty. It was reconstructed and expanded in 1912 by the descendant Chen Yi, a General of the Kuomintang. The whole building, shown in the figure below, consists of two compartments with the entrance facing south. The first compartment is the entrance hall with two side halls to the east and west. The side hall in the east served as the private school for children of the lineage, while the side hall in the west functioned as the gatekeeper's accommodation. On the two wooden gates of the entrance hall were painted two colourful door gods named Yuchigong and Qinshubao. The entrance hall and the main hall are connected by a stone path in a big sky well, where pine and cypress and flowers were planted.

The second compartment is the main hall for rituals. Above the three entrance

³⁶ Photocopied from the *Genealogy of Chen Lineage*, see 陈燮枢. (1916). 《浙江东浦陈氏怀十房宗谱》 (Vol. 12).

wooden doors are three steles, on which were carved, from east to west, the traditional Chinese characters '奉先思孝' (in worshipping your ancestors, think how you can prove your filial piety), 報本³⁷ (requite heaven and earth and the ancestors) and 追遠維誠 (remember the ancestors with sincerity). In the main hall are three rooms partitioned by brick walls but connected by two round door openings, on the walls of which were written four words: 忠 *zhong* (doing one's best),³⁸ 孝 *xiao* (filial piety or family reverence), 節 *jie* (integrity) and 義 *yi* (appropriateness).³⁹ In the middle front of the main hall was the shrine, in which ancestral tablets were placed. In the middle of the main hall was a big long table, on which candleholders and incense burners, sacrifices, tea and wine were placed.

(Chen, interview, 5 July 2012)

As Mueggler (1997) has noted, 'the perceived space of practices and the conceived space of representations gave rise to lived representational space' (p. 54). Representational space, according to Lefebvre (1991), is the space 'as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of "inhabitants" [...] It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects' (p. 39). In the Chen Lineage Ancestral Hall, the symbols are the traditional Chinese characters comprising the core values of Confucian teachings. When the members of the lineage assembled for performing rituals, these characters were the moral teachings that revealed the essence of the rituals. Thus, knowing and doing are united and imbedded in the space of the ancestral hall.

The traditional teaching of Confucian values was conducted in the private school in the ancestral hall, where children of the lineage were taught the Confucian classics, such as the Four Books: the Confucian Analects, the Book of Mencius, the Great

³⁷ 報本 is the combination of 報 and 本. The former means requite, recompense, or reward, while the latter means root, origin, source or basis. The concept appears in Confucian classic Liji. For example: 《礼记 郊特牲 - Jiao Te Sheng》: 萬物本乎天, 人本乎祖, 此所以配上帝也。郊之祭也, 大報本反始也。[All things originate from Heaven; man originates from his (great) ancestor. This is the reason why Ji (sacrificial ritual) was associated with God (at this sacrifice). In the sacrifices at the border there was an expression of gratitude to the source (of their prosperity and a going back in their thoughts to the beginning of (all being).] 報本 is closely related to the sacrificial ritual to heaven, the earth and ancestors. Therefore, 報本 refers to expressing gratitude to the three bases of rites as introduced by Xunzi in section 6.3.1 of this chapter.

³⁸ For why the character 忠 is translated as doing one's best, see Rosemont, H. and R. T. Ames (2009). *The Chinese classic of family reverence: a philosophical translation of the Xiaojing*. Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, page 91-92.

³⁹ For why the character 義 is translated as appropriateness, see Rosemont, H. and R. T. Ames (2009). *The Chinese classic of family reverence: a philosophical translation of the Xiaojing*. Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, page 89-90.

Learning and the Doctrine of the Mean. The Four Books were the most important texts of Neo-Confucianist philosophy. Sometimes, when the children were just beginning to learn the characters, they used a sort of primer. This was known as the Three Characters Classic, so-called because each sentence in the book consisted of three characters arranged so that when recited they produced a rhythmic effect, helping the children to memorise them more easily. This book contained as its very first statement: 'the nature of man is originally good'. This is one of the fundamental ideas of Mencius' philosophy.

6.5.2 The Ancestral Hall as Office and Warehouse

According to the memory of Mr Chen, editor of the *Gazetteer of Dongpu Town*, the ancestral hall was administered by the head of the lineage. The lineage had houses and fields, which provided revenue to cover the expense of the sacrifices offered to the ancestors every year. On the first day of the first lunar month every year, the gates of the ancestral hall opened. All members of the lineage, young and old, came to bow and kowtow to the ancestors. They could get buns and rice cakes. This custom ended in 1948.

During Land Reform in the early 1950s, ancestral corporate land owned by local lineages, the proceeds of which were used to pay for sacrificial rituals to the ancestors, upkeep of ancestral halls, widows and orphans and the education of promising lineage boys, was confiscated. During the period of the 'Smash the Four Olds' campaign during the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese characters that manifested the Confucian values were removed from the ancestral hall and ancestral tablets were destroyed. The ancestral hall was used as an agricultural association office for the sixth village of Dongpu County, and functioned as the office when the policy of agricultural cooperation was implemented. Later, it became a warehouse for Dongpu village during the period of the People's communes.⁴⁰

In the course of agricultural collectivisation in Communist China, the thinking was not in support of local autonomy, but rather aimed at creating ever-larger units of production that were fully integrated into the state administrative hierarchies and chains of command descending from Beijing (Zhou, 1996). Thus rural collectivisation eliminated the old system of ritual territoriality, whereby local community identities were installed through rituals to local deities, Earth Gods, City Gods and lineage ancestors (Yang, 2008).

⁴⁰ The people's commune was the highest of three administrative levels in rural areas of the People's Republic of China during the period of 1958 to 1982-85 until they were replaced by townships. Communes, the largest collective units, were divided in turn into production brigades and production teams. The communes had governmental, political, and economic functions.

Within the framework of modern discourse (i.e., evolutionism or the linear history of progress), the ancestral hall as a symbol of the lineage system became the object of transformation and reformation. As a result, the ancestral hall as ritual and educational space was eradicated from people's everyday life to satisfy the will and power of the nation-state.

6.5.3 The Ancestral Hall as Leisure Centre and Cultural Heritage

With the initiation of economic liberalisation in the early 1980s, ancestral halls began reclaiming their pre-revolutionary significance as community centres, ritual sites and focal points of lineage authority. The rebuilding of community ancestral halls has been especially prevalent in southeastern China, where lineage organisations were historically more developed and where more communities enjoy donations from relations overseas.

The Chen's Ancestral Hall was reconstructed by Dongpu village in the 1980s and it has since functioned as a leisure centre for the elderly. The private school is now a reading room, with a few outdated magazines and newspapers on a rack. What remains concerning the past in this room are five stone tablets embedded in the wall on which also hangs a Gree-brand air-conditioner. These more than 100-year-old tablets mainly instruct the lineage members to remember and make obeisance to ancestors. The other side hall is now a table tennis court, while the main hall serves as the recreation centre for the elderly to watch television and play Chinese chess, mah-jong and billiards.

However, the ancestral hall also functions as a place for contemporary moral and ethics education, launched officially by the local and central government. On the wall of the ancestral hall entrance were installed two big rectangular showcases in which slogans are posted, such as 'to build a national civilized city, to make the city more attractive and to make our life more beautiful'. Other specific principles and moral codes are displayed in the windows, including the civilised citizen rules, 'seven don'ts' conduct codes, personal moral codes, socialist concept of honour and disgrace,⁴¹ basic ethics of the citizen, social ethics, professional ethics and domestic virtues.

In the contemporary context, the Chen's Ancestral Hall features a heterogeneous quality in its functions, all of which are the result of the will and power exerted by the local and state authorities. The ancestral hall as a leisure centre for the elderly may be

⁴¹ Socialist concept of honor and disgrace features Eight Dos and Don'ts described by former Chinese President Hu Jintao. According to official explanation, the concept, which underscores the value of patriotism, hard work and plain living, belief in science, consciousness of serving the people, solidarity, honesty and credibility, and observation of the law, is a perfect amalgamation of traditional Chinese values and modern virtues.

associated with the moral principle of ‘respect the old and love the young’ advocated by the state power for the ancestor ritual in the contemporary context. In this manner, the central values of ancestor rituals may partly be sustained.

It is also noteworthy that the showcase on the wall of the ancestral hall plays a role in moral education. The juxtaposition of the ancestral hall as an educational space for Confucian teachings in traditional China and the moral education launched by the local and central governments appears ironically symbolic. The anti-tradition movement and total denial of Confucian values that began with the modernisation process in the mid-nineteenth century in China eroded the moral and ethical foundation of everyday life for ordinary people. Moreover, the Cultural Revolution arguably eradicated the good and fostered the evil in human nature. Ironically, Confucian values—忠 *zhong* (doing one’s best), 孝 *xiao* (filial piety or family reverence), 節 *jie* (integrity) and 義 *yi* (appropriateness)—were treated as resources of moral education for the leaders and cadres of the Chinese Communist Party as an action taken to implement the spirit of the Communist Party of China’s Eighteenth General Assembly (Longchengxianfeng, 2013).

In 2003, the ancestral hall was designated as the city-level cultural relic protection unit by the Bureau of Cultural Relics of Shaoxing City. This can be interpreted as the strategy of the local authorities to fulfil the purpose of patriotic education. The survival of this ancestral hall through successive political campaigns during the Maoist-era was attributed to Chen Yi, who was esteemed as a patriot by the Communist Party of China, but executed as a traitor by Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of Kuomintang, because Chen Yi attempted to rebel against the Kuomintang and defect to the Communist Party of China in early 1949 when he saw that the Kuomintang had lost control of mainland China. Local experts are now considering whether to transform the ancestral hall into Chen Yi Memorial (Zhou, 2013). If so, the ancestral hall that once functioned as the ritual and educational space of Confucian teachings will become a place for patriotic education.

The functional transformation of the Chen’s Ancestral Hall reveals the dominant representations of space, the ‘space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers, as of a certain type of artist with a scientific bent—all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived’ (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 39). However, de Certeau optimistically holds that the weak are always creative in finding tactics resistant to the disciplinary strategy.

The example of spatial practice at the Zeng Lineage Ancestral Hall (Huang, 2012) in Xiamen, Fujian Province entails an opportunity for a combination of tradition and

modernity. What makes the Zeng Lineage Ancestral Hall stand out from other lineage halls is that one descendant in the lineage runs a Temple Café in the hall. The opening of the café was approved by ancestors by means of divination. Different from conventional cafés, the Temple Café regularly witnesses the offering of incense to ancestors before and after business hours every day. Additionally, the Temple Café closes for Qingming Festival and Winter Solstice every year so that the descendants of the Zeng Lineage can practice their grand ancestral rituals.

6.6 Conclusion

The ritual spaces of *tang*, ancestor tombs and ancestral halls have undergone transformation under the power of modernity. To accommodate ancestor rituals within the contemporary context, some modification, often but not always involving altered spatial forms and structures, has been required to uphold traditional symbolic meanings. At times, it may not be possible to maintain these meanings and new conceptualisations of space and time may be invented to address the changing social circumstances. However, while the power of modernity extends to effect change in ancestor rituals and in conceptions of space and time, it does not remove the importance of the ancestor ritual itself. Indeed, despite modifications to rituals, ordinary people in their everyday life continue to adhere to the fundamental values and beliefs. The form of rituals may change, but their essence and meanings remain.

Ancestor rituals, as the pivotal embodiment of the Chinese culture of *xiao*, are transmitted from generation to generation and are constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to the changing environment. Ancestor rituals are the manifestation of Chinese people's cultural identity and continuity. Compared with the state ancestor rituals such as Dayu State Ritual⁴² employed by the local/state power to

⁴² Da Yu (大禹 Yü, the Great, c. 2200 - 2100 BC), was a legendary ruler in ancient China famed for his introduction of flood control, inaugurating dynastic rule in China by founding the Xia Dynasty, and for his upright moral character. Few, if any, records exist from the period of Chinese history when Yü reigned. Because of this, the vast majority of information about his life and reign comes from collected pieces of oral tradition and stories that were passed down in various areas of China, many of which were collected in Sima Qian's famous Records of the Grand Historian. Yü and other "sage-kings" of Ancient China were lauded by Confucius and other Chinese teachers, who praised their virtues and morals. Yü is one of the few Chinese rulers posthumously honored with the epithet "the Great".

The Public Memorial Ceremony to Da Yu was initiated in the coalition of Zhejiang Provincial Government and Shaoxing Municipal Government in 20 April, 1995. Thereafter, the Yü mausoleum was designated as one of the national Hundred Patriotism Education Bases by the Publicity Department (formerly the Propaganda Department of the Communist Party of China) and was designated as the precious cultural relics under state protection by the State Council. Since 1995, Shaoxing Municipality has organized minor sacrificial ceremony each year, public sacrificial ceremony every five years and major national-level ceremony every ten years. The ceremony in 2006 was attended by over 3000 sacrificial members and 7000 audience. On 1 March, 2007, the

promote tourist economy and patriotic and nationalistic education (Chen, 2010), ancestor rituals observed by ordinary people in their everyday life deliver the genuine meaning of this cultural heritage although they are not necessarily identified as the officially recognised intangible cultural heritage. This raises some important questions concerning what happens when Chinese people convert to Christianity and how Chinese Christians interact with the state power and practitioners of Chinese rituals. The following chapter investigates these questions in the context of the town of Dongpu.

ceremony was upgraded to the national level granted by the Ministry of Culture of China. It was then hosted jointly by the Ministry of Culture and the People's Government of Zhejiang Province and undertaken by the People's Government of Shaoxing Municipality.

Chapter 7: Christian Faith in a Family-Based Church Community

7.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates how the Chinese Christian community interacts with the local/state power in its spatial practices. A historical narrative of the development of the Christian Church in China is presented against the background of the changing religious policies coming from the Chinese central government. From the Maoist era to the contemporary reform era, state power has exerted its coercion in spatial practice. However, the Christian community has also exercised evasive tactics and won themselves the expanded space of the congregation in which to practice its Christian faith relatively unmolested and unregulated by the CCP.

This chapter also explores how the Christian community responds to the state power in religious practice. The state power continues to promulgate its ideology of historical and dialectical materialism through its propaganda system, including the education of younger generations. Additionally, the state power strives to accommodate Christianity into the official discourse of patriotism and nationalism and its project of constructing a harmonious socialist society through the two organisations of TSPM and CCC. In response to the strategy of the state power, the Christian community does not adopt either passive surrender or direct resistance, opting instead for opportunistic tactics. In this way, Christians have gained a degree of autonomy in their spaces of religious practice.

7.2 Spatial Practice in the Christian Church of Dongpu Town

In his book *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre (1991) shows that we cannot treat space simply as an inert and neutral container for people, events and social institutions. He urges us to think of space as an ongoing social production of spatial structures and conceptions as well as bodily incorporations of space, whose contours actively produce and transform social relations and whose historical development must be examined. We must conceive of social agents, whether persons, groups or social institutions, as inseparable, not only from their positioning in space but also from their strategic deployments of space. This section investigates during different periods the spatial practices in the Christian Church of Dongpu Town by both the local/state power and the Christian community itself.

7.2.1 Before the Maoist Period

Christianity was introduced to Dongpu in 1944. A Christian named Song Xiaxian established a preaching house in Xixiangqiaolong in Dongpu Town, at which time there were about five Christians. In the following year, the Christian Quan Guozhen founded another preaching house on today's 30 Qilin Road in Dongpu Town (Chen, 1998). According to Pastor Quan in the current Christian Church of Dongpu Town, his grandfather Quan Guozhen bought a *siheyuan*⁴³ from a landlord in the neighbourhood with the gold he earned running a rice wine business in Shanghai. He spent another few *jin* of gold renovating the house. Upon completion, the decorated brick-and-wood structured house had a pleasing appearance, with a sky well in the centre and surrounding walls. The first row of three rooms of the complex was used as the preaching house. The second and third rows of rooms were for living and running wine shops. In 1946, Song Xiaxian and Yu Zhechen moved their preaching house from Xixiangqiaolong to Qilin Road. The two preaching houses were adjacent to each other with only one partition wall. In 1948, the partition wall was dismantled and the two preaching houses merged. The Quan family gradually became the key figures in Dongpu's Christian Church.

During this period, the local/state power was virtually absent from this private household church. The preaching house was a self-contained place for Christian congregation. To some extent, it was quite similar to the private household temple discussed in Chapter 5. The Christian preaching house was a lived space that combined the mundane and the sacred space in local people's everyday life. This was the space of users (Christians) and was not represented (or conceived). Compared with the abstract space of experts (e.g., architects, urbanists and planners), this space staged the everyday activities of users that was concrete and subjective:

As a space of 'subjects' rather than of calculations, as a representational space, it has an origin ... with its hardships, its achievements, and its lacks. ... It is in this space that the 'private' realm asserts itself, albeit more or less vigorously, and always in a conflictual way, against the public one.

(Lefebvre, 1991, p. 362)

In reality, it is difficult to define whether the preaching house was in the private or public realm, for it could be viewed as private from the perspective of property ownership or public considering its openness to the Christians in the neighbourhood.

⁴³ A *siheyuan* (四合院) is a historical type of residence that was commonly found throughout China, most famously in Beijing. In English, *siheyuan* are sometimes referred to as Chinese quadrangles. The name literally means a courtyard surrounded by buildings on all four sides.

Thus, it was a liminal space, both public and private. In this particular space, local people created and lived their religious life as part of their common Christian faith.

7.2.2 During the Maoist Period

Before the radical extremes of the Cultural Revolution, the Communist Party had a more gradualist approach to weaning the Chinese people away from religious life. The Religious Affairs Bureau was founded in 1954 under the State Council in Beijing, with lower branch offices at provincial and local levels to oversee the implementation of religious policy. Several national religious organisations, including the TSPM⁴⁴ (for Protestants), were established to serve as a bridge between the various religious communities and the Party-state. These entities were to facilitate the downward movement of Party directives to local religious leaders and to channel up concerns from the grassroots to Party leaders (Yang, 2008, p. 27). However, during the Cultural Revolution, even these government religious agencies were unacceptable for a society bent on atheism, and they were all disbanded.

Pastor Quan recalled that during the Maoist period, the house church occupied the functions of a warehouse and a prison. Religious activities were stopped and preachers in the church were badly treated during the Cultural Revolution. In an interview, he told what happened to one of his aunts during this period:

I was eight years old then. The church was closed and we couldn't attend the church service. Some slogans of this period were 'Sweep Away All Monsters and Demons', 'Smash the Four Olds'⁴⁵ and 'Down with Feudalism, Capitalism and Revisionism'. My second aunt was a key figure in our church at that time. Some red guards took her away and interrogated her. They cut her long hair and forced her to deny Jesus Christ. She said: 'I couldn't deny Jesus Christ. He's so good and saved us and my family. If I denied Jesus Christ, then I became a woman without any conscience.' She didn't give in at all. Then the red guards tied her hands behind the back and hung her on a tree with a rope. The branch snapped and she fell solid on the ground. One of her arms broke. She suffered a lot. All her hair was cut. It

⁴⁴ The Three-Self Patriotic Movement (三自爱国运动, colloquially 三自教会, the Three-Self Church) or TSPM is a Protestant church in the People's Republic of China. Three-Self refers to the three principles of self-governance, self-support (i.e., financial independence from foreigners) and self-propagation (i.e., indigenous missionary work).

National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China (中国基督教三自爱国运动委员会) known in combination with the China Christian Council (中国基督教协会) as the lianghui (two organizations), they form the only state-sanctioned (registered) Protestant church in mainland China.

⁴⁵ The Four Olds or the Four Old Things (四旧) were Old Customs, Old Culture, Old Habits, and Old Ideas. One of the stated goals of the Cultural Revolution in the People's Republic of China was to bring an end to the Four Olds.

was really humiliating for a woman. She was also forced to wear the theatre costume⁴⁶ and was paraded through the streets in Dongpu.

(Pastor Quan, interview, 15 July 2012)

The above paragraph illustrates that the state power exercised its dominance in people's religious life in a despotic manner during the Maoist period, particularly during the Cultural Revolution. Different from Lefebvre's (1991) focus on the imbrications of power and space in capitalism, Michel Foucault was concerned with the increasing logic of preserving, monitoring and managing human life. He theorised modernity as the expanding spaces of 'disciplinary' and 'governmental' regimes that create enclosed spaces, such as hospitals, prisons, schools, factories and insane asylums, for optimising surveillance, producing individuals and providing care and social services to a population (Foucault, 1977, 1984, 1991). In the case of the Christian Church of Dongpu Town during the Cultural Revolution, the private preaching house was confiscated in the service of the socialist or Communist cause of modernity. The transformation of the religious space into a warehouse and prison displayed the dominance of representations of space over the previous lived space for the practice of the Christian faith. The warehouse and the prison were the governmental spaces that were 'a hallmark of modernity in that they transcend differences of political apparatuses in the modern world (capitalist democracies, state socialisms, and dictatorships), cross over national boundaries and cultures, and insinuate and expand themselves into every modern institution' (Yang, 2004b).

7.2.3 During the Post-Mao Period

In 1980, the State Council issued a circular requiring all religious property that had been confiscated since 1949—not just churches and temples and not just those few that had still been operational in 1966—to be returned to the appropriate religious organisations, and for compensation to be paid for the years of occupation (Guowuyuan, 1980). The TSPM was also restored. Also in 1980, the Protestants founded a new national body, the CCC, to serve as the umbrella for the Protestant churches across China, parallel to but separate from the TSPM, which was widely perceived as more political than religious and was an organisation of individuals rather than of churches (Dunch, 2008). In 1982, 'Document 19' was promulgated by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, admitting 'leftist errors' in past dealings with religious

⁴⁶ The theater costume is worn by the actors and actresses who performed Beijing Opera, Shaoxing Opera, Yue Opera (another style of local opera in Shaoxing) and so on. These artists got a derogative title 'xizi' (opera performers) in old China because opera performers were regarded as a humble employment in the mainstream values.

life and calling on Party cadres throughout the country to allow religious activities and to return places of worship to their congregations (MacInnis, 1989, pp. 7–26).

In December 1982, religious activities were officially restored in Dongpu Church under the sanction of the Religious Affairs Bureau of the People's Government of Shaoxing County, and in March 1985, the church property policy was implemented in Shaoxing City (Chen, 1998). However, as Pastor Quan (interview, 15 July 2012) admitted, religious activities had resumed in secret at the end of 1970s. During this period, it was not allowed to meet in the church openly. However, they saw other Christians have small-scale meetings, so they also congregated secretly and quietly in the second row of rooms with the doors closed because the preaching house was still occupied by the town government.

The manner in which Christians practiced their religion at this time can be viewed as the tactics of poaching in the sense of de Certeau's resistance. They 'vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers' (de Certeau, 1984, p. 37). De Certeau's (1984) distinction between 'place' and 'space' is determined respectively 'through objects that are ultimately reducible to the being-there of something dead' and 'through operations and actions of historical subjects (a movement always seems to condition the production of a space and to associate it with a history)' (p. 118). The *siheyuan* as a physical architectural existence could be simply viewed as a place; however, it could be transformed into a religious space for Christianity or into governmental spaces such as a warehouse or prison. The transformation was made possible only because of the actions and movement of subjects, whether this be the Christians as the weak or the state apparatus as the powerful. Therefore, the practice of space relates to the way a certain place is used, and the ways of using places is open-ended with multiple possibilities. While the Christians' ownership of the preaching house was deprived, they could still have their religious life by turning other rooms into a congregational space. Indeed, a physical religious place such as a church may not even be necessary. As the example of Pastor Quan's aunt showed, some Christians never stopped believing and practicing their faith even during the harshest period of religious suppression during the Cultural Revolution because they had a religious space in their mind and heart that could not be occupied by the state power. The religious activities were restored officially in the town of Dongpu after the preaching house was returned to the Christian community.

With the development of the socialist market economy and the nationwide urbanisation of rural areas, the town of Dongpu underwent three stages of town

construction from the 1980s to 2000 (Chen, 1998, p. 126). According to the town construction plan, the People's Government of Dongpu Town building was located at 30 Qilin Road, at the centre of the town, exactly opposite the preaching house. As Pastor Quan (interview, 15 July 2012) explained, the town government hated to see the church standing opposite their building. They complained that the musical band and choir were too noisy, claiming that they disturbed the neighbourhood. Consequently, the whole complex of the *siheyuan* was dismantled. With regret, Pastor Quan (interview, 15 July 2012) recalled, 'It was a traditional and beautiful architecture. But I forgot to take some pictures. It was a very important part of the history of our church. It could have been a cultural relic if it hadn't been dismantled'.

The church was relocated to the northwest of the town of Dongpu. The new church, with an area of 1030 square metres, was completed and put into use in 1993. As Paster Quan (interview, 18 July 2012) told me with pleasure:

The present location is a bit isolated with fields on the north, but convenient for parking. And the musical bands⁴⁷ of the church needn't worry about the complaints of neighbouring residents. At present, there are about 500 regularly attending Christians from the town of Dongpu and neighbouring towns and villages. It was God's grace and a blessing in disguise'.

During my fieldwork in the summer of 2012, the blueprint of a new church to be built opposite the old one had been granted, and the base had been constructed before I left. One reason for building the new church was that the old one, established in 1993, had some quality problems in its construction and cracks had appeared in its exterior walls. Pastor Quan explained that, when constructed, the church was a three-no product: no official design, no official construction procedures and no official blueprint. When the problems became apparent, Pastor Quan went to the town government; however, he could not get any officials to pay attention and nobody was sent to investigate. Later, Quan contacted the general manager of the Dongpu construction company who built the church. The manager's wife was a Christian in the church. The manager went to talk about the issue with the Party committee secretary of the town government. At Christmas one year, the manager invited the secretary to the church and showed him the cracks. He said to the secretary: 'If the church collapses and these Christians get hurt or

⁴⁷ The church has one electronic band and one brass band. The two bands often provide performance on Sunday services as well as on occasions, such as wedding ceremonies and funerals, free of charge. The bands are mainly composed of young Christians. Primary and middle school students are encouraged to receive free training of musical instrument performance during summer and winter vocations.

something, I have to be responsible. But you are also to be blamed because you are secretary'. Soon after this, the secretary held a meeting with the Party committee and they decided to allocate five *mu*⁴⁸ of land for a new church. Although only four *mu* was eventually allocated, Pastor Quan told me that God had made preparations; they later bought another one *mu* from a farmer. Pastor Quan revealed that the manager and the secretary were like brothers and that they often had dinners together. The construction contractor had paid for a tour of Europe for the leaders of the Party committee.

Another reason for constructing the new church was that the present church could not accommodate the increasing number of Christians. This was probably the most important reason, as Pastor Quan later revealed his plan to convert the old church into a nursing home for elderly Christians. Quan's vision was for these elders to live together and enjoy their remaining life. He believed that the church nursing home would be much better for these elderly Christians than the mainstream one because there would be service, worship, choir and praise in the church. As a result, the elderly Christians' state of mind would be improved and they could continue to congregate if they wanted. In addition, the pastors could preach sermons, sing psalms and play videos to them.

From the perspective of spatial practices, the relocation of the church from the centre of the town to its present isolated location was symbolic in the deployment of space. The Town Government of Dongpu building could be viewed as the symbol of local/state power, which was channelled top down from the central government by the Chinese Communist Party. The tension between the central location of the town government building and the marginalised location of the preaching house represents the intolerance of the atheist and materialist Chinese Communist Party towards the monotheistic Christian community and signals the marginal position of religion in the construction of socialist urbanisation.

On the side of Christians, they would of course hope that the door of their church could be open to all sinners in the world. For this reason, churches are often located in populated areas and in the centre of towns and cities in Christian countries because Christians are keen to actively and positively influence, change and eventually save the people of the world (in contrast to the chosen people in heaven). They consider themselves as the servants of God and want to be the salt and light of the world.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Five *mu* equals 1/3 hectare.

⁴⁹ New Testament Matthew (5:13-16): You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its flavour, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled on by people. You are the light of the world. A city located on a hill cannot be hidden. People do not light a lamp and put it under a basket but on a lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the

However, the Christian community in the town of Dongpu did not own their building in the centre of town and had to accept the relocation in the face of the local power. Nevertheless, the new location of the church brought some unexpected advantages, as explained by Pastor Quan above. Just as the relocation isolated the church from the centre of town, so it isolated the Christian community from the ‘surveillance’ of the local power. Moreover, the plan for the repurposing of the old church was a good example of tactical spatial practice. Although Pastor Quan and the Christian community would not necessarily expect so, their provision of a new church building while they also retain the old one shows that the community has their own art of resistance in response to the strategy from the local/state power. It was through their tactical spatial practice that the Christian community won themselves a wider space for their religious life. This spatial practice also illustrates the ongoing contest between the state power and the Christian community.

7.3 State Power and Religious Practice in the Church

This contest between the state power and the Christian community was not limited to the spatial dimension; it also affected some religious practices in the church. The central government led by the Chinese Communist Party, the state power on the one hand continued to propagandise its ideology of historical materialism and dialectical materialism through its propaganda system, including the education system and particularly among the younger generation. At the same time, the state power strove to bring Christians and their churches under the control of the state through the TSPM and CCC and required that Christianity be adapted to socialism (Dunch, 2008). In response, the Dongpu Christian community did not choose passive surrender or direct resistance to the state power; rather, the interactions between their practice of religion and the state power were much more complex and tactical.

7.3.1 Party Indoctrination versus Christian Faith

Article 36 of the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China states: ‘No state organ, public organisation, or individuals may compel citizens to believe in, or not to believe in, nor may they discriminate against citizens to believe in, or do not believe in, any religion’ (National People’s Congress, 2004). However, the rules and functioning of the Communist Party often violates this stipulation. This is evidenced by the following viewpoint of the Director of the National Commission of Ethnic and Religious Affairs of China:

same way, let your light shine before people, so that they can see your good deeds and give honour to your Father in heaven.

We implement and adhere to the policy on freedom of religious belief because this policy abides by the regular pattern of religious development, satisfy people and nation's fundamental interests. But this does not mean we advocate idealism and take a neutral attitude between materialism and idealism. Nor does it mean that we can give up the education on materialism and atheism among people, especially adolescents; and give up the responsibility in the management and guidance of religious affairs.

As for how to deal with these issues, not to speak of the more complicated things, but at least what we can do very soon includes: to forbid anybody to promote and encourage a given religion with administrative power; to forbid religion to interfere with government's functions and authority; to unite patriotic religious organisations to fight against the penetration of religions abroad; to conduct effective management of religious affairs and help religious organisations to construct internal systems of administration; to propaganda dialectic materialism and historical materialism through media and school education at all levels (excluding religious schools and institutions). These measures do not at all contradict the policy on freedom of religious belief. Rather, they just ensure the positive role religious causes play in the construction of the modernisation of our country.⁵⁰

(Wang, 2013)

What the Dean expressed about the policy on freedom of religious belief was self-contradictory, although he claimed it was not so. Freedom of religion or freedom of belief is a principle that supports the freedom of an individual or community, in public or private, to manifest their religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance; the concept is generally recognised also to include the freedom to change religion or not to follow any religion (United Nations, n.d.). The freedom to leave or discontinue membership in a religion or religious group—in religious terms called 'apostasy'—is also a fundamental part of religious freedom, covered by Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, n.d.). Freedom of religion is considered by many people and nations to be a fundamental human right. In a country with a state religion, freedom of religion is generally considered to mean that the government permits the religious practices of other sects besides the state religion, and does not persecute believers in other faiths. Freedom of religion also allows any individual the autonomy to follow or not any religion without any force from any

⁵⁰ Translation from news report '我坚持认为，中共党员不能信教'—专访全国政协民族宗教委员会主任朱维群 (I firmly believe that Chinese Communists can not believe in religion- a special interview with Zhu Weiqun, the Director of National Commission of Ethnic and Religious Affairs of China) .

coercion such as state power. In China, the state religion means the five state-sanctioned religions. Other religious practices and faith are often considered illegal. Obviously, this violates the principle of freedom of religion. Additionally, the Chinese Communist Party's insistence on propagandising materialism and atheism through the media and school education at all levels, and particularly among young people, also clearly violates the principle of freedom of religion.

China's current education system, including its various education institutions, administrative management and curriculum, caters to the needs of the one-party dictatorship. Party indoctrination has replaced citizenship education to become the core of all levels of public education (Zhang, 2011, p. 121). Party indoctrination refers to the ruling political party using education as a tool for indoctrinating society in the Party's ideology and policies (Zhang, 2006). The Party claims that this type of education represents the state and its people, giving it its public character. However, in reality, ideological education is employed as a state apparatus to impose the will of the ruling authorities on society as a whole.

In China's current education system, Party indoctrination holds a central position, established and legitimated by law. The Preamble of the current Constitution of the People's Republic of China emphasises the historical achievement and ruling legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party (National People's Congress, 2004). Further, the ideological nature of education is clearly revealed in the Education Law of the People's Republic of China:

(Article 3) In developing the cause of socialist education, the State adheres to taking Marxism, Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought and the theory of building socialism with Chinese characteristics as its guidelines and follows the basic principles defined in the Constitution.

(Article 6) The State conducts education among educatees in patriotism, collectivism, socialism as well as in the importance of ideals, ethics, discipline, the legal system, national defence and national unity.

(National People's Congress, 1995)

To carry out the Party indoctrination, a powerful supporting and organisational system is established at all levels of schooling. This system is composed of the Party affairs work system at all schools, the public political and ideological teaching staff, head teachers and political instructors, the Youth League system and Party-controlled student organisations. An important part of Party indoctrination at schools is the so-called 'upbringing the successors to the cause of Communism' program. In primary

schools, almost all students are required to join the Young Pioneers of China.⁵¹ In middle schools, almost all students join the Communist Youth League.⁵² In college, students are encouraged to become members of the Chinese Communist Party. Membership of these three pro-Party organisations has become one of the evaluation criteria for determining a student's political performance.

Political performance plays a dominant role in the student evaluation system. Both the admission and graduation of students are subject to political investigation. Students' failure in tests of political subjects disqualifies them for graduation certificates, and students' political and ideological conduct may affect their employment after graduation. Those who take an active role in Party organisations or become a Chinese Communist Party member will usually gain an advantageous edge in all kinds of prize and competition evaluation as well as in further study and employment opportunities.

During my fieldwork, I found that the Party indoctrination characteristic of the materialism and atheism education at schools was often psychologically and morally traumatic for Christian students. During a casual conversation in the church, a junior middle school Christian student (field notes, 22 July 2012) told me about her experience at school. All of her classmates had joined the Communist Youth League; however, she could not because she was a Christian. She knew that the Youth League was an atheist organisation. While she would have gladly joined for the sake of overcoming her difference from her classmates, the Chinese Communist Party and its member-nurturing organisations such as the Young Pioneers and Youth League forbid citizens who are religious believers to join these organisations. Therefore, she decided not to join the Youth League. She said that her head teacher had talked to her seriously about this matter a few times, promising that she could join the League right away as long as she stopped going to church. The girl explained that students who were not Youth League members were often considered by classmates and teachers as problem students, either in their studies or in their moral conduct. For the sake of his daughter, the father of the

⁵¹ The Young Pioneers of China is a mass youth organization for children aged six to fourteen in the People's Republic of China. The Young Pioneers of China is run by the Communist Youth League, an organization of older youth that comes under the Communist Party of China. The Young Pioneers of China is similar to Pioneer Movements that exist or existed in many Communist countries around the world.

⁵² The Communist Youth League of China, also known as the Young Communist League of China or simply the Communist Youth League is a youth movement of the People's Republic of China for youth between the ages of fourteen and twenty-eight, run by the Communist Party of China (CPC). The league is organized on the party pattern. Its leader is its First Secretary, who is also a member of the CPC Central Committee. The Communist Youth League is the assistant and reserve of the Chinese Communist Party. The Communist Youth League is responsible for guiding the activities of the Young Pioneers (for children below the age of fourteen).

girl suggested that if the school put her name on the list of Youth League members without asking her to identify her religion, she should pretend to be uninformed. However, if she were clearly asked to declare her religious belief and to vow to fight for the cause of Communism all her life under the League Flag, then she should firmly say no. The girl finally did not become a member of the Youth League.

The Chinese Communist Party's materialism and atheism education also represents a dilemma for Christian college students. In discussing the choice between Christian faith and political belief in Communism, Pastor Quan in the church offered the following solution to students:

First of all, you should tell your teacher you are a Christian and see what your teacher says. If the teacher says ok, it does not matter then. That's it. You can join the Party. We don't mean to oppose it. But the first thing is you have to declare your faith that you are a Christian. Another issue is about how to fill in the form. In the form you may be asked to declare your religion. If there is no such column, then you don't need to do that. But if there is, then you must write clearly you are a Christian. If they say you cannot join the Party because you are a Christian, then forget it. Our church does not say you can never join the Party. We don't oppose it. If they ask you can join, you'd better not take an active part in the Party school training. If they try to persuade you, you have to declare your faith first. If it's fine, you can join. After that it's their business, not yours. But if we conceal our identity intentionally, then it's our business and we cannot get away with it before God.

(field notes, 19 August 2012)

Comparing this suggestion to the one offered by the father to his daughter, the tactics employed are almost identical. Both the girl's father and the pastor placed the Christian faith before political conviction. However, neither denied that students could join the Party organisations, provided they did not have to deny or contravene their religious faith.

From the perspective of belief, monotheistic Christianity contradicts the atheistic and materialist Communism. However, the advice to participate in Communist organisations to such extent that is possible without forsaking one's Christian faith can be interpreted as an example of the Christian community's opportunistic tactics towards the Chinese Communist Party's strategy of materialist and atheist education. For the Christian students discussed above, their faith in God was unshaken such that joining the Youth League or Chinese Communist Party did not mean a genuine belief in materialism or atheism, but merely served as a tactic to improve the students' situation

at school or their employment prospects after graduation. Although these tactics seemed vulnerable to the strategy of the state power, Christians claimed their identity and showed a certain degree of opposition to the Chinese Communist Party's indoctrination.

Another tactic of resistance to the Party's indoctrination of materialism and atheism was the church's operation of a Sunday school and church holiday program during winter and summer school holidays. The Communist Party of China and schools at all levels do not encourage schoolchildren to go to church, as showcased by the girl's story. Nevertheless, the church regularly organised a Sunday school in one of its four classrooms for the children of Christian families to study the Bible. The summer and winter school holidays also provided an opportunity for schoolchildren to learn how to play musical instruments and sing in a choir. The electronic musical band and brass band were composed mainly of middle school and college students. However, the church does not refer to these activities for young people as a Sunday school, and these programs are kept quiet in public. The Christian community simply does what they feel is necessary within the space and opportunities they have available to them.

7.3.2 Escape without Leaving

Churches and other meeting places affiliated with the TSPM and CCC are often ignored by scholars because of their alleged 'pro-Communist' theologies or 'pro-Party' positions—ideas propagated by some house church leaders. There is also a perception that Three-Self churches are organised under the guidelines prescribed by the TSPM and CCC and that these organisations' pastors are selected and approved according to the same standards before being ordained (Xie, 2010, p. 92). Therefore, these officially sanctioned churches and meeting points are assumed by researchers to be problematic in many aspects including in their theology. However, this assumption overemphasises the influence of church-state relations on the theological correctness and organisational structure of the Three-Self churches and neglects the fact that most of its church members are ordinary Chinese Christians with little concern for church-state relations and religious policies.

I once asked an elderly Christian woman how she felt about her Three-Self church service. She answered: 'Thank the Lord, thank our government' (field notes, 8 July 2012). Indeed, most lay believers in Three-Self churches consider the major differences between the house church and the Three-Self church to be worship location and perhaps style of worship, not theological differences. The ordinary Chinese Christian has little interest in political struggles or theological orthodoxy (Xie, 2010, p. 75). However, it has to be pointed out that some Christians, especially those who receive higher

education, do care about the study of the Bible and theological orthodoxy. During my fieldwork, several primary school teachers who came to attend a Bible study seminar asked the pastor some quite academic questions about the Bible and expressed their discontent with the present religious policy. Therefore, attitudes towards the state-sanctioned churches vary among different categories of people, relying heavily on the economic, social and educational background of the Christians.

Liang (1988, pp. 38-45) asserted that churches under the leadership of the TSPM were not official churches in the strict sense because they still had some degree of relative autonomy despite being under governmental surveillance. Therefore, the categorisation of churches into Three-Self churches and house churches is not appropriate. In other words, affiliation with TSPM/CCC does not mean churches support TSPM/CCC without any reservation. Instead, the relationship between churches and state power through TSPM/CCC is complicated and diverse in its character, echoing the complexity and diversity of Christian believers in China.

Pastor Quan explained that the Church of Dongpu Town that used to be in the center of town joined the two organisations of TSPM and CCC in the 1980s. Before that, the church was a private preaching house or meeting point in a rural village of Dongpu Town. To some extent, the church has to uphold the ‘love-one’s-nation, love-one’s-religion’ principle, adhere to the right direction of running religious affairs, promote the theological construction and adapt to the socialist society. However, according to my observation, the Dongpu Church is autonomous in its religious affairs, such as its instruction, preaching and other services. I asked the pastor whether the church had experienced any change in its evangelism after joining the TSPM and CCC. He answered with confidence: ‘Evangelism has little to do with TSPM and CCC. As long as our church accepts the mission of God, we will and we can surely spread gospels. Our church is the kingdom of God. It does not belong to any organisations’ (Pastor Quan, personal communication, 15 September 2012). The pastor told me that he, as the leader of this church, has to attend meetings arranged by TSPM/CCC and the Bureau of Religious Affairs and has to study the religious policies and ‘follow’ the guidelines. However, I could infer from his answer that policies and guidelines are one thing and actual religious practice is another.

This can also be seen in the example of the ‘three-fixed’ principle, which requires churches to have 1) a fixed location, such that all religious activities and congregation can only take place at church; 2) fixed personnel, with all people engaged in religious work having to be recommended by the church administration and reported, tested and

ordained by the two organisations; and 3) a fixed area, such that clergy can only be engaged in religious work in their own churches and are not allowed to work in other areas or to invite clergy from other areas to conduct religious work in their areas (Huang, 2003b, p. 112). The 'three fixed' principle are the policy imposed by the authorities to restrict evangelization across administrative borders. Despite this principle, during my fieldwork, I participated in a three-day Bible study seminar delivered by a pastor from another church and attended an evening event at which the Christians of Dongpu Church presented a show at another church.

Further, the leadership of Dongpu Church is still composed of Pastor Quan and his family members, even though the church has registered with the TSPM/CCC. While this new affiliation with the two organisations indicates the penetration and dominance of the state power in the church, the present church is a continuation of the original preaching house, which has achieved its autonomy through implicit tactics within the strategic system. In other words, the Church of Dongpu practiced resistance and achieved autonomy by working tactically inside, rather than detaching itself from, the strategy of the state power. The church's affiliation with TSPM/CCC provides legitimacy for the religious activities of many churches in rural areas. The resistance of the Christian Church in Dongpu can thus be viewed as 'escape without leaving' the dominant social order (de Certeau, 1984, p. xiii).

7.4 Conclusion

The Christian community and the state power have been engaged in a complex interaction of resistance and dominance in both spatial and religious practices throughout the modernisation and socialist periods and continuing in the present day. In response to the strategy of state power, the Christian community did not adopt either passive surrender or direct resistance, but rather exercised evasive tactics within state power, thereby achieving a certain degree of autonomy in their space of religious practice.

From the historical and cultural point of view, Christianity in the town of Dongpu has become a religious tradition and heritage transmitted from Pastor Quan's grandparents to his generation. This cultural heritage constantly makes adaptation in response to the changing religious policies under state power. However, the significance of Christian faith endures in the community and defines the cultural identity of these Chinese Christians.

Chapter 8 still focusing on the Christian community investigates the hybridity of Christian and traditional Chinese culture through a Chinese Christian's funeral. It also

explores the tension between the Chinese funeral tradition practiced by ordinary people and the funeral reform implemented by state power.

Chapter 8: Hybridity in a Christian Funeral

8.1 Introduction

The Chinese Christian's funeral described and analysed in this chapter shows a subtle compromise between, and combination of, Christian culture and Chinese ritual tradition. An analysis of how the Christian community and practitioners of Chinese rituals responded to the belief and values of each other shows that the Christian community sets themselves apart as a 'we group' (Christians, the chosen people of God) from the 'they group' ('superstition believers', the people in the world), while the practitioners of Chinese rituals view Christians as alien people, traitors to Chinese traditional culture and unfilial descendants. This conflict between Christian culture and Chinese traditional culture derives from the conflict between the monotheistic model of religion from the West and the indigenous polytheistic ritual tradition. The binary opposition and hierarchy of 'religion and superstition' contribute to the discursive dominance of Christianity over Chinese ritual tradition.

The Chinese Christian's funeral also illustrates the tension between ordinary people's observance of funeral tradition as the inheritors of Chinese ritual tradition and the funeral reform implemented as part of governmentality under the state power. The revival of funeral ritual tradition represents a resistance by ordinary people to funeral reform. This reveals the contest between the funeral tradition as popular culture and the funeral reform advocated in the official culture. This contest, in turn, suggests the tension between the cultural autonomy of ordinary people's everyday life and the cultural leadership of the ruling Communist Party of China.

8.2 The Christian Funeral

Shortly after I attended the traditional Chinese funeral of my wife's grandmother in a mountainous village in west Zhejiang Province in the summer of 2012, I received a call from the pastor of the Christian Church of Dongpu Town. He told me that a Christian had just passed away and the church was delivering the service as part of the funeral. The pastor asked if I would like to attend the funeral. I accepted the invitation.

The deceased was an 84-year-old Han Chinese woman. Her husband had died in middle age. They had three sons and three daughters. However, two of these daughters had died very young of malnutrition and disease during those years of famine and

poverty in the Maoist era.⁵³ The three sons and the remaining daughter were raised by this woman alone and were now all very successful. The oldest son was an entrepreneur of a textile company and a beverage company; the second son was the general manager of a construction company with 12 branch companies across China; the youngest son was the Chinese Communist Party branch secretary of Dongpu Village in Dongpu Town; and the daughter also had her own company. The pastor told me that the woman's sons and daughter were not or were at most nominal Christians, despite their mother's piousness. During my fieldwork in the church, I had never seen them attend services.

The funeral comprised a three-day wake, during which family members, relatives, friends and neighbours came to pay respect to the deceased and console the family at the house of the deceased; a funeral procession around the places where the deceased had lived, held on the fourth day in the early morning; the farewell ceremony and cremation in a crematorium following the procession; and the earth burial on a hill following the cremation.

The church delivered three evenings of service during the three-day wake. When I attended the service at the deceased's house, it was already the third day after her death. I followed the loud music and found the house. It was a three-storey villa enclosed by walls. The large metal gate was open. Against the walls on the two sides of the gate were standing lines of flower baskets with yellow and white chrysanthemums. Dozens of people were seated on the benches in the courtyard, between which ran a passage from the front gate to another gate opening into the *tang* of the villa. Between the courtyard and the gate to the *tang* was a crescent platform that served as a stage for Pastor Quan to deliver the prayers and sermons and the choir to perform with the

⁵³ These years are called the Three Years of Hardship or the Three Years of Great Chinese Famine, referred to by the Communist Party of China as the Three Years of Natural Disasters or Three Years of Difficult Period between the years 1958 and 1961 characterized by widespread famine. Drought, poor weather, and the policies of the Communist Party of China contributed to the famine, although the relative weights of the contributions are disputed due to the Great Leap Forward. According to government statistics, there were 15 million excess deaths in this period. Unofficial estimates vary, but scholars have estimated the number of famine victims to be between 20 and 43 million. Historian Frank Dikötter, having been granted special access to Chinese archival materials, estimates that there were at least 45 million premature deaths from 1958 to 1962. Chinese journalist Yang Jisheng concluded there were 36 million deaths due to starvation, while another 40 million others failed to be born, so that 'China's total population loss during the Great Famine then comes to 76 million.' The phrase 'Three Bitter Years' is often used by Chinese peasants to refer to this period.

The Great Leap Forward (1958-61) was a radical state-orchestrated mass mobilization campaign launched by Chairman Mao, calling for leaps in agricultural and industrial production so that China would equal Great Britain's steel production in ten years. In the countryside, it was accompanied by the People's Commune movement that radically stepped up the pace of agricultural collectivization, by combining several villages into giant new units of production and accounting, and households and families lost their decision-making ability. The difficulties of adjusting to working with strangers, the lack of economic incentives to work and the diversion of energies to backyard rural industries meant that agricultural production plummeted.

accompaniment of the brass band and another electronic band. A big rectangular white cloth with a red cross at the centre and the four characters 安然见主 (see the Lord in peace) was hanging from the ceiling to the ground at the gate to the *tang*. Behind this cloth, the deceased woman lay inside an air-conditioned crystal coffin. She was not dressed in her best as in a traditional Chinese funeral; instead, she wore a plain white shroud. Another white cloth covered half the coffin, so only the face of the deceased could be seen from outside.

The family members did not wear the conventional black of Western Christian tradition or the conventional Chinese all-white sackcloth mourning apparel and sackcloth hoods.⁵⁴ Instead, they were dressed in white shirts and black trousers. Most distinctively, family members wore black armbands, not with the Chinese character 孝 (filial piety) but rather with the character 悼 (mourn).

The church service for the three evenings focused on sermons by pastors preaching about the meaning of life and death in the Christian faith (see Appendix 8.1). The military-style brass band which was composed of big and small drums, cymbals, a trumpet and pocket trumpet performed loudly. The choir sang songs such as 'Rest in the arms of the Lord' and 'See you again', amplified by a pair of loudspeakers standing on the left and right ends of the stage.

In the early morning of the next day, the family arranged a funeral procession in the neighbourhood of the town before attending the farewell ceremony in the funeral parlour. The procession was composed of a long team of vehicles in the following order: one truck for the musical band, one van sent from the funeral parlour for the crystal coffin, more than 10 luxury cars such as BMWs and Porsches for the family members of the deceased, two trucks for dozens of flower baskets and two large buses for friends and Christians from the church. The parade moved slowly through the streets of the town and past the Christian Church.

At about half past six in the morning, the whole procession arrived at the funeral parlour. The farewell ceremony took place at the biggest hall in the funeral parlour. The crystal coffin, surrounded by white lilies and chrysanthemum, was placed at the far end of the hall. Behind the coffin was a wall on which was hung a black and white picture of the deceased. One pastor from the church presided over the ceremony. The brass band

⁵⁴ For a detailed description of Chinese mourning apparels, see Yu, H. (2012). *Interweaving of Ritual Meanings in Gouliang Miao Village*. Doctor of Philosophy in English Language and Literature PhD Thesis, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou.

again performed loudly, this time with music one might hear at a school sports meeting. When the music stopped, Christians said prayers and sang songs. Then, the oldest son of the deceased was invited to deliver a speech before the standing microphone. He paused at intervals to stop his tears, and the speech became a kind of self-murmuring in half mandarin and half local dialect. Pastor Quan then delivered a sermon on the short mundane life and eternal life in the Christian faith (see Appendix 8.2).

Following this, the Christians started to sing ‘See you again’ repeatedly. Family members, close friends and some other Christians with flowers in their hands started to walk three times around the coffin to have a last look at the deceased. The staff of the parlour finally came and wheeled away the coffin for cremation. The wails of the sons and daughter of the deceased resounded in the spacious farewell hall. They bowed to their mother’s portrait on the wall.

During the break, I found on the wall of this biggest hall some pictures depicting four stories selected from the Twenty-four Filial Exemplars.⁵⁵ In the adjacent hall, another farewell ceremony was over. Quite coincidentally, the deceased was also a Christian. However, the family were dressed in the traditional Chinese all-white sackcloth mourning apparel. Their farewell hall looked very quiet, with only a few people. Someone was even attracted by our ceremony and peeked at the door of our hall. I spoke with Pastor Quan about what I saw next door. He did not say much but commented on our farewell ceremony. With disappointment, Quan said:

The picture should not have been put up on the wall in the funeral according to our Christian faith. But one of our elder sister’s (the deceased) grandsons said pictures were used in Christian funerals in foreign countries. So I said nothing more. But the elder sister’s sons and daughters bowed before the picture just now. I told them not to do that before the farewell ceremony, but they still did that. The picture and the bow are virtually idol worship from the perspective of our belief.⁵⁶

(field notes, 3 September 2012)

About 40 minutes later, a hall staff member wheeled out a cart upon which sat a delicate cuboid urn with a clear red cross on the top. The oldest son held the urn with his two

⁵⁵ The Twenty-four Filial Exemplars also translated as The Twenty-four Paragons of Filial Piety (二十四孝) is a classic text of Confucian filial piety written by Guo Jujing, a scholar of the Yuan dynasty (1260 – 1368). The text was extremely influential in the medieval Far East and was used to teach Confucian moral values. It is virtually untaught in schools today, although adults may be familiar with it.

⁵⁶ Quotations about the idol worship can be found in the Bible. For example, Exhortation to Obedience 26:1 You must not make for yourselves idols, so you must not set up for yourselves a carved image or a pillar, and you must not place a sculpted stone in your land to bow down before it, for I am the LORD your God.

hands with great care. The second son took down his mother's picture from the wall and held it in his arms. All the people followed them and got into their respective vehicles.

About 10 minutes later, we arrived at the foot of a nearby hill where the coffin was to be interred. Pastor Quan explained that the gravesite had been chosen many years ago and that it covered an area of about 20 square metres. The two daughters of the deceased who had died young were buried here. The family spent 30,000 RMB for this site at that time, which was a huge amount of money for ordinary people. However, these days, such a site could not be attained even for 300,000 RMB. This gravesite had a very good *fengshui*, with tombs standing north and facing south. It was tranquil and surrounded by green and luxuriant trees. There were no other tombs nearby.



Figure 8.6 Tomb of the Deceased Christian

The path up the hill was a bit steep and slippery, but the brass band finally made their way to the cemetery and again performed loudly. Pastor Quan made prayers again. Since the tomb was built long ago, it had to be opened before the coffin could be moved into the tomb. This had already been done by the time of our arrival by four men who the family had paid to complete the burial. When the oldest son was putting the urn into the nicely painted life-size wooden coffin, the other sons and family members unfolded above the coffin a bed sheet with finely embroidered flowers and phoenix to protect the urn from direct sunlight. Then, the coffin was shut with wooden nails and pushed into

the channel made by a stone coffin buried in the tomb. The burial was complete. On the way down the hill, a sister in the church said to me: ‘Teacher Xue, isn’t our Christian funeral more *renao* (热闹)? So many brothers and sisters come to say farewell to our elder sister. We really love each other’. I nodded with agreement.

8.3 Funeral in Two Cultures

The funeral is often considered the key to understanding a certain culture and the profound values and psychology of a people. Chinese funerals have long been a topic of research interest in Chinese native and Western scholarship. One quite recent study was Yu’s (2012) cultural anthropological investigation of traditional funeral practices in a village of ethnic minority Miao from the indigenous perspective of ritual (*li*) hermeneutics (Wu & Hu, 2010). However, the funeral presented in this chapter was not a traditional Chinese funeral, nor was it strictly a Christian funeral. It was a combination of Chinese culture and Christian culture. As detailed above, this funeral was dedicated to an 84-year-old Chinese Christian, and as such, the funeral was inherently a life-cycle ceremony of hybridity between two cultures.

From the perspective of Chinese ritual tradition, some cultural practices and values were still observed in the funeral. The most prominent was the practice of *fengshui* in the gravesite location. *Fengshui*, literally ‘wind and water’, is an ancient art or technology that tries to improve people’s physical and spiritual life by aligning the buildings in which they live and the graves in which their ancestors are buried, to harmonise with and tap into the flow of the ‘primordial energy’, or *qi*, of the earth (Yang, 2004b). This archaic practice of aligning bodies, families and lineages with space found its most important expression in the siting of burials. One of the earliest extant classics of *fengshui*, the *Book of Burial Rooted in Antiquity* (Jin dai bi shu) written by Guo Pu during the Jin dynasty (265–420) states:

In burial one takes advantage of vital qi. ... When the vital qi circulates in the earth, it ferments and gives life to the myriad things. [Human beings] receive [their] form from [their] parents. [Their] basic frames obtain qi and the forms [they are] given accept it and harbor it there. Life is the gathering of qi. What coagulates and solidifies becomes bones which are the only remainder upon death. Therefore, in burial, qi is returned to within the bones in order to protect the way which gives life.

(Yang, 2004b, p. 732)

As the siting of burials, or the *yin* house (阴宅) for the deceased (in contrast to the *yang* house 阳宅 for the living), is held to be of great significance to the prosperity of the lineage, *fengshui* continues to be practiced by the majority of Chinese people,

especially in rural areas. The practice of *fengshui* deals not only with the relationship between humans and nature, but also serves as the communication medium between the living (descendants) and the dead (ancestors). Considering the nominal Christian identity of the sons and daughter of the deceased and the actual desirable *fengshui* of the cemetery, there is reason to infer that the location of this gravesite was carefully chosen by some *fengshui* master. Further, according to Pastor Quan, the tomb and coffin had long been prepared. Many elderly people in China also prepare their death clothes early, partly based on the belief that the earlier one prepares for death, the longer one's actual life can be.

Meanwhile, the loud music performance and involvement of many people in the funeral displayed another distinctive characteristic of Chinese culture, which could be summarised as the emphasis on *honghuo* (red and hot) or *renao* (hot and noisy) in most Chinese social and ritual events. Those who have spent time in China can understand the idea that the more *renao* (热闹) an event is, the more successful it may seem to the participants. Chau refers to this desired state as *honghuo* (红火) or red-hot, which is the colloquial term used in Northern Shaanxi (陕北). In his study of the Black Dragon Temple in Shanxi, Chau proposes what he calls a 'sociothermic' theory of Chinese sociality (Chau, 2006, p. 156), based on the Chinese notion of *honghuo*, 'a condition of social co-presence ... the gathering of a group of people in one social space' (Chau, 2006, p. 147). He continues:

Crowdedness is the necessary condition for honghuo-making. It is as if the simple convergence of many people will generate honghuo, which is why I choose to translate honghuo not simply as 'exciting,' but also as 'social heat' or 'red-hot sociality.' The convergence of people generates honghuo, and honghuo generates a greater convergence of people because people are disposed to be attracted to the noise and colors of honghuo.

(Chau, 2006, p. 148)

Like in temple festivals and wedding ceremonies, Chinese people were also drawn to funerals to experience 'the most desirable mode of sociality: red-hot sociality ... Intense co-presence ... social heat endows popular religious sites and the deities with heightened aura and appeal' (Chau, 2006, pp. 147-148).

My grandmother-in-law's funeral was not only attended by about 100 of her descendants and relatives, but also witnessed by many other neighbours, acquaintances and even strangers in the village and other villages nearby. It was definitely a *renao* as well as a grief-stricken funeral. While it may appear paradoxical, it is quite

understandable because everyone thought my grandmother-in-law had died a good death at the age of 85 at home instead of lying in a hospital bed, and being taken care of by her sons and daughters until her last breath. In this sense, the funeral was a happy occasion. The same can be said for the funeral of the 84-year-old Chinese Christian. The loud music played by the electronic and brass bands from the Western tradition was functionally synonymous to that by traditional Chinese folk instruments such as gongs, flutes and trumpets. In addition to scaring away the spirits and ghosts, the loud music also functioned to create the *renao* atmosphere. As evidenced by what the sister said to me at the conclusion of the burial, *renao* is so ordinary for Chinese people that it is often taken for granted as a positive value.

However, apart from these few Chinese ritual elements, the combined influence from the Christian culture and the funeral reform under the state power meant that most elements of the Chinese funeral tradition were greatly diminished in this Chinese Christian's funeral compared with my grandmother-in-law's traditional Chinese funeral. The conventions of a traditional funeral that were absent include the following. Family members were not dressed in traditional mourning apparel and their armbands did not show the Chinese character 孝 (filial piety). There was no food placed in front of the coffin as an offering to the deceased during the wake. Nor was there an altar with burning incense or a lit white candle positioned at the foot of the coffin. No joss paper or prayer money (to provide the deceased with sufficient income in the afterlife) was burned during the wake. Funeral guests were not required to light incense for the deceased and bow as a sign of respect to the family. No Buddhist or Taoist ritualists were invited to chant verses from scriptures at night.⁵⁷ During the procession, there was no long lit joss stick (symbolising the soul of the deceased) held throughout the journey. Nor were paper models of objects such as cars, statues, ships and so on carried during the procession to symbolise the wealth of the deceased's family or for the deceased to use in the other world (called *yinjian* 阴间, in contrast to the *yangjian* 阳间 of the living). During the burial, family members and other relatives did not throw handfuls of earth into the grave before it was filled. After the funeral, the clothes worn by the mourners were not burned to avoid the bad luck associated with death. These are only a fraction of the elements that I observed and participated in at my grandmother-in-law's traditional Chinese funeral but did not see in the Chinese Christian's funeral.

⁵⁷ It is believed in Chinese culture that the souls of the dead face many obstacles and even torment and torture for the sins they have committed in life before they enter the afterlife. And prayers, chanting and rituals offered by the ritualists help ease the passage of the deceased's soul into heaven. These prayers are accompanied by music played on the gong, flute and trumpet.

From the viewpoint of Christian culture, the influence of the Christian faith was evident throughout the funeral. During the three-day wake, the farewell ceremony at the crematorium and the burial on the hill, the Christian church delivered services featuring sermons, prayers and musical performances that were intended to spread the gospel to the family and friends of the deceased concerning the meaning of life and death in the Christian faith. In terms of its cultural function, the church service corresponded exactly to the role of the Buddhist or Taoist ritualists in a traditional Chinese funeral. Also in the Chinese Christian tradition, the red cross could be seen everywhere at the funeral. There were even red roses in a flower basket arranged into a red cross. Characters such as 安然见主 (see the Lord in peace) also explicitly conveyed the religious identity of the deceased. Most importantly, the influence or dominance of Christianity in the funeral was visible through the absence of conventional Chinese funeral practices such as burning joss paper, prayer money and incense to the deceased and bowing and kowtowing to the deceased. In other words, what was valued in the Chinese funeral tradition was absent in the Christian culture.

The difference in the funeral practices between the Chinese ritual tradition and Christian culture indicate a divergence of focus in the funeral. The funeral in Chinese ritual tradition focuses on the deceased, the ancestor and the kinship relations. The extravagant funeral with its complicated rituals reveals Chinese people's attitude of 'treating the dead as the living'. The funeral can be viewed functionally as a communication ceremony between the living and the dead, the human and the ghost, and the world of yin and the world of yang (Guo, 1992). Instead of being a rupture of these binary structures, these ostensible oppositions are connected through the funeral. Consequently, life and death are brought into an everlasting cycle and the extended family or lineage is sustained.

By contrast, the funeral in Christian culture places emphasis on faith in God. The Church of Dongpu delivered services to remember the deceased and console the family, but more significantly to encourage the people at the funeral to reflect upon the meaning of life and death and the faith in God. Therefore, the Christians said prayers and sang songs to glorify God. Pastors spread the gospel to encourage the family of the deceased to believe in God. The Christian community expressed sorrow, blessing and love to the family of the deceased as well as their fellow Christians. This divergence in the focus of the funeral between the Chinese tradition and the Christian faith contributes at least in part to the tension between these religious traditions in present day China.

8.4 The Chinese Rites Controversy

This divergence in the focus of the funeral was exemplified by the conflicting perspectives of the two cultures towards the particular bodily posture of bowing to the portrait of the deceased. The practitioners of Chinese ritual tradition performed this bodily ritual action out of their embodied knowledge as a ritual heritage. By contrast, the Christians endeavoured to avoid this action, as their faith considers it an act of idol worship.⁵⁸ This is part of the rites controversy between the two cultures.

The practice of bowing and kowtowing is often seen as a violation of the Biblical injunction in the Ten Commandments and understood as idol worship or acceptance of undemocratic status differentials, submission to power and self-abasement. However, when bowing and kowtowing are situated culturally into the everyday life of Chinese people and Confucian tradition, they deliver very different connotations. Although bowing (bending from the waist while standing) was encouraged by the government to replace kneeling and kowtowing on occasions such as funerals and Tomb-Sweeping Day (Tan, 2010, pp. 337-338) after Chairman Mao Zedong declared that the Chinese people had ‘stood up’ in 1949, bowing, kneeling and kowtowing all continue to be practiced today among Chinese people, especially in rural areas, and in the diaspora. In his ethnographic research, Kipnis (1994) observed bows and kowtows on four occasions: ancestral sacrifices, funerals, weddings and the Spring Festival. He argued against kowtowing as a display of abject servility performed only by members of a subordinated group, but presented the kowtow as a form of *li* (ritual) that enabled one to participate in the (re)structuring of social relations and hence the subjectivities that were caught up in those relations (Kipnis, 1994, p. 201). From this perspective, when all of the members of the extended family and even the people in the village kneeled and kowtowed before the coffin in my grandmother-in-law’s funeral, people were participating in the (re)structuring of their social relations and subjectivities, either as part of the kinship relations or merely as friends and acquaintances in the village. It was an expression of *li* (ritual propriety). This was also the case in the Christian woman’s funeral, when her sons and daughter bowed before the portrait of their mother.

Bowing and kowtowing are better understood as an externalised expression of *xiao* (filial piety), the foundation of all Confucian teachings (Rosemont & Ames, 2009, p. 1). ‘The Chinese character *xiao* 孝 was originally a highly stylized picture of a gray-

⁵⁸ Exhortation to Obedience 26:1 “You must not make for yourselves idols, so you must not set up for yourselves a carved image or a pillar, and you must not place a sculpted stone in your land to bow down before it, for I am the LORD your God.

haired old person 老 and a young child 子, reflecting as it does generational deference and the reverence it engenders' (Rosemont & Ames, 2009, p. 1). *Shuowenjiezi* elaborates the character 孝 (filial) as follows: 'The upper part of the character is a simplified form of "old" (老), and the lower "son" (子) shows children sustaining him and bearing him up'.⁵⁹ Hence, *xiao* is better rendered as 'family responsibility', 'family deference', 'family feeling' or 'family reverence' (Rosemont & Ames, 2009, p. 1). Filial piety is discussed much in the *Analects of Confucius*; the following is one example:

Meng Yizi (the minister of the Lu State) asked what being filial meant. Confucius answered, 'Do not disobey the rites.'

Once when Fan Chi (a disciple of Confucius) was driving a carriage for Confucius, Confucius said, 'Meng Yizi asked me what being filial meant and I answered, "Do not disobey the rites."' 'What did you mean?' asked Fan. The Master replied, 'When the parents are still alive, serve them according to the rites; and when they pass away, bury and then make sacrifices to them according to the rites.'⁶⁰ (Lai & Xia, 1994, p. 15)

When one's parents die, the proper death ritual for them means filial piety. In Confucius' understanding, filial piety is ritual practice and action with reverence rather than an ideological or religious consciousness. It depends on the individual's self-education (*jiao* 教). According to the character 教, in which the left part is 孝 (*xiao*, filial piety) and the right is 文 (*wen*, culture), Jin Rikun, a Korean scholar, infers that filial piety is the core of the Confucian education (Du, 2002, p. 55). This Confucian education is often implemented through personal examples and verbal instruction (身传言教), with heavy involvement of bodily ritual actions, such as the bowing and wailing in a funeral. Here, these ritual actions can be viewed as sincere emotional expressions out of the command of implicit but overarching Confucian values of *li*. When the descendants were performing these bodily gestures, they did not only present their *xiao* to their ancestors, they also served as an example for their offspring to follow. In this sense, the bodily expressions served as a communication between the living and the dead. As Wulf (2011) revealed, 'communication crucially depends on how people make use of their body in their culturally determined behaviour and action, which body distances they keep, which body postures they adopt, which gestures they develop' (p. 82). These bodily actions can deliver the grief and respect of the living to the deceased.

⁵⁹ See <http://ctext.org/dictionary.pl?if=en&char=%E5%AD%9D>

⁶⁰ Chinese version: 孟懿子问孝。子曰：无违。樊迟御，子告之曰：孟孙问孝于我，我对曰‘无违’。樊迟曰：何谓也？子曰：生事之以礼；死葬之以礼，祭之以礼。（《论语·为政》）

The gesture of bowing suggests a sense of ‘repaying one’s roots’ from the children to the parents, with these gestures conveying the meaning of *xiao* from the performers to their children. It is not even necessary that the ritual performer believe in what the rituals are teaching; the very performance of the ritual is a bodily enactment of it, and with repetition through time, these enactments create certain moral and bodily dispositions and habituses (Rappaport, 1979; 1999, pp. 107-138).

The Confucian tradition takes rituals to be essentially symbolic and evocative. The purpose of rituals is to transform people’s thoughts and feelings through symbolic actions. The funeral can be viewed as a ritual in which bodily gestures such as bowing and kowtowing express and reinforce certain beliefs about the world, particularly about human relationships. They teach us about our dependence upon and duties towards others. They are also emotionally moving. They imbue repeated actions with special feeling as well as meaning (Curzer, 2012, p. 292).

This conflict between the two cultures on the matter of bowing to ancestors in the funeral is actually a small part of ‘The Chinese Rites Controversy’ in Sino-Western cultural history, which can be traced back to as early as the 1630s and continued well into the eighteenth century, with consequences up to the present day (Rule, Collani, & Menegon, 2004). In its simplest terms, the controversy arose regarding the relationship between the monotheistic Christianity from the West and Chinese indigenous ritual tradition and religious culture when Christian missionaries came to spread Christianity (including Catholicism and Protestantism) in China. The specific questions at issue were:

whether Chinese Christian converts might or might not continue to perform rituals in honor of their ancestors, and some related problems such as how to render the name of God in Chinese (the ‘terms’ question); whether Christian mandarins might perform rituals to Confucius and other official rituals such as those to the guardian spirits of their city; and more general issues still of accommodation of Western Christian liturgy and church law and practices to Chinese conditions.

(Rule, et al. 2004, p. 2)

When Protestant missionaries arrived in China in the nineteenth century, they attempted to correlate concepts from Chinese people’s ritual tradition such as *tian* (天) and *shen* 神 (a generic term for gods or spirits) to Biblical terms. Out of their strong Biblicism, the Protestant missionaries tended to equate *tian* with heaven and the worship of *tian* with imperial idol worship, while *shen* was considered to refer to God (Rule, et al. 2004, p. 2). However, this was found to be an inappropriate translation, as

shen in Chinese can refer to a variety of supernatural spirits, deities, immortals and even Buddhas from the Taoist, Buddhist and Confucian tradition. Even ancestors can be equated with 'God' by Chinese people (Graham, 1961, p. 120). As analysed by one scholar:

Christianity was based on a transcendental leap of faith different from any China had confronted before the unconditional belief in the reality of the biblical God, the Holy Trinity, and eternal life for individual souls. This voluntary surrender of the autonomy of humans to an abstract and unknowable deity could well be seen by Chinese as a phase of simplistic religious impulse that the Chinese civilisation had long since superseded. Although the worship of one god or another was fully permissible, this was usually regarded in China as the less enlightened attitude of the masses. And in any case, none of these deities can claim monopolistic authority. Thus, although Christianity was at first accepted as perhaps one more addition to the pantheon of the people, much as Nestorianism and Manichaeism were, the idea that this particular god must replace all others would be difficult to accommodate ... For the Chinese followers of folk religion, all deities were equally real. The Chinese people would be ill-prepared for the kind of 'unreasonable' leap of faith adhered to in the West.

(Gamer, 2008, pp. 378-388)

Based on the analysis above, a conclusion can be drawn that the reason underlying the conflict between the two cultures is that the polytheistic Chinese ritual tradition cannot be accommodated in the framework of monotheistic Christianity. Chapters 5 and 6, respectively, analysed the culturally specific meaning of ritual practices dedicated to Guanyin and ancestors in the everyday life of Chinese people. However, these ritual practices are viewed as idol worship and superstition in the Christian faith. The divergence on these ritual practices between the two cultures brings people in the two respective communities into conflict, at least in the ideological dimension.

Out of their biblical tenets, the Chinese Christians in Dongpu did not practice rituals in the same way as their non-Christian counterparts because these practices were all considered acts of idol worship or superstition. During an interview with Pastor Quan during my fieldwork, I was asked about the religious status of my family. Pastor Quan's comments provide evidence for the above argument:

Chen:⁶¹ Do your parents believe in Jesus?

I: No, they don't. We bow to Buddhas⁶² and we also perform ancestor rituals.

⁶¹ Another Christian in the church.

Quan: Superstition, they believe in superstition. Hope you can break away from your tradition like my father. My grandma used to be a pious believer in superstition. She bowed to Buddhas and was virtually a Buddhist. She was a vegetarian and recited Buddhist scriptures as a young girl. She was very superstitious until the Grace of God was cast on my family. It's the way things are that Chinese people bow to Buddhas and practice superstition along the long history. The western missionaries even contributed their lives to spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ to China in order to awaken many lost people in China. We believers in Jesus know the end of our future, but the people in the world, the believers in superstition, don't know where they are going. [I don't know] whether it is *sukhavati* or somewhere else. Their life goal is not clear. We know we have hope by believing in Jesus.

(field notes, 20 July 2012)

Christians' attitude towards ritual practitioners was also evidenced by other studies. By conducting interviews, Xie (2010, pp. 85-86) found that among the 88 Christians interviewed, only nine of them, mostly in their twenties, expressed a willingness to respect the beliefs of other religious traditions. Most interviewees expressed denial of other religious traditions, saying variously: 'they are wrong', 'it is not understandable', 'they should stop believing in those false idols immediately to save themselves' or 'I would not allow my family members or friends to follow superstitious traditions, because they are false'. Fortune telling, psychic consultations and healings by witchcraft are all among the superstitions to which they object. Yet more evidence of Christians' attitude of their superiority to 'superstition believers' comes from the pastor's sermon at the Chinese Christian woman's funeral: 'People will go to heaven after they leave the world if they go to church in their life; but they will go to hell if they go to temples'.

Superstition, or *mixin* (迷信) in Chinese, is a modern category and can be translated as 'misguided belief.' The term *mixin* was taken from the modern Japanese *meishin*, which first appeared in Japanese writing in 1889 (Nedostup, 2001, p. 26). The term 'superstition' had taken on new political significance after the Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment, which had an ambivalent relationship with an older

⁶² Bowing to Buddhas(拜菩薩) is sometimes not a particular act of worshipping Buddhas. Rather, it is a set phrase in local people's everyday life, which refers more frequently to an agenda or event people are engaged in. For example, my mother would tell an acquaintance of hers on the way by saying: 'I am going to bow to Buddhas' or 'I am going to the temple'. Buddhas here are used as a general word to refer to not only the figures in Buddhism such as Guanyin, but more commonly to the myriads of territorial deities.

Roman Catholicism. When these terms were introduced into Japan, they were positioned and shaped by the political exigencies of the Meiji Restoration, which sought to promote State Shinto and emperor worship and weaken the political hold of Buddhist and sectarian traditions (Hardacre, 1989 ; Ketelaar, 1990). Later, when this term entered the Chinese vocabulary, it became incorporated into the efforts of the national elite to reform traditional culture and to promote a new nationalism to counter the threats posed by European and Japanese imperialism. Thus, *mixin* became a convenient term to denote anything traditional that authorities thought should be discarded.

Pastor Quan's use of 'superstition' to refer to the ritual practices in the quotation above could be meant both in the Protestant sense for older Roman Catholicism and in the sense of the modern discourse of scientism and atheism. Ironically, during the Cultural Revolution, Christianity itself was denigrated as one of the 'Four Olds' and as feudal superstition together with other religions and practices. Therefore, it is probably correct to say that the 'superstition label' attached by Christians to Chinese traditional ritual practices is the product of a discursive conspiracy between the monotheistic Christianity and the historical teleology of modernisation (Chen, 2010, p. 167). Consequently, the scale of the freedom of religion tilts towards those institutional scripture-laden religions that are often categorised as 'high religions' in contrast to the 'low religions' of the masses with their heterogeneous and hard-to-define ritual practices.

From the perspective of practitioners of Chinese rituals, Christians are viewed as a different category of people for betraying their traditional culture and ancestors. During the interview with Pastor Quan, he related how his grandmother replied when his father decided to believe in Jesus Christ (for more details, see Appendix 8.3): 'You are my only son. I name you Changgen⁶³ and hope you can keep the blood of our family. If you believe in Jesus, you are not my son' (field notes, 20 July 2012). Pastor Quan commented on his grandmother by saying: 'This is what we believe in our tradition. If we believe in Jesus, then our ancestors will be simply forgotten and abandoned. And our family will be doomed without ancestors' (field notes, 20 July 2012).

The attitude of Pastor Quan's grandmother was also held by my own mother. To conduct my fieldwork, I often had to attend a church. The more time I spent at the church, the more worried my mother became. Eventually, she said to my wife: 'If he believes in Jesus, he is not my son. I will not allow him to walk into my house. I will make this clear in my will and he won't get anything from me. All these years I brought

⁶³ Changgen 长根 literally means 'everlasting root'.

him up is in vain' (my wife, personal communication, 15 September 2012). In astonishment, I relieved her, saying that I was only doing research in the church.

Judging from Pastor Quan's family story and my own story, there seems to be an irreconcilable conflict between those who believe in the Christian faith and those who practice Chinese ritual traditions. This can be attributed to the strong adherence by the two communities to their respective beliefs and values. These beliefs and values constitute the cultural identity of the communities. In other words, their cultural identity is partly expressed through their religion and rituals.

For Chinese people who are not believers in any monotheistic religion, 'the rituals performed at marriage and at death were central to definitions of Chinese cultural identity' (Watson & Rawski, 1988, p. ix). As analysed in the previous sections, the traditional Chinese funeral reveals the significance of family reverence and the structure of family members. As Fei (1992) insightfully points out:

In Chinese rural society, however, there are obvious differences in the nature of the family. Our families have long-term continuity and serve as means to organize other activities. The main axes of the family are between father and son and between mother and daughter-in-law. These are vertical, not horizontal, relationships. The husband–wife relationship plays a minor role. (p. 85)

Indeed, although the urbanisation of China is deepening, the basic axes of Chinese families remain unchanged. For example, a Chinese couple's marriage is a bonding between the couple's families, rather than an attachment of the husband and wife; the main axes of Chinese families are between the old generation and the young generation, or the ancestors and descendants, rather than within the same generation, between a husband and a wife. This is indicated by the Chinese character 孝 (*xiao*, filial piety), the morphological meaning of which was explained above. Therefore, it is understandable that such an enormous emphasis is placed on this core value of the Confucian teachings, which is manifested explicitly and implicitly through how descendants act in the traditional Chinese funeral.

By contrast, the funeral in Christian culture focuses on the relationship between man and God and between brothers and sisters. 'In the organization of Western families, husband and wife are the main axis. Husband and wife are central players around whom everything else moves, and the force that holds them together as a couple is their emotional attachment' (Fei, 1992, pp. 84-85). As stipulated in the Bible (Genesis 2:24): 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh'. However, Huang (2003a) asserted that 'the main axis

of Christian family is neither vertical nor horizontal, but a triangle, i.e. husband's and wife's respective tie with God plus the bond between husband and wife' (p. 56). From the structural perspective, a triangular relationship would be the most stable. However, in practice, the Christian family operates on the axis of husband and wife, who are equal in the name of their only father, God. This equality applies to all Christians among brothers and sisters as well children and parents in the family. In addition to a biological father, each person, therefore, shares a more important heavenly father, who is definitely placed ahead of the former according to the Christian faith. It is arguably this overwhelming prioritisation of God over biological parents and ancestors as well as the abandonment of ancestor rituals such as making offerings to ancestors on Tomb-Sweeping Day and New Year's Eve that worried practitioners of Chinese rituals such as my mother.

To summarise, the Chinese rites controversy arose from a conflict of cultural identity, defined by the respective beliefs and values of the Chinese ritual tradition and Christian faith. However, 'we [humans] do not have a homogeneous identity but that instead we have several contradictory selves. Two important features of the human subject are perpetual mobility and incompleteness. In a sense, identity is a process; it is heterogeneous' (Sarup, 1996, p. xvi). As Huang's (2003a) anthropological study of Christianity in rural China shows, the identity of Chinese Christians unavoidably involved a hybridisation of Chinese culture and Christian culture, as was shown in this chapter in relation to the Chinese Christian's funeral. The form of Christianity practiced by Chinese people, especially in rural areas, is influenced by their local culture and traditional religious practices.

8.5 Funeral and State Power

In addition to highlighting the combined influence of Chinese ritual tradition and Christian faith as well as the conflict between them, the Chinese Christian's funeral also embodied the presence of the state power. This section explores the tension between ordinary people's practice of funeral tradition and funeral reform under the state power.

Chinese funerals have been under reform by the state power for more than 100 years, since the beginning of the twentieth century. The primary goal of funeral reform in all periods of Chinese government has been to eliminate 'superstitious and wasteful customs' in funeral services, such as making and burning paper decorations, inviting Buddhist or Taoist monks to perform rituals, hosting a lavish feast for guests and keeping the coffin at home for an extended period before burial. The aim is to develop a civilised, scientific and ecological funeral culture and thus a 'modern and civilised'

country. After so many years of reform, the ‘civilised, scientific and ecological’ funeral advocated by the government can be summarised as follows:

Farewell ceremony is held to replace the whole set of traditional rites composed of agendas such as wearing makeup and dressing up for the deceased, setting the lingtang (灵堂 the funeral hall) and receiving the visitors during the wake, encoffining, procession and carrying the coffin to the graveyard; wreaths are offered to replace the burning of joss paper and incense; black arm-bands are worn to replace the traditional sack-cloth mourning apparels; cremation are adopted to replace earth burial; public cemeteries are constructed to replace privately built tombs; urns are used to replace the wooden coffin.

(Geng, 2010, p. 194)

Among these changes, cremation and the officially recognised manner of burial are probably the most unacceptable aspects of funeral reform among the majority of ordinary people, especially in rural areas. Until the twentieth century, cremation was practiced only for Buddhist monks, as a sign of their liberation from the cycles of death and rebirth. By the 1930s, however, the Chinese state had begun to promote cremation (Palmer, Shive, Shive, & Wickeri, 2011, p. 92). From the government’s perspective, cremation in place of traditional earth burial was necessary in the face of increasing population pressure and a severe shortage of arable land. Cremation and the use of urns, according to the government, would reduce the use of land for tombs and the lumber needed for coffins.

However, from the perspective of ordinary people and time-honoured ritual tradition, the incineration of the dead sounded dreadful and many people still believed in the notion that ‘only a burial brings peace to the dead’. Crucially, most Chinese believed that the body was sacred and that it had to be properly buried. This perspective of sacredness in body may derive from the Confucian value of *xiao* (family reverence): ‘Your physical person with its hair and skin are received from your parents. Vigilance in not allowing anything to do injury to your person is where family reverence begins’⁶⁴ (Rosemont & Ames, 2009, p. 105). This connection between the sacredness of body and *xiao* is further evidenced by an account of the funeral in the *Genealogy of Chen Lineage in the Town of Dongpu*:

The ancient funeral for great officers lasted three months and for ordinary officers one month. People wore their mourning clothes and ate mourning food and didn’t change them unless the funeral was completed. This is a manifestation of deep grief

⁶⁴ The Chinese version is: 身体发肤，受之父母，不敢毁伤，孝之始也。

for the death of their loved ones. However, the deceased should be buried as soon as possible in case the body was drowned by rain and scorched by the sun. The ancient buried their deceased loved ones in the only hope that they would not be eroded by the wind and water, bitten by the insects, cut by the plough, buried under the city walls, pools, and the paths. This was all about it.

(Chen, 1916, p. 33)

Despite this initial reluctance, cremation is now the most widespread form of disposing of corpses in China today. This is the result of the dominant intervention of the state power in the private life-cycle ritual of ordinary people. As Chau (2005) argued, this amounted to the state's taking over the people's right to host life-cycle key rituals, and thereby their face and self-esteem along with their social prestige and sense of sovereignty. However, this is not to say that the policy of funeral reform has not often met with great resistance in rural China. Even today, the state power's suggested changes to funeral practices have not been adopted in some remote areas. In the traditional funeral of my wife's grandmother, these 'superstitious and wasteful customs' were retained.

In terms of the Chinese Christian's funeral in this case study, much of its difference from a traditional Chinese funeral can be attributed to the influence of the Christian faith, although the cremation was undoubtedly the product of state power. Despite this, the family of the deceased did exercise some level of resistance to the funeral reform policy. The most prominent aspect of this resistance was the tomb and the burial. Despite the deceased having been cremated, the urn was still placed into a wooden coffin. As aforementioned, the government's purpose in encouraging the use of cremation in place of burial in wooden coffins was to reduce the use of arable land for graveyards. The spirit of the government's policy was clearly not followed in this funeral. This act could be understood as a compromise between the family and the state power. On the one hand, the family followed the government's rigid policy of cremation; but on the other, they still practiced their ritual tradition of earth burial by placing the urn inside a wooden coffin. Additionally, the area of the tomb greatly exceeded the officially sanctioned area of 0.7 square metres for the burial of one urn (Zhejiangshengrenminzhengfu, 2006). In this particular case, this could be attributed to the fact that the tomb was constructed some years earlier on a hill rather than on arable land, so the funeral reform policy might not have applied at that time. Alternatively, the powerful political and economic background of the family could explain their attainment of the large gravesite. While these points of resistance may not seem strong,

even people without a powerful family background find ways to go against the government policies of funeral reform, signalling their discontent with the funeral reform policy.

According to a case study of funeral culture in Shaoxing City conducted by the Office of Spiritual Civilization Construction of Shaoxing City Government (Ni, Sun, & Luo, 2005), Shaoxing City has seen great achievements in funeral reform and administration in recent years with the formulation and implementation of a series of laws and regulations on funeral reform and administration as well as the improvement of facilities for cremation and funerals. Specifically, a number of construction projects have been completed, including five funeral parlours, six commercial cemeteries, 160 non-profit cemeteries, 17 urn storage places and two cemeteries for tree funerals. The policy of cremation has also been implemented across the city and the cremation rate is 100 per cent. In addition, more than 330,000 tombs have been flattened and relocated (Ni et al. 2005, p. 96).

From the perspective of spatial practice, the achievements of the Shaoxing City Government demonstrate the strategic reproduction and deployment of space by the local/state power that is occurring alongside the (re)construction and urbanisation of rural villages, towns and cities across contemporary China. Over the past 30 years, and even more aggressively during the last decade, Chinese government officials and their private sector partners have ventured to rationalise the spatial distribution of human remains and to reduce the overall number of newly buried Chinese corpses through the promotion of cremation. Funeral reform has become a controversial governmental initiative, crafted in response to China's population crisis and modernisation. There is mounting tension between the people and the local/state power on funeral reform.⁶⁵

This strategic reproduction and deployment of space was a representation of 'abstract space', which expanded the space of homogeneity and suppressed differences of local culture, history and natural landscape (Yang, 2004, p. 721). This abstract space was instrumental, quantitative, repetitive and predictable, and based on a conceived knowledge and rational Cartesian logic; it increasingly took over from the bodily production of lived space. It tries to reduce 'the practico-sensory realm, the body, and

⁶⁵ A recent incident is old people in Anqing City, Anhui Province committed suicide because the local government destroyed their wooden coffins and would implement the cremation policy from 1 June, 2014. See (ifeng.com, 2014). 安徽安庆强砸老人棺木 多人为逃避火葬自杀, Retrieved 29-05-2014, from http://news.ifeng.com/photoview/detail_2014_05/29/36570691_0.shtml#p=1. Another extreme incident was the "tomb-flattening campaign" in Zhoukou city in Henan Province. See Wade, S. (2012). Henan Officials Commit a Grave Error Retrieved 25-03-2014, from <http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2012/12/henan-officials-commit-a-grave-error/>.

social-spatial practice’ to the mathematical logic of mental and conceptual space, and submits space to a product of a ‘hypertrophied analytical intellect’ (Lefebvre, 1991, pp. 200,308).

However, despite the claimed achievements in the case study of funeral culture in Shaoxing City, some prominent issues remain: (1) some ‘backward’ elements (i.e., the traditional funeral rituals) are being revived; (2) the ‘white’ expense⁶⁶ is extravagant; (3) illegal burials are common, and large luxurious tombs are found built by local people; (4) non-profit cemeteries and new styles of burial such as tree and lawn burials have not been welcomed; and (5) funeral businesses are thriving on a large scale, with a great number of people involved in businesses such as joss paper and incense production, services by Taoist and Buddhist ritualists and *fengshui* masters, stone tablet carving and coffin making (Ni et al. 2005, p. 98).

These prominent ‘issues’ in funeral culture can be viewed as a robust resistance to state power by ordinary people. This resistance is in the sense of de Certeau, who likens it to the use of the term in electronics or psychoanalysis: it is what hinders and dissipates the energy flow of domination and what resists representation (Highmore, 2002, pp. 151-152). Instead of having been eradicated by the local/state power, these ‘superstitious and wasteful customs’ have returned in spite of the intensifying intervention of state power in the funeral. If these customs are viewed as a kind of intangible cultural heritage, then these ordinary people are tactically practicing, inheriting and safeguarding their heritage. In this sense, as Mayfair Yang (2004) noted, graves and temples are both, and in similar ways, at the centre of the contest between the local state, local communities and religious specialists.

8.6 Conclusion

The hybridity and complexity of the Chinese Christian community is the inevitable result of its combination of imported Christian and indigenous Chinese cultures. The Chinese Christian’s funeral exemplified this hybridity and complexity. As discussed, the Christian community tried to set themselves apart as the chosen people of God from the people in the world through their Christian faith and specific actions, such as the abandonment of ancestor rituals and the worshipping of deities, which they consider the practices of ‘superstition believers’. Therefore, the Christian faith served to distinguish between a ‘we group’ (Christians) and a ‘they group’ (‘superstition believers’) (Huang, 2003a, p. 98). From the viewpoint of orthodoxy of religion,

⁶⁶ White expense refers to the expense on the funeral, contrary to the ‘red’ expense for wedding ceremony.

Christianity had the hegemonic superiority in official discourse, as Christianity is one of the five state-sanctioned religions in China, while ‘superstitious’ ritual practices are neither officially recognised as, nor deemed by the ritual practitioners themselves, a religion. Moreover, from the perspective of the practitioners of Chinese ritual tradition, Christians were alien people, traitors to Chinese traditional culture and unfilial descendants (Huang, 2003a, p. 98). This conflict between the Christian culture and Chinese traditional culture and the binary opposition between religion and superstition contributed, to some extent, to the tension, and thus power and resistance, between the two communities. At the same time, the Christian community was unavoidably subject to the influence of indigenous Chinese culture, as shown by the Chinese cultural elements in the Chinese Christian’s funeral. As Huang (2003a) discovered, Christianity as a foreign culture transplanted into China was always faced with the issue of indigenisation; that is, the process of infusion between Christian culture and Chinese traditional culture.

Ordinary people’s observance of funeral tradition and the funeral reform under the state power revealed another dimension of the tension between ritual practice as intangible culture, which represents the cultural identity of Chinese people, and the hegemonic, arbitrary and even violent governmentality of the state project of modernisation. The resistance from ordinary people to the funeral reform indicated the paradox in the idea that modernisation based on economic development would eliminate the ‘backward and superstitious’ culture. Instead, practitioners of funeral tradition asserted themselves as the inheritors of Chinese culture. As discussed in Chapter 6, Chinese funerals typically manifest the Confucian value of *xiao*. The tenacious observance of traditional funerals shows ordinary people’s innate respect for this cultural heritage. Thus, there will be an enduring contestation between ritual practitioners and the state power in relation to individuals’ everyday life as cultural autonomy.

This chapter and the previous Chapters 5 and 6 explored how ordinary people in the town of Dongpu resist the strategy of state power in both spatial and religious practices in their everyday life. The following two chapters will situate two Chinese rituals, Shaoxing Zhufu and Jiuxian Temple Festival, in the context of the practices of intangible cultural heritage. These two case studies will again adopt the analytical framework of strategy and tactics with a focus on exploring how these two rituals are produced as intangible cultural heritage, the effect of heritage practice on local cultures

and the intricate relationship between heritage stakeholders, such as ritual practitioners, heritage managers and local/state power.

Part Three Religion and Heritage

Chapter 9: Shaoxing Zhufu (绍兴祝福) and Intangible Cultural Heritage

9.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses how the festival ritual Zhufu is practiced annually as part of the lunar New Year celebration in the everyday life of the local community in the town of Dongpu. The sacredness of time and space constructed through the ritual Zhufu reflects the inner piety of individual worshippers. This inner feeling of sacredness is characteristic of its temporality and contingency. In the contemporary period, Zhufu has been appropriated and represented by heritage managers and local government to serve economic and political purposes through the discursive practice of intangible cultural heritage. As both intangible cultural heritage and ethnic traditional festival, Zhufu is performed as a tourist attraction at local tourist destinations. However, the practice of Zhufu in ordinary people's life worlds differs from the folklore performance as a tourist attraction and from its discursive representation for the education of citizenry in nationalism and patriotism in official ideology. Zhufu as everyday practice by ordinary people can thus be viewed as resistance to the rituals representational performance in both official ideology and the tourist economy.

9.2 Background

Zhufu is a festival ritual practice observed mainly among the ordinary people in rural areas and some suburban areas in Shaoxing City on one day after the twentieth of lunar December and before Chinese New Year's Eve. The local people in Dongpu and areas in Shaoxing City customarily call the ritual the 'Feast of the Great Buddha'⁶⁷ or the 'Feast of Zhufu Buddha'. In this grand festive event, the local community makes offerings to the Buddha for blessing and thanksgiving at the turn of the lunar year.

The prototypes of the Zhufu Buddha were the legendary figures of the Han Chinese people that died fighting against invaders from other ethnic groups. The first prototype was based on two brothers called *Huangshan Xi'nan* (黄山西南 Southwest of

⁶⁷ Many local people use Buddha more often than god or deities when referring to the supernatural they worship. For example, the most commonly revered Buddha among vast majority of ordinary people is the Goddess of Mercy. But she was simply called Guanyin Buddha.

Huangshan)⁶⁸ who died in fighting the Jin soldiers when the Empire of the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1279) was invaded by the Jin Empire (1115–1234). As these brothers' names were unknown, the people of the Song Dynasty had to name them after the place where they died. The other prototype was *Nanchao Shengzong* (南朝圣宗 the emperor and generals of the Southern Song Dynasty [1127–1279]) who died in the war against the Mongolian invasion. To commemorate these people, their contemporaries hailed them as national heroes.

Legends also go that the people of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) offered sacrifice to the loyal emperor and generals in hope of restoring the Ming Dynasty after its conquest by the people of Manchu. Since it was illegal to launch the campaign of 'Fan Qing Fu Ming' (overthrow the Qing Dynasty and restore the Ming Dynasty), the ritual had to be performed secretly and quietly under the cover of night (Liu, 1996). This is commonly viewed as the origin of Zhufu.

The ritual became well-known largely due to the novel *Zhufu* (祝福 New Year's Sacrifice) by Lu Xun (2005), the father of modern Chinese literature and spearhead of the New Culture Movement.⁶⁹ Detailed in its entirety in the novel, the festival ritual served as a symbol of old culture and feudal superstition that was supposed to be abandoned and smashed in the enlightenment discourse of democracy and science against the Confucian tradition of *li*.

The festival ritual waned like other ritual practices across China under the suppression of anti-superstition movements and anti-religious movements from the Republic era (1911–1949) to the Maoist era (1949–1978) (Yang, 2008). With the reform era, and particularly since the rise to nationwide prominence of the practice of intangible cultural heritage, there has been a restoration of ritual practice throughout China. Zhufu was identified as the Zhejiang provincial-level intangible cultural heritage in June 2007 (Zhejiangshengrenminzhengfu, 2007) and ethnic traditional festival in January 2008 (Chen, 2008).

⁶⁸ Huangshan is a mountain range in southern Anhui Province in eastern China.

⁶⁹ The New Culture Movement (新文化运动) of the mid 1910s and 1920s sprang from the disillusionment with traditional Chinese culture following the failure of the Chinese Republic, founded in 1912 to address China's problems. Scholars like Chen Duxiu, Cai Yuanpei, Li Dazhao, Lu Xun, Zhou Zuoren, and Hu Shih, had classical educations but began to lead a revolt against Confucianism. They called for the creation of a new Chinese culture based on global and Western standards, especially democracy and science.

9.3 Zhufu: The Practice of Festival Ritual in Everyday Life⁷⁰

Zhufu is treated as the grandest ceremony at the end of the lunar year. Thus, the date of the ritual is often carefully chosen according to the Chinese lunar calendar, which tells people which day is auspicious for the ritual. Once the date is chosen, the preparation begins. The ritual consists of the following procedures: cleaning up the house; preparing the sacrifice; offering the sacrifice (welcoming and bidding farewell to the Zhufu Buddha)⁷¹; and sharing the blessing.

9.3.1 The Ritual Procedures

Before the ritual begins, every family needs to clean their whole house thoroughly because the Zhufu Buddha in heaven refuses to come to a dirty house. The ritual is usually performed in the *tang*.⁷² To show reverence, the *tang* has to be tidied carefully. Tables and chairs, bowls, plates and chopsticks, candleholders and incense burner have to be cleaned and prepared.

People spend much time and money preparing the sacrificial offerings. Although the specific offerings vary from family to family, they usually consist of wine, tea, *niangao*,⁷³ *zongzi*,⁷⁴ three or five cooked animals, fruit and so on. Ordinary families usually prepare three animals: a rooster, a bar of pork and a tail of fish, while a wealthy family offers an additional goose and lamb. When the local people kill these animals, they never use the word ‘kill’. It is taboo to allude to death during this period. Instead, they say ‘dress up the poultry’ for the sake of auspiciousness.

⁷⁰ This section was based on the narration of my informants Mr. He, who was a folklore expert in the town of Dongpu. The video produced for the identification of Zhufu for the provincial-level intangible cultural heritage was shot in his house.

⁷¹ Zhufu Buddha or Great Buddha is the term used by the local people. I do not employ ‘the God of Fortune’ for Fushen (福神) as used in the novel because the readers may confuse it with ‘the God of Wealth’ for Caishen (财神).

⁷² Tang(堂) or Tangqian(堂前) is an inner space of a traditional Chinese house, roughly equivalent to the living room in a Western-style house. It is typically furnished with a big square wooden table with four chairs. A painting can often be seen on the wall with a couplet of traditional Chinese calligraphy on the two sides.

⁷³ Niangao, sometimes translated as year cake or Chinese New Year's cake, is a food prepared from glutinous rice and consumed in Chinese cuisine. While it can be eaten all year round, traditionally it is most popular during Chinese New Year. It is considered good luck to eat nian gao during this time, because ‘nian gao’ is a homonym for ‘higher year.’ The Chinese word 粘 (ni Chinese word ‘sticky’, is identical in sound to 年, meaning ‘year’, and the word 糕 (gao the word ‘cake’ is identical in sound to 高, meaning ‘high or tall’. As such, eating nian gao has the symbolism of raising oneself taller in each coming year (年年高升 ni 升 such, eating nian gao has the symbolism of raisingky sweet snack was believed to be an offering to the Kitchen God, with the aim that his mouth will be stuck with the sticky cake, so that he can't badmouth the human family in front of the Jade Emperor.

⁷⁴ Zongzi (粽子) is a traditional Chinese food, made of glutinous rice stuffed with different fillings and wrapped in bamboo, reed, or other large flat leaves. They are cooked by steaming or boiling. In the Western world, they are also known as rice dumplings or sticky rice dumplings.

When all of the offerings are ready, the ritual starts. In the past, the ritual was performed by men, while women were excluded. In addition, men whose *Shengxiao*⁷⁵ (生肖 Chinese zodiac) was inharmonious with that of the host would not be allowed to participate in the ritual. However, these taboos no longer apply. The ritualist usually takes a shower before the ritual day and eats vegetarian food to show his reverence. The ritual can be performed before or after midnight. If the ritual takes place before midnight, it is called ‘the feast of the lazy Buddha’; after midnight, it is ‘the feast of the diligent Buddha’. Most people believe that it is more efficacious and shows more reverence to the Buddha if the ritual is conducted after midnight. Therefore, pious people usually stay up late that night and rise at three or four o’clock the next morning to cook the sacrifice and conduct the ritual.

When the offering begins, two wooden square tables called ‘Eight Deities Tables’ are positioned together close to the wide-open gate in the *tang*. The way the tables are arranged is determined by the transverse wood grain on the table surface. When the tables are used for worshipping Buddhas, the transverse wood grain must be parallel with the gate of the house, while in rituals for ancestors, the transverse wood grain must be vertical to the gate. Next, all of the offerings are placed on the tables in the order of middle first, and then left to right. Figure 9.1 shows the setting of the sacrifice in a typical wealthy family. A detailed description of the nature of the offerings follows.

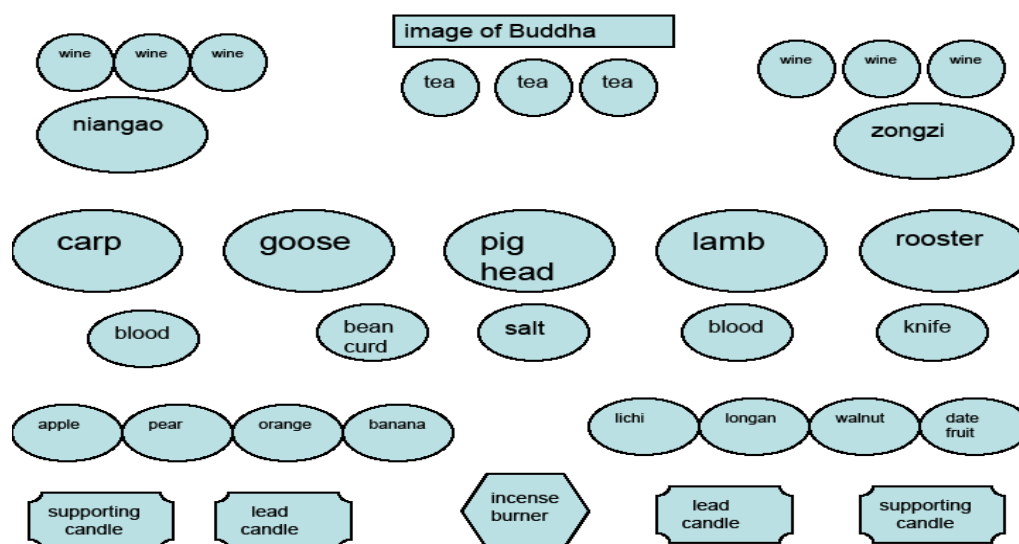


Figure 9.7 The Setting of the Sacrifice in Zhufu

⁷⁵ The *shengxiao* (生肖, literally ‘birth likeness’), also known in English as the Chinese zodiac (‘zodiac’ derives from the similar concept in Western Astrology and means ‘circle of animals’), is a scheme and systematic plan of future action, that relates each year to an animal and its reputed attributes, according to a 12-year cycle. It remains popular in several East Asian countries, such as China, Vietnam, Korea, Taiwan and Japan.

The wine is the local rice wine made in Shaoxing City. The tea is green tea without water. The carp is alive, with its eyes covered by red paper marked with the Chinese character 福 (happiness). A rope runs through its dorsal fin and it is hung on a small rack called a 'dragon gate'. Carp is chosen due to the time-honoured legend of 'carps jumping over the dragon gate' (鲤鱼跳龙门).⁷⁶ The goose, lamb and rooster are cleaned, cooked and placed in red-painted wooden plates on the table in a sitting position. All the heads of the five sacrificed animals except the carp have to point to the gate of the house, suggesting a respectful welcome to the Great Buddha. The pig head is placed with its pigtail in its mouth, which means a whole pig for the sacrifice. Usually, seven or nine red chopsticks are thrust into the back of the five sacrificed animals. In the local dialect, *qi* (number 7) is similar in pronunciation to *que* (缺 literally 'lacking') and so suggests people's wish for blessing. The number 10 should be avoided because it signifies complete satisfaction without any lack. Therefore, its use suggests to the Great Buddha that this family is fortunate enough and does not need his blessing. On the back of the goose and chicken, their cooked intestines are put around the red chopsticks, also to imply a sense of entirety of the sacrifice. *Niangao*, with its similar pronunciation to *niangao* (年高 literally 'annually higher'), signifies people's best wishes for better and higher well-being year after year. If *niangao* is combined with *zongzi*, then a new word *Gaozhong*⁷⁷ (高中) comes into being. *Gaozhong* means doing very well in the imperial examinations in traditional China. This indicates the family's hope that schoolchildren can work hard and become high-ranking officials one day so that they can glorify the whole extended family.

When all of the offerings are placed accordingly at their respective positions, the worshipping begins. This is intended to welcome the Buddha to enjoy the feast. The host, usually the oldest male (e.g., the grandfather), lights the lead candles and the father

⁷⁶ Carps jumping over the dragon gate (鲤鱼跳龙门) is a legend handed down in China for generations. The carp makes its way up a waterfall, hoping to become a dragon. In Chinese culture, dragons traditionally symbolize potent and auspicious powers, particularly control over water, rainfall, hurricane, and floods. The dragon is also a symbol of power, strength, and good luck. With this, the Emperor of China usually used the dragon as a symbol of his imperial power and strength. In Chinese daily language, excellent and outstanding people are compared to the dragon while incapable people with no achievements are compared with other, disesteemed creatures, such as the worm. A number of Chinese proverbs and idioms feature references to the dragon, for example: 'Hoping one's son will become a dragon' (望子成龍, i.e. be as a dragon). People use the expression 鲤鱼跳龙门 to refer to the successful candidates in the imperial examination. In the ritual of Zhufu, the carp suggests the wish of family for the young people to make progress in study or get promotion in career.

⁷⁷ In the local dialect, *Gaozhong* is no different from *Gaozong* because in their pronunciation, Zh is identical to z in Pinyin.

lights the supporting candles. Then, the host offers the incense and bows and kowtows four times each behind the candles towards the gate. All the juniors follow the host according to their position in the family hierarchy. At this moment, there are many taboos. For examples, everybody must be solemnly quiet; wine must not be spilled out of the cups; and chopsticks must not be dropped on the ground. Once the bowing and kowtowing are completed, following the principle of ‘quickly for Buddha and slowly for ancestors’, the host fills the participants’ cups with wine.

After the Buddha completes the grand banquet, a short ceremony is held to bid farewell to the Buddha. The host goes to the sky well in the courtyard to burn joss paper and a picture of Zhufu Buddha. After the burning items turn to ash, a cup of wine is cast on the ground. Then, the tongues of the rooster and goose are removed from their mouths and thrown on the roof of the house in the hope that the Great Buddha will bring peace and harmony to the family without any quarrels. With this, fireworks are set off, announcing the end of the ritual.

After the Great Buddha enjoys the feast, the tables are instantly turned around and all the chopsticks are taken down from the sacrifice so as to worship the ancestors. The sacrificial ritual for ancestors also involves bowing and kowtowing as well as burning paper money. However, it takes much longer, to allow the ancestors to enjoy the feast slowly. After this, the whole family sits around the table enjoying the sacrificed offerings, especially *niangao* with chicken soup. The old saying goes: ‘Eat the fortune niangao, everything is better and higher in the coming year’. With the blessing from the Great Buddha and ancestors, family members bless each other and exchange their wishes and resolutions for the coming New Year.

9.3.2 Contingent Sacredness in Time-Space

The practice of Zhufu is part of people’s everyday life. As a ritual, it is observed to fulfil the communication between the secular and the supernatural worlds in a particular time and space. Thus, it is imbued with certain sacred and religious meaning. The sacredness in the ritual can be analysed on the time-space dimension by investigating the particular actions in the ritual. However, the sacredness of time and space in Chinese ritual tradition is different from that of ritual practices in religions such as Christianity, in which there is a fixed place of worship (i.e., the church, where Christians attend services regularly). While in Christianity, there is a clear distinction of time-space between the sacred and the profane, rituals like Zhufu are temporary, contingent and dissolved in the setting of secular life. In other words, there is no particular space for this ritual. The space is at most a minor transformation of the living

room. To some extent, this shows ordinary people's tactics of making-do in the de Certeau's sense.

On the temporal dimension, Eliade (1959) claims that there are sacred and profane times for religious people. The former are experienced through religious festivals, the latter in ordinary daily life. Specifically, since religious festivals re-actualise sacred events from their mythical origins, participating in them means stepping out of ordinary time and into sacred time. From the local people's viewpoint, the day after the twentieth of lunar December and before the Chinese New Year's Eve is conventionally called the 'Zhufu period'. This span covers a sequence of rituals, such as making offerings to the Kitchen God, Zhufu Buddha, the ancestors and even the five animal deities.⁷⁸ Therefore, the 'Zhufu period' brings people out of the profane time and into the sacred time. Further, the carefully chosen date and time for the ritual suggests a sense of sacredness different from ordinary time. This festival ritual occurs cyclically, so the sacred time is also cyclic. In this circular movement of time, the cosmos regains its original sacredness at each New Year. People feel that the cosmos is recreated each New Year and time begins afresh.

However, unlike the sacred feeling towards time in religions such as Christianity, the sacredness in the ritual of Zhufu reveals Chinese people's traditional perspective on time, which is imbued with a distinctive emotional experience and value judgement towards time. That is to say, time is given different qualities, such as auspiciousness and ominousness, according to a set of determinant rules, such as the yin–yang and *wuxing* theory.⁷⁹ Thus, time is endowed with ethical meaning, which mainly functions to regulate the relationship between humans and the cosmos. Here, the cosmos is divinised and assumes the form of deities, ancestors and ghosts. These festival rituals were invented to regulate the relationships between humans and deities, ancestors and ghosts to solve problems in everyday life. In this sense, compared with sacred time in

⁷⁸ The five worshipped animals are commonly believed to be: snake, horse, monkey, frog and weasel. But some people replace frog and weasel with chicken and dog. In the local community of Shaoxing City particular among the grassroots people, these five animals are deified and called 'Five Sacred Buddhas' because they are considered as the guardians of families. The snake, in particular, is well worshipped because it is also considered to be able to bring wealth and fortune. The sacrificial ritual is conducted particularly by women. Offerings of six eggs, six cups of sugar tea, six pairs of chopsticks and a pair of candles are placed on the rice bucket. No incense is burned because the smoke is believed to keep off the snake. On 28th of lunar December, my mother performs this ritual as part of the annual celebration of Chinese New Year.

⁷⁹ The Wu Xing, also known as the Five Elements, Five Phases, the Five Agents, the Five Movements, Five Processes, and the Five Steps/Stages, is a fivefold conceptual scheme that many traditional Chinese fields used to explain a wide array of phenomena, from cosmic cycles to the interaction between internal organs, and from the succession of political regimes to the properties of medicinal drugs. The 'Five Phases' are Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water.

transcendental religions such as Christianity, the temporal sacredness in the Chinese festival rituals is limited. Rather, it is more closely related to secular everyday living.

On the spatial dimension, the sacredness in Zhufu is also contingent and evocative. Chapter 6 discussed how *tang* functioned as a sacred space in the everyday life of Chinese people. Zhufu reveals more explicitly the process of sanctification (Eliade, 1959); that is, how material components, including *tang* and objects such as offerings, become imbued with religious meanings within the indigenous epistemological framework. For the ritual space of Zhufu, the household, including *tang* and objects like ritual vessels, have to be cleaned before the ritual takes place. Semantically, cleanness is in opposition to profanity (dirtiness), thus implying sacredness. Similarly, as components of the ritual, the sacrifice, incense burner and candles suggest a sense of sacredness. Thus, the whole space on this particular occasion is clothed with a feature of divinity. The space is no longer experienced as neutral or homogeneous.

This sacred space is characterised by its temporality and contingency. The sacredness of the space is constructed and evoked solely for a particular ritual event that takes place on a cyclical basis. In the ritual Zhufu, its sacredness for every ordinary family is defined by the sequence of rituals at the end of every lunar year. Thus, it can be argued that this space exists in time (Warf & Arias, 2009). Moreover, the sacred space for the festival ritual Zhufu exists in the celebration of the Chinese lunar New Year. Once the ritual is over, the sacredness of this space is gone with the unstoppable flow of time.

In summary, the sacredness of time and space is the feeling or experience of individual believers. It reflects the inner piety of individual worshippers to varying degrees. The practice of ritual Zhufu is the embodied, ritualised actions carried out by individual families within an indigenous epistemological framework to achieve their goals in their everyday life.

9.4 The Heritagisation of Zhufu

As analysed in the previous section, Zhufu is an annual ritual practice in the local community. In the past, as part of the traditional culture of the Chinese lunar New Year, it was denigrated as a backward custom and abolished in urban areas due to its 'superstitious' nature. However, with the reform era, and particularly since the rise to prominence of the practice of intangible cultural heritage, there has been a restoration of ritual practice throughout China. As part of this revival, Zhufu was officially identified as intangible cultural heritage and an ethnic traditional festival. Since then, it has been publicly performed at some tourist destinations in Shaoxing City.

The reversal in the fortunes of Zhufu can be partially attributed to the power of the global movement of safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage and the tenacious observance of this cultural tradition by ordinary people. However, it needs to be understood within a wider national cultural, economic and political context. As Lei (2014) argues, the revival of traditional Chinese culture was a manifestation of the shift in the state's ideological nationalism. The purpose of selectively reviving the traditional Chinese culture on the part of the central government is to establish a cultural autonomy and soft power that could be deployed as a defensive instrument against Western values on the one hand, and a cultural leadership and effective ideology to serve as a shared cultural identity and set of values among the domestic masses on the other (Lei, 2014, p. 12). The practice of intangible cultural heritage can thus be viewed as an indispensable constituent part in this revival, which is itself part of the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Within this context, it is understandable why Zhufu was identified as intangible cultural heritage as follows.

For a cultural form to be identified as intangible cultural heritage, applicants are required to provide supporting documents, such as video, texts and objects, to the intangible cultural heritage appraisers, who are often professionals in folklore, arts and anthropology. In the video produced for the identification of Zhufu as provincial-level intangible cultural heritage, Shaoxing Zhufu was given a detailed explanation as introduced in Section 9.2 of this chapter. However, a special emphasis was placed on the origin and significance of this ritual, as follows:

The purpose of ritual practice is to commemorate the national heroes who sacrificed their life for the nation, to pray for the arrival of the God of Zhufu. Through the preservation of Zhufu, (we) can educate descendants to love country, love nation, love people and respect revolutionary martyrs, ancestors and today's social constructors, just like Nanchao Shengzong and Huangshan Xinan.

[Transcribed from the video produced by Shaoxing Municipal Government]

As Gao (2008) argued, reclassification from intangible culture to intangible cultural heritage is not a simple change of name; rather, it is a systematic production of public culture. Intangible culture is a spontaneous concept that only indicates a particular category of cultural form. By contrast, intangible cultural heritage highlights cultural awareness, which includes the claiming of rights, value assessment and social naming. Heritage, in its initial meaning, is property. Therefore, cultural heritage can be defined as cultural property. To turn a ritual into heritage is to define the owner of the property rights and the value of the ritual. This requires a complex process of

assessment, conventionally undertaken by experts and professionals from relevant disciplines and domains. However, the evaluation criteria are often ambiguous, conventionally involving, but not being limited to: cultural originality, excellence of craftsmanship, representativeness of the community, scarcity and political correctness. These criteria control the aesthetics in the evaluation of a certain culture and directly determine how the potential intangible culture is represented in the identification process. Thus, appraisal inevitably involves inclusion and exclusion among a certain choice of cultural forms based on the criteria. In this sense, the heritagisation of a cultural form is a process of cultural objectification associated with heritage politics, which are concerned with the (re)framing of the ritual from ordinary life (Handler, 2011).

The heritagisation or objectification of a ritual, such as Zhufu, is to highlight a certain part of the ritual while disregarding other aspects based on the criteria aforementioned. An analogy can be made to choices when taking a photograph. In light of this, when submitting Zhufu for consideration as intangible cultural heritage, the Shaoxing Municipal Government placed special emphasis on the significance of Zhufu for the nationalist and patriotic education of citizens. This was achieved by appropriating the legendary origin of this ritual. By incorporating the legends and folklore tales of this ritual into the official narrative, a new heritage was constructed at the service of the official ideology. As Schouten (1995) asserts, 'heritage is not the same as history. Heritage is highly processed through mythology, ideology, nationalism, local pride, romantic ideas or just plain marketing into a commodity' (p. 21). Indeed, all heritages are sifted and selected from the massive number and range of historical objects; what heritage can be singled out and preserved depends heavily on the ideology of the authorities.

Hall (2005) explicates heritage as a discursive construction through which the nation-state establishes collective identity, gains political legitimacy and educates the citizenry:

[w]e should think of the heritage as a discursive practice. It is one of the ways in which the nation slowly constructs for itself a sort of collective social memory. Just as individuals and families construct their identities by 'storying' the various random incidents and contingent turning points of their lives into a single, coherent, narrative, so nations construct identities by selectively binding their chosen high points and memorable achievements into an unfolding 'national story'. This story is what is called 'Tradition'. (p. 23)

Correspondingly, the heritagisation of Zhufu was a discursive practice. Shaoxing Zhufu was placed under the category of folklore on the inventory of intangible cultural heritage. Although folklore and intangible cultural heritage overlap substantially in content, they differ sharply in the representation of official discourse. Folk culture, especially ritual practice, was often represented in the past as ‘feudal superstition’. *Min* (民 folk) in *minjian* (民间 folk community) usually referred to ‘backward’ and ‘uneducated’ peasants. Thus, folk culture was often associated with derogative terms such as ‘superstitious’, ‘backward’ and so on. By contrast, intangible cultural heritage is a new discourse that eliminates the possessive component of ‘folk’ or ‘folk community’. It assumes that those practices designated as cultural heritage belong to all people, regardless of whom they belonged to historically or culturally, because they have been rendered as public culture (Gao, 2007a). In the new discursive space, the folklore Zhufu gained its new status and value due to its association with nationalism and patriotism.

In reality, applicants’ (usually the local authorities rather than individuals) drawing upon local cultural resources, such as tradition, history, legends and tales, to beautify their ‘backward’ customs has become a conventional tactic. As argued by Hobsbawm (1983), tradition can be invented at short notice for a given event. It can be said that Shaoxing Zhufu is an invented symbol with associated meanings of regional or national community within the contemporary context of heritage discourse practice and cultural politics. Interpreting Zhufu as connoting ‘commemorating the national hero’ enhances its conformity with the dominant political values. To have intangible culture identified as heritage, applicants have learned from the political rhetoric that any content that violates ideological taboos (i.e., any possible ‘superstitious remains’) must be removed from the intangible culture, while aspects interpretable as conforming to the official ideology, such as nationalism, patriotism and the construction of a harmonious society, need to be highlighted in the identification process.

In the terms of the discursive practice of heritage, just as a ritual is endowed with political and social significance for the purpose of the identification process, so too does the heritagised ritual serve as an instrument of the state power to fulfil social and political purposes. In 2008, Shaoxing Zhufu was identified as one of 18 ethnic traditional festivals by the Zhejiang Provincial Department of Culture, and Shaoxing County was designated as the preservation site of Zhufu. According to a news report (Chen, 2008), the identification of ethnic traditional festivals aimed to foster the ethnic traditional culture and promote the transmission and preservation of ethnic traditional festivals. The introduction of Zhufu in the news emphasised that, ‘The connotation of

Zhufu is to commemorate the national heroes and it is significant in uniting people, cultivating the national spirit, and constructing the harmonious society' (Chen, 2008). This is likely to be one of the most important reasons that this heritage ritual was singled out as an ethnic traditional festival. Since its identification, the media has ensured Zhufu's close association with the uniform account of its connotation and prominent significance. Consequently, the connotation and significance with which the ritual was endowed based on a selective reading of its related legends and tales have become fact in the official discourse.

While the identification of rituals such as Zhufu as ethnic traditional festivals might suggest a revivalism of folklore supported by the government out of respect for people's everyday life, this was actually part of a grand national cultural project in a wider political context. The identification of ethnic traditional festivals was initiated nationwide in 2005 by the Publicity Department of Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (中央宣传部). In that year, the Publicity Department, together with the General Office of Central Commission for Guiding Cultural and Ethical Progress (中央文明办), the Ministry of Education (教育部), the Ministry of Civil Affairs (民政部) and the Ministry of Culture (文化部), issued a document entitled *Advice on Fostering the Beautiful Tradition of National Culture by Using Traditional Festivals* (Xinhua, 2005). In the *Advice*, the significance and operational principles of this high-profile project were highlighted as follows:

(significance) Faced with the strategic mission of constructing a harmonious socialist society, [...] making full use of national traditional festivals to foster the beautiful tradition of national culture is of utmost significance [...] in further enhancing the cohesion and sense of identity in the Chinese nation, in promoting the nation's reunification and strengthening, in developing continuously the culture of the Chinese nation, and in maintaining the national cultural interests and security.

(principles) Using traditional festivals to foster the beautiful tradition of national culture has to adhere to the Deng Xiaoping Theory and the important thought of the Three Represents⁸⁰ under the guideline of constructing a harmonious socialist

⁸⁰ The Three Represents is a sociopolitical ideology credited to General Secretary Jiang Zemin which became a guiding ideology for the Communist Party of China at its Sixteenth Party Congress in 2002. The formal statement of the theory is: 'Reviewing the course of struggle and the basic experience over the past 80 years and looking ahead to the arduous tasks and bright future in the new century, our Party should continue to stand in the forefront of the times and lead the people in marching toward victory. In a word, the Party must always represent the requirements of the development of China's advanced productive forces, the orientation of the development of China's advanced culture, and the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people in China.' — Jiang Zemin's speech at the 16th CPC Congress, November 2002)

society⁸¹ so as to foster the great national spirits of patriotism [...] to direct people to a scientific understanding and grasp of the traditional festival customs, to eliminate the feudal dross and add contemporary connotation to the festivals.

(Xinhuaawang, 2005)

As can be clearly seen from the content of the *Advice*, the revival of ethnic traditional festivals was framed within contemporary Chinese social and political discourse, such as ‘constructing a harmonious socialist society’, ‘enhancing the cohesion and sense of identity in the Chinese nation’, ‘promoting the nation’s reunification and strengthening’ and ‘maintaining the national cultural interests and security’. In other words, festivals were not conceived by the state power merely as a part of ordinary people’s everyday life; rather, they were treated as an instrument to fulfil a social and political project, which was systematically, ideologically and discursively implemented top-down from the central authorities to the provincial and municipal levels.

9.5 Safeguarding Zhufu through Performance

Since the UNESCO’s 2003 *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* entered into force, heritage practices have been carried out within the framework of this standardised text among state parties at the community level. According to Article 2.3 of UNESCO’s Convention, ‘Safeguarding’ means:

measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, particularly through formal and informal education, as well as the revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage.

(UNESCO, 2003)

To better preserve and transmit this heritage ritual, Shaoxing County was designated as the preservation site of Zhufu in 2008 (Chen, 2008). In 2012, the

⁸¹ The phrase Harmonious Socialist Society (和谐社会), often shortened to Harmonious Society, is a socio-economic vision that is said to be the result of Chinese leader Hu Jintao’s signature ideology of the Scientific Development Concept. It serves as the ultimate goal for the ruling Communist Party of China along with Xiaokang society, which aims for a ‘basically well-off’ middle-class oriented society. First proposed by the Chinese government under the Hu–Wen Administration during the 2005 National People’s Congress, the idea changes China’s focus from economic growth to overall societal balance and harmony. The idea is clearly visible in banners all over China. The phrase can relate back to the time of Confucius when music could bring about harmony by maintaining balance in the society. In addition, music was considered to have the power to transform people into becoming more civilized. Thus, the idea of harmony also suggests the government’s responsibility in guiding people ‘to the correct direction in life.’

Shaoxing Municipal Bureau of Culture, Radio, Television, Film, Press and Publication⁸² designated the landmark tourist destination of Shaoxing City, Lunxun Native Place,⁸³ as the performative transmission site for the intangible cultural heritage Zhufu (Shaoxingshiwenguangju, 2012). In reality, Zhufu had long been performed as a tourist attraction at Luxun Native Place and other tourist destinations in the city. However, after its designation as intangible cultural heritage and ethnic traditional festival, its performance was advertised by the local media as a must-see distinctive folklore programme in the tourist's itinerary.

As an ordinary tourist as well as researcher, I observed the performance of Zhufu in Luxun Native Place. The heritage ritual was displayed at the Deshou Tang of the Ancestral Residence of Luxun. As analysed in Chapter 6, *tang* was the ritual space of a traditional Chinese family. Deshou Tang was the ritual space for the Zhou lineage⁸⁴ for ancestor and festival rituals. The Zhufu ritual was performed twice at Deshou Tang, in the morning and afternoon, for a duration of 15 minutes, from the first day to the fifth day of the Chinese lunar New Year. Each performance session was conducted by three male actors (with the roles of grandfather, father and son), with the guidance of an interpreter. The three actors and the interpreter were all dressed in traditional Chinese garments and, to create a sense of tradition, each man had a long braid of artificial hair hanging down the back of his neck.

Surrounded by a large crowd of curious tourists from across the country, the interpreter announced the ritual, which began amidst much noise from the audience. The prepared grandest sacrifice was placed on the two joined Eight Deities Tables. Everything was real, including the live carp brought from an outside tank before the worship began. The interpreter delivered a thorough and fluent explanation of the procedures of the ritual. He particularly emphasised the special meaning of the sacrifice and the number of chopsticks and highlighted the taboos during the ritual, particularly

⁸² Shaoxing Municipal Bureau of Culture, Radio, TV, Film, Press and Publication(绍兴市文化广电新闻出版局) is an administrative organization in charge of culture and art, radio & TV, culture relics, press, publication and copy right. It is the organisation which directly takes charge of the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. The responsibilities involves drafting the documents and regulations concerning the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, organising the application and identification of intangible cultural heritage inventory, implementing the transmission, performance and study of intangible cultural heritage, etc.

⁸³ Luxun Native Place (鲁迅故里) is the well-preserved historic districts in Shaoxing City, which features rich cultural values and distinctive landscapes of ancient watertown. It is the place where Luxun spent his early years as a child with a number of most attractive places, such as the Former Residence of Luxun, Ancestral Residence of Luxun, Sanwei Bookroom and Luxun Memorial. It has become a golden name card for the tourism of Shaoxing and even the whole city.

⁸⁴ Lu Xun's real name is Zhou Shuren. Lun Xun was the most famous penname used by this great writer, so much so that it even outweighed his real name.

the exclusion of women. However, he did not mention the origin of Zhufu. With his interpretation, the three actors bowed and kowtowed in the order of their seniority with much reverence. Finally, some peanuts were handed out to the tourists as a replacement for *ninagao*. These fortune peanuts almost led to a fight among the tourists. As at every tourist attraction, the performance of Zhufu was recorded by tourists with their digital cameras and video recorders.

In section 9.4, an analysis was made on how the official discourse of nationalism and patriotism was embedded in the heritagisation of Zhufu and how this heritage ritual was appropriated to serve social and political projects. Based on the logic of ideological propaganda conventionally adopted by the Publicity Department at the central and local levels, the origin of Zhufu and its contemporary connotation and significance should have been highlighted during the performance and interpretation at the tourist destination. However, this was not the case. Rather, attention was directed towards displaying the purported or ostensible authenticity of this ritual.

This paradox can be understood as a division between the ritual performed as a tourist attraction and the ritual represented in the heritage and official discourse. From the viewpoint of folklore performance at the tourist destination, it can be speculated that the deliberate avoidance of the legendary stories concerning the origin of Zhufu in the interpretation was due to the limited time of performance. Indeed, for a 15-minute long performance, the focus should be on the most important procedures, such as the display of sacrifice, bodily worshipping and sharing the blessing. This would best exhibit the folkness, novelty and exoticism of this ritual to the tourists, thus generating more revenue.

However, another possible consideration is that tourists might consider it strange if the ritual were said to be of great significance as claimed in the official discourse. As Ashworth (2011) asserts:

public heritage is far less effective in transmitting the messages intended by the producers than they generally assume it to be ... [because] heritage consumers are not passive receptors of whatever messages may be transmitted by public agencies but possess numerous defence mechanisms for filtering its content. (pp. 35-36)

Therefore, the performed ritual was one script, focusing on the display of authenticity, while the ritual represented in the heritage and official discourse is another narrative that conforms and caters to the political ideology.

From the viewpoint of authenticity, the performance of Zhufu was problematic if the local government attempted to preserve and transmit this heritage ritual. To achieve

the utmost 'authenticity', folklore experts conducted much research work to restore the original character of Zhufu based on the historical documents of the Zhou lineage. From the description above of the performance, this 'authenticity' was manifest in the grandeur of the sacrifice, the manner in which the three male actors were dressed and the detailed interpretation of the taboos in the ritual and meanings of the sacrifice. However, despite this, the performance was merely imitative in contrast to the real practice of ordinary people.

Viewed in this light, the performed ritual at tourist destinations was a framed folklore programme disconnected from everyday life. Firstly, Zhufu is only one part of the overall celebration of the Chinese lunar New Year in the local community. Its meaning and significance to ordinary people is only revealed when it is practiced together with other rituals such as making offerings to the Kitchen God, the ancestors and the five animal deities. Moreover, this grand ritual is supposed to take place in a particular sacred time-space, with the sacredness being temporary and contingent. At the tourist destination, even the performance of the solemnity and sacredness of the ritual was drowned out by the noise and curiosity of the crowd. In addition, in the real modern-day ritual practice, people would be dressed in their normal clothes and women take more responsibilities in the ritual.⁸⁵

Necessarily, to display Zhufu to the rushing tourists in the shortest time, the heritage ritual was condensed and simplified into its most prominent ritual components to allow these to be highlighted and repeated. It was staged for the express consumption of a tourist audience, which may comprise both locals and non-locals (Shneiderman, 2011). In this sense, the ritual performance is, as Boorstin (1964) put it, an artificial attraction and fake event. The tourists, as cultural sightseers, come to a secure environment to pursue a sense of strangeness. They are bound by their bubble environment and isolated from the real living environment of the local community.

The problems of safeguarding the ritual Zhufu through performance can be attributed to the ambiguity in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage itself. As a crucial component of the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, the transmission of intangible cultural heritage from one generation to the next plays a significant and inevitable part because the medium of this transmission is human bodies. Moreover, this transmission itself is problematic when considered in relation to heritage preservation. The forms of intangible cultural heritage are much more difficult to define, convey and

⁸⁵ In my field work, the previous taboo that women should avoid in the ritual did not work any more. Rather, more and more women played increasingly important role in the ritual Zhufu.

conserve in contrast to tangible heritage forms such as architectural monuments, which are easily identified and protected. 'While the tangible heritage is fashioned from relatively durable material, the forms of intangible cultural heritage are subject to historic and cultural change to a far higher degree' (Wulf, 2011). This raises the question of what is effective and substantial transmission if a ritual constantly adapts to historic and cultural changes. Similar questions were raised by state delegates, intangible cultural heritage experts and the secretariat during the preparation of the intangible cultural heritage *Convention* and the initial phases of its implementation:

If traditions are constantly reinvented and therefore always different, is the concept of authenticity consistent with the idea of intangible cultural heritage? Is the revival of a tradition that is meaningful to a group of people, less important than its original form? Is a practice less 'valuable' if it is appropriated by outside actors and ceases to be transmitted by the group that created it?

(Bortolotto, 2013, p. 74)

In addition, the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage itself contributes to what could be called the 'preservation paradox' (Ashworth, 2011). It is well-known that the rationale underlying the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage is that rituals and practices such as oral traditions, languages, performing arts, social customs and traditional crafts are viewed as endangered by the homogenising forces of an economic and social globalisation. However:

the notion of a ritual practice being endangered raises the question that the existence of such endangerment is itself a clear indication that the ritual no longer fulfils the purposes for which it was created, for if it were still relevant and meaningful, it would not be endangered and in need of protection.

(Ashworth, 2011, p. 33)

Therefore, in terms of the ritual Zhufu, it can be argued that safeguarding it is unnecessary since the ritual practice lives on among ordinary people.

Even if it is necessary, the safeguarding of Zhufu through performance only serves as part of a process of museumification due to the static pursuit of 'authenticity'. The concept of authenticity has drawn much critical attention on the part of heritage professionals over the past couple of decades. Authenticity is a concept used for the World Heritage List as a fundamental qualifying condition for the inclusion of a cultural site (UNESCO, 2013). Since the early 1990s, this concept has been strongly criticised within UNESCO fora for its supposed 'Eurocentric' character and has been declared 'culturally relative' (Larsen, 1995). Due to its even more problematic character in the

policy area instituted by the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* than in that of the *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, some experts have even asserted that the term ‘authenticity’ as applied to tangible cultural heritage is not relevant when identifying and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in light of the fact considering that intangible cultural heritage is constantly recreated (Bortolotto, 2013).

Although UNESCO has rejected the concept of authenticity in its approach to heritage, and the intangible cultural heritage Committee of UNESCO has explicitly asked state parties to avoid reference to the inappropriate vocabulary of ‘authenticity’ in the evaluation of an element nominated for inscription on the Representative List of intangible cultural heritage and not to fix intangible cultural heritage in some frozen, idealised form, it remains very ‘difficult for heritage stakeholders to disregard the values conveyed by the concept of “authenticity” when they are seeking recognition for their cultural expressions’ (Bortolotto, 2013, p. 77). Here, heritage stakeholders who claim to be more responsible for ‘authenticity’ than the communities themselves that are the real bearers of these rituals and practices are often assumed to hold the role of cultural managers and folklore experts. Consequently, the heritage ritual Zhufu was performed in an ‘authentic manner’, justified by those experts according to their archaeological understanding of the ritual. In this way, as Ashworth (2011) argues, the transmission of this ritual through performance treats the heritage ritual as a museum artefact. Zhufu is presented as objects without relevant context, interesting for their antiquity, ingenuity, beauty or strangeness. Through performance, the ritual is contained, de-contextualised and marginalised as a curious, colourful and quaint relic, the purpose of which is to attract audiences for the sake of boosting the local tourism industry.

9.6 Conclusion

The analysis in this chapter concluded that there was a distinction between the performed heritage at a tourist destination and discursively represented heritage in the official discourse. The former was a tourism-oriented cultural expression with a focus on the display of authenticity in the ritual, while the latter catered to state- and regional-level nationalism and patriotism through the discursive promotion of local festivals as intangible cultural heritage. The two regimes of heritage in two contexts (the tourism market and official political discourse) suggest separate but reciprocal narratives of ritual representation. The former serves as a testimony for the ideological legitimisation, whereas the latter justifies the former at the discursive level. According to Bortolotto (2013), the representation of ritual in a heritage ‘is a reflexive meta-discourse on culture

whose characters and values are made explicit and objectified' (p. 77). This objectification turns culture into a political tool and a weapon that can be utilised for identity claims or cultural rights advocacy within a broader discursive context created by political, economic or other kinds of external agendas.

Distinct from the two representations of heritage above is the ritual practice of Zhufu in actual everyday life. In the view of Shneiderman (2011), ritual practice is the embodied, ritualised actions carried out by individuals within an indigenous epistemological framework to achieve localised goals. Practices are carried out within the clearly delimited private domains of the household or communal spaces because the community has always done them this way; it is the implicit habitus and the way in which people make their lives in a society. Different from the pursuit of fossilised authenticity in the performance and the claim of plausible significance for a political agenda, the ritual practice of Zhufu exerts its vernacular and grassroots meanings in everyday life. Thus, it is another type of cultural expression and hidden script, in which people continue to embrace those 'superstitious' elements in the ritual or adapt the ritual to the changing world. In some instances, the ritual may no longer be practiced in everyday life because the new generation of people has adapted to a new lifestyle.

However, at present, the ritual practice of Zhufu can be seen as a resistance to the representations in the production of intangible cultural heritage. The resistance lies in the independent cultural expression of the ritual as practiced by ordinary people, as compared to the heritage representations. Importantly, the discourse of intangible cultural heritage has legitimated this 'backward and superstitious' custom into a beautiful ethnic traditional festival. This has signalled to ordinary people that the political atmosphere towards these ritual practices is loosening. In response, ordinary people have taken the opportunity to revitalise and reinvent these ritual practices for the pursuit of their own well-being in their everyday life.

The ritual Zhufu was performed as intangible cultural heritage at tourist destinations, but was practiced more 'authentically' by ordinary people in individual families. The next chapter investigates a collective and communal ritual, the Jiuxian Temple Festival, in the discourse of intangible cultural heritage.

Chapter 10: Jiuxian Temple Festival (酒仙庙会)⁸⁶ and Intangible Cultural Heritage

10.1 Introduction

This chapter first presents a descriptive introduction to the Jiuxian Temple Festival held before 1949 in the town of Dongpu. The analysis demonstrates that this communal ritual event was a combination of the sacred and secular worlds. This distinctive feature of time-space in ritual practices indicates a reciprocal relationship between ritual practitioners and deities. This chapter also explores the revival of the Jiuxian Temple Festival as the Cultural Festival of Shaoxing Rice Wine and intangible cultural heritage. The focus is on the investigation of how the Jiuxian Temple Festival was jointly produced as intangible cultural heritage by heritage stakeholders, including the village committee, scholars and experts, wine industry entrepreneurs and local villagers.

This chapter again adopts the analytical framework of resistance and domination. However, the interaction between ritual practitioners and the local/state power was not simply one of binary opposition. Instead, the practice of intangible cultural heritage placed the ritual practitioners and the local/state power in a subtle relationship involving cooperation, negotiation and a degree of opposition. In other words, the discourse and practice of intangible cultural heritage served both as strategy for state power to accommodate temple festivals into its social, cultural and political agenda and as tactics for local power and cultural inheritors to legitimate and sustain their ritual tradition.

10.2 Background

Although *shehui* (社会) in modern Chinese refers to the term ‘society’, in ancient China, it referred to the combination of two characters meaning ‘the shrine of the earth god’ (社) and ‘an assembly or meeting’ (会). Therefore, in the past, *shehui* referred to the assembly for welcoming and parading the gods during the spring and autumn sacrifice to the earth god. Later, it meant temple festivals in general (Palmer et al. 2011, p. 30).

⁸⁶ Jiuxian (酒仙) is literary for wine immortal or wine god. In religious sense for this case study, it means the Patron God of Winemaking, but in Chinese culture, Jiuxian could refer to a simple person who has an enormous capacity for drinking, or more often than not to the poets or literati who loved drinking in ancient China. Therefore, Jiuxian has culturally become an esteemed title. In this case study, Jiuxian means differently in different context. Therefore, I simply use the pinyin.

Temple festivals (庙会 *miaohui*), sometimes translated as temple fairs (庙市 *miaoshi*) or ‘competitive celebrations to welcome the gods’ (迎神赛会 *yingshen saihui*), take place in temples dedicated to local gods throughout rural China, as well as in a few closely regulated urban temples. Rituals and festivals are celebrated during major annual holidays such as the Lantern Festival, as well as on the birthdate of each god. Festivals usually include rituals in the temple, opera on a stage facing the temple, processions of the gods around the ritual boundaries of the village and the blessing of offerings prepared by each family in the village. The ritual processions provide a venue for the many different local performing arts troupes unique to each local cultural region. Each family in a village celebrating a festival provides a set amount (per capita) to the temple committee, which posts its accounts, showing income from the members of the village and individual donations, along with annual temple oil-lamp and incense income. Expenses are also scrupulously posted and include the costs of ritual performances (such as by Taoist priests, Buddhist monks, sectarian ritual specialists and ‘Confucian’ masters of ceremony). The opera performances are usually the primary expense. In some areas, temple committees have already formed a secondary tier of local governance, providing many services to their communities (Davis, 2005).

Before 1949, there were as many as 15 temple festivals (See Appendix 10.1) held annually in the town of Dongpu, with the Jiuxian Temple Festival being typical of these. However, the project of constructing the socialist and communist country and the Cultural Revolution’s suppression of anti-superstition movements during the Maoist era after 1949 saw almost all temple festivals suspended. Only with the reform era of the 1980s was there a restoration of temple festivals throughout China. The Jiuxian Temple Festival was restored during this period.

Owing to the nationwide rise of the practice of intangible cultural heritage since China became a state party to UNESCO’s 2003 *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* in August 2004 (Zhongguowang, 2006), an increasing number of temple festivals are being restored and reinvented throughout China. Zhejiang Province put into force the Regulations on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in June 2007 (Zhejiangshengweihuating, 2007). At the time that this research was conducted in 2012, the Tianyi Temple Festival had been restored at Xingfu Temple⁸⁷ in Dongpu Town and the Jiuxian Temple Festival had restarted at Long Kou

⁸⁷ Legend goes that Xingfu Temple was established in 1795 (during the reign of Qianlong emperor) and was renovated in 1807 (during the reign of Jiaqing emperor) and 1848 (during the reign of Daoguang emperor) and 2010. It is a tradition that local people held temple festival on the 7th of the

Temple in Yangchuan Village of Dongpu Town. The former festival, which is dedicated to the ancient Chinese divine physician named Hua Tuo (25–220 CE), was restored in 2012 and has been held twice (Lin, 2014). The latter was restored in 2010 and has since been held four times (Zhou, 2013). The Jiuxian Temple Festival was also identified as Shaoxing municipal-level intangible cultural heritage in 2013 (Shaoxingshirenminzhengfu, 2013), and the local government and village committee was in the process of attempting to upgrade it to Zhejiang provincial- or even national-level intangible cultural heritage.

10.3 Jiuxian Temple Festival in Everyday Life

According to the *Cultural Study of Jiuxian Temple Fair* (Yu & Yu, 2011), it was not recorded when exactly the tradition of worshipping the Patron God of Winemaking started. However, it was known that the custom was directly related to the local tradition of household winemaking, which was often the work of housewives. In the past, every family would make rice wine at the end of lunar October every year. The wine made in Dongpu was particularly mellow and fragrant, so the local people believed a Buddha was guarding them. Therefore, they started worshipping the deity. People would kill chickens and geese as sacrificial offerings, organise a dragon boat race and perform local drama to welcome the god. In 1852, during the reign of the Xianfeng Emperor of the Qing Dynasty, the Jiuxian Shenhui (the Association of the Patron God of Winemaking) was established jointly by 28 major wine shop owners. In the same year, the shrine for the deity was built in Jieding Temple in Shangfang Village of Dongpu Town. A stone tablet erected in Jieding Temple in 1857 recorded how the temple festival was celebrated in 1852 and the specific donations that had been made by wine shop owners (Yu & Yu, 2011, p. 80). The tradition of the Jiuxian Temple Festival is thus officially considered to have started in 1852. From that year, the Jiuxian Temple Festival was held for three successive days (the sixth through eighth day of lunar July) every year. It is noteworthy that the statue of the Jiuxian enshrined and worshipped in Jieding Temple was an image of a woman because that woman was believed to have first invented the way Shaoxing rice wine was made. In 1936, Chen Ziyong, the governor of Dongpu Town proposed to change the temple festival into a commercial fair for wine products (Yu & Yu, 2011). From then on, the temple festival was imbued with much significance in promoting the local wine industry, although the ritual of worshipping

lunar July to celebrate the birthday of Tianyi (heavenly doctor) Buddha . After about ten years of discontinuation, this tradition was resumed in 2012. Apart from Tianyi, the Earth Buddha is also enshrined in this temple.

Jiuxian, the opera and other local artistic performances and processions of the god also continued.

10.3.1 Jiuxian Temple Festival Before 1949

The Jiuxian Temple Festival mainly consisted of sacrificial ritual and the god parade. A few days before the temple festival, an invitation card called *longtoupai* (Dragon Head Card) was distributed to every household in every village by a messenger from that village. This card was a yellow paper on which was painted the image of Jiuxian. It served as a bill, requiring every household to attach three copper coins to the card and post the card on their gate. On the day of the festival, these cards were collected and burned in front of the statue of Jiuxian.

The sixth of lunar July was the day for the sacrificial ritual. On the table in front of the statue of Jiuxian were placed candles, incense burners and sacrificial offerings such as five animals (i.e., sheep, pig, goose, rooster and carp), fruit, wine and tea. Then, a large jar of rice wine was uncovered and some wine was scooped from the jar. The major wine shop owners offered incense to the god and poured wine from the jar on the ground as an offering to the deity. Five women then started to sing the praises of the wine. Following this, a small group of Taoists performed rituals to celebrate Jiuxian's birthday. Some elderly people would stay overnight, chanting Buddhist scriptures.

The seventh of lunar July was the highlight of the temple festival. In the morning along the riverbank of Jieding Temple docked four dragon boats towing another deity boat. Strong male villagers carried the statue of Jiuxian onto the deity boat. The statue was seated in the shrine on the boat with flags on both sides, a marquee at the back, a sacrificial table in the front and a musical band playing along. To the sound of bronze cannon fire, gongs and drums, these boats were pedalled quickly forward.

Villagers placed sacrificial offerings on tables along the riverbank, waiting for the boat team. All the family members went out welcoming Jiuxian respectfully with empty buckets placed beside their tables. A small wooden messenger boat arrived before the boat team. A man on the messenger boat performed acrobatics, and winemakers waiting on the riverbank rewarded him with jars of wine for the temple festival banquet.

Then, the performing arts troupes called *huihuo* arrived. *Huihuo* in the Jiuxian Temple Festival included troupes on the land and in boats. The land troupes included the guard of honour, the bronze cannon team, a stilt-dancing team, the dragon and lion dance team, the sedan chair team, the wine flag team, the dragon flag team, the 36-traditional-trade team and so on. The boat troupes performed on two boats. On one boat, performers dressed in costumes as ancient figures sang the local dramas. On the other

boat, several people were dressed up as *heibai wuchang*⁸⁸ and performed ghost dramas. While terrifying in appearance, these performance were humorous.

After the *huihuo* boats came the deity boat, travelling slowly. Music was played loudly and cannons were fired. Villagers waiting on the bank bowed, kowtowed and prayed in veneration. After the deity boat had gone by, women took their empty buckets and fetched water from the river. The water was taken home as ‘blessed water’ with which villagers could make better wine.

The deity of Jiuxian was paraded through each village on the boat. At noon, the deity was returned to its shrine in the temple. Then, every household feasted their relatives and friends from afar. Wine merchants from across the country were invited to the banquets. A wine fair was held during the temple festival, and in the afternoon, a theatre was constructed in front of the Jieding Temple. Audiences from villages in Dongpu and neighbouring places all came to enjoy the local dramas. There were all kinds of other performances and vendors. A dragon boat race was also held. The winners were rewarded a jar of fine wine if they said ‘Wish you prosperity’ to the renowned winemakers. Every family celebrated this festival, eating, drinking and enjoying the performances until the eighth of lunar July.

10.3.2 The Sacred and Secular

As already analysed, the ritual practices of Chinese people are often characterised by their combination of the sacred and the secular in one ritual. Jiuxian Temple Festival was a communal collective ritual event that took place in a particular time and space. In this particular time-space, there was no clear demarcation between the sacred and the secular, although religious people and non-religious people would have experienced differently what was the sacred and what was the secular in the same time-space (Eliade, 1959, pp. 201-213).

On the spatial dimension, the Jiuxian Temple Festival was held in the sacred space of the Jieding Temple. However, as the festival proceeded to the god parade, the sacred deity was removed from its shrine and carried around the villages on a boat to allow it to be worshipped by the people. The sacred deity thus came out of its sacred place and

⁸⁸ The Heibai Wuchang (黑白无常 literally ‘black and white impermanence’) are also known as the ‘Black and White Guards of Impermanence’. They are in charge of bringing the spirits of the dead to the Underworld. The Black Guard and the White Guard are in charge of evil and good spirits respectively. In some tales, they appear during the Ghost Festival and reward the good by granting them pieces of gold. There are statues of them in some Chinese temples, where they are worshipped, and they are usually depicted with ferocious snarls on their faces and long red tongues sticking out of their mouths to scare away evil spirits.

into the secular world. This transition from the sacred to the secular suggests a fusion between the sacred and the secular.

On the temporal level, the sacred aspect of this ritual event was prominent on the first and the second day, when the sacrificial ritual and worshipping took place. However, the remainder of the festival was largely secular, with the enjoyment of a feast, entertainment by a variety of performances and a fair of wine products. Further, if the sacred were to be considered as a personal experience, then it differs from person to person. For example, the sacrificial ritual and worshipping meant serious and sacred to members of temple committees and major winemakers; however, young people might have considered the festival only interesting and amusing in the secular sense.

The analysis of the combination or fusion of the sacred and the secular in the Jiuxian Temple Festival showed the reciprocal relationship between the people and the deity. The deity of Jiuxian was approachable. It was offered the sacrifice in the mundane world and could be invited out temporarily from its sacred shrine and worshipped by people without any obstacle. From the ordinary person's perspective, deities are powerful but are not disagreeable or untouchable because these deities were created by people according to their own imagination of ideal personages, who are often the representatives of moral saints. Moreover, these characters of deities were created by people in autonomy to serve purposes in their everyday life. Therefore, while deities are worshipped and venerated by people through offerings, they are also considered responsible for the welfare of worshippers. It is thus not surprising that people will resort to other deities if the deities they worship are not effectual in solving their problems in everyday life. From this reciprocal relationship, it can be concluded that sacredness is an individual feeling during ritual practices. It does not transcend people's everyday life.

As indicated in the table of temple festivals (see Appendix 10.1) in Dongpu before 1949, temple festivals were an important part of everyday life. Alongside their spiritual function as a communal event for ritual practice, temple festivals also played a crucial secular role in enriching and entertaining people in their everyday life and enhancing relational communications in the community.

10.4 Revival of Jiuxian Temple Festival

Chau (2011b) concludes that there are 'two strategies which people "doing religion" in China adopt in negotiating with the Party-state to attain a higher degree of legitimacy' (p. 6). The first is 'getting into the official fold', which refers to obtaining the status of belonging to one of the five officially recognised religions and becoming

an officially recognised ‘venue for religious activities’. The second is ‘creative dissimulation’, which is to disguise one’s religious activities as something more palatable for official eyes. For example, many temples or religious festivals are now being promoted as folklore, museums, charitable organisations, tourist destinations, local ‘landmarks’ or ‘cultural festivals’, thus highlighting the cultural and economic benefits and functions of religious activities and downplaying or obscuring the otherwise ‘superstitious’ aspects (such as divination, exorcism, spirit writing, spirit mediumism, processions and pilgrimage).

In de Certeau’s sense, these are the ‘tactics’ adopted by practitioners of religions to gain authorisation for their religious activities from the state power. The case of Gu Zhaitang An (Ancient Nunnery), discussed in Chapter 5, is an example of the first type of tactic, ‘getting into the official fold’. Despite this local place of deity worship having little to do with Buddhism, its exterior wall was painted with the six Chinese characters 南无阿弥陀佛 that often appear on the wall of Buddhist temples. In this way, the venue secured some legitimacy. The second tactic type, ‘creative dissimulation’, is largely analogous to what de Certeau (1984) called *la perruque* (wig), or a diversionary practice of using an employer’s resources for personal use:

the worker’s own work disguised as work for his employer. It differs from pilfering in that nothing of material value is stolen. It differs from absenteeism in that the worker is officially on the job. ... The worker who indulges in *la perruque* actually diverts time (not goods, since he uses only scraps) from the factory for work that is free, creative, and precisely not directed toward profit. In the very place where the machine he must serve reigns supreme, he cunningly takes pleasure in finding a way to create gratuitous products whose sole purpose is to signify his own capabilities through his work and to confirm his solidarity with other workers or his family. (pp. 24-26)

The tactic of *la perruque* can explain how the Jiuxian Temple Festival was revived from being a ‘wasteful superstition’ to being recognised as intangible cultural heritage. If the practice of intangible cultural heritage is seen as the reference point, then the revival of the Jiuxian Temple Festival underwent two phases: the restoration before 2010 and the innovation after 2010 for the identification of intangible cultural heritage (Yu & Yu, 2011, p. 90). The revival of the Jiuxian Temple Festival during the two periods exhibited different characteristics, although the tactics (i.e., creative dissimulation) were similar. For the convenience of analysis below, the first period is termed as the festival’s revival as the Cultural Festival of Shaoxing Rice Wine, while

the second period is defined as the festival's innovation as intangible cultural heritage. The focus in this section is on investigating how the Jiuxian Temple Festival was produced as intangible cultural heritage.

10.4.1 Revival as Cultural Festival of Shaoxing Rice Wine

It was documented in the book *Cultural Study of Jiuxian Temple Fair* that a sports meet of wine culture was held in Shaoxing City in 1990 and two Jiuxian Temple Festivals were held, respectively, at the Dongpu Brewery in 1992 and in the market street of Dongpu Town in 2000 (Yu & Yu, 2011, pp. 86-89). The same book stated that the Jiuxian Temple Festival evolved into the Cultural Festival of Shaoxing Rice Wine during the reform era and was celebrated as many as 17 times from 1987 to 2005 (Yu & Yu, 2011, p. 115). This statement could be interpreted as emphasising the ongoing tradition of this communal ritual festival. However, cultural events held during these years tended to focus on the performance of folk arts, such as the dragon and lion dances, competitions such as lifting wine jars and racing while carrying wine jars, and the economic function of the wine fair. By contrast, the sacrificial ritual aspect of the festival was disregarded or performed quietly. Since it is the view of this study that the true substance of temple festivals consists in the belief practice through offering sacrifices to spirits and deities, it is important to note that the 'superstitious aspects' of the revived Jiuxian Temple Festival were not encouraged or recognised openly in the official cultural and political discourse during the 1987–2005 period.

The local community can be understood to have adopted the strategy of 'creative dissimulation' to continue the ritual tradition, although 'the tradition' is always in the process of being made and remade by social actors in response to changing concrete, local circumstances (Chau, 2011b, p. 3). Here, the changing circumstances involve the specific historical, political, social, economic and cultural factors during a specific period. The negotiation that occurred between the territorial religious community of the town of Dongpu and the Party-state's materialist and atheistic ideology became a process of gaming, whereby the local community waits to take advantage of any possible opportunity (i.e., relaxed religious policies or political atmosphere) to innovate and sustain its ritual tradition, while the Party-state turns a blind eye due to the positive cultural and economic benefits and functions brought by these religious activities.

10.4.2 Innovation as Intangible Cultural Heritage

The Jiuxian Temple Festival was identified as Shaoxing municipal-level intangible cultural heritage in 2013. However, the application preparation started as early as 2010. The traditional Jiuxian Temple Festival was held in Jieding Temple in

Shangfang Village of Dongpu Town before 1949, as described in Section 10.3 of this chapter. However, the Jieding Temple building almost disappeared for various reasons during the Maoist era, such that only a very small part of the structure remained. Therefore, the Yangchuan Village Committee encouraged villagers to donate money for the renovation of Long Kou Temple following the advice of Yu Rixia, the director of the Shaoxing City Yushun⁸⁹ Culture Research Association. As a result, as much as 135,500 RMB was pooled from villagers between May and July in 2010 for use for such expenses as the remaking of the statues of Jiuxian based on the image of He Zhizhang (a high-ranking scholar official in Tang Dynasty), the God of Wealth and the Dragon King. A *kaiguang*⁹⁰ ceremony was performed for the new deity statues on the sixth day of lunar July. Then, the temple festival, composed of sacrificial ritual and the parade of three deities, was held on the fifteenth day of lunar August (Mid-Autumn Day) (Yu & Yu, 2011, p. 72). Since then, the new Jiuxian Temple Festival has been held in Long Kou Temple.

If the Jiuxian Temple Festival was revived as the Cultural Festival of Shaoxing Rice Wine in a disguised manner, then the practice of intangible cultural heritage prevalent across the country provided an unprecedented legitimating opportunity. Although the temple festival's innovation as intangible cultural heritage can still be viewed as a tactic of 'creative dissimulation' adopted by ritual practitioners, the cultural practice that is brought by the discourse of intangible cultural heritage is quite different (Gao, 2007a). The practice of intangible cultural heritage not only legitimated and reinstated the communal ritual event from the disguised 'Cultural Festival of Shaoxing Rice Wine' to 'Jiuxian Temple Festival'; it also endowed the cultural tradition with an exotic and powerful honour as 'intangible cultural heritage'. This legitimating process was an endeavour of heritage production and cultural innovation carried out jointly by heritage stakeholders, including the village committee, scholars and experts, entrepreneurs of the wine industry and local villagers.

⁸⁹ Shun or Di Shun was a 23rd-22nd century BC legendary leader of ancient China, among the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors. Shun's half-century of rule was said to be long for the history of China.

⁹⁰ *Kaiguang* (开光) is the Chinese term for consecration of a statue of a deity. In Chinese, the literal meaning of *Kaiguang* is 'opening of light'. It is often performed in the Buddhist and Taoist traditions. A *kaiguang* ritual varies amongst traditions, but it is essentially the act of formal consecration for proper usage by dotting the eyes of a statue using a calligraphy brush coated with cinnabar. In Taoism and Buddhism, the ritual is performed by senior clerics and is done by inviting a specific deity, Buddha or bodhisattva to empower an 'empty' effigy of themselves and to fill it with a divine essence. It is believed that if a statue has not gone through *kaiguang*, it cannot be worshipped or used for performance, as the eyes are still 'closed'.

The village committee, particularly the secretary of the Communist Party of China in Yangchuan Village and head of Yangchuan Village, performed a leading role in the innovation of the Jiuxian Temple Festival. As Chau (2011b) points out, the improvement brought to the local economy by religious revival is one of the key reasons that local governments lend their support. Just as different locales in the country compete with one another to build the most favourable environment for foreign investors, resulting in the mushrooming of 'tax protection zones', many locales with famous religious sites now use these sites as 'symbolic capital' (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993) to help to enhance the locales' renown to attract investors and tourists (Chau, 2011b, pp. 10-11). The town of Dongpu was the cradle of Shaoxing rice wine and has been the home of prosperous wine shops and markets throughout its history. Thus, the committee of Yangchuan Village, the Shaoxing City Government and entrepreneurs of the wine industry all regarded the revival of the Jiuxian Temple Festival as a business opportunity to develop tourism and the wine industry in Dongpu.

The revival of the temple festival might also have involved some private reasons on the part of the Communist Party of China secretary of Yangchuan Village. As the leader⁹¹ of the village, the secretary acted as the *huishou* (head of the temple committee who initiates and leads the whole temple festival) for the Jiuxian Temple Festival and he has been appointed as the intangible cultural heritage inheritor of the Jiuxian Temple Festival. As a grassroots official, the secretary is required to show some political achievements. Thus, it is understandable that he seeks economic and tourism development for his village through reviving the Jiuxian Temple Festival. Moreover, funds are allocated by the city or higher levels of government for villages with recognised intangible cultural heritage for its safeguarding. In addition, Mr He, a local expert on folk culture and intangible cultural heritage, told me that the secretary's grandfather was once a Kaiba⁹² master in the famous Zhou Yun Ji wine brewery and that he had managed the Long Kou Temple in his later years. The secretary's mother was now in charge of the temple. Thus, Mr He and his family were once part of the wine

⁹¹ In contemporary China, village head is elected by villagers, while the village secretary of CPC is appointed by the party committee of the town to which the village is subordinate. Village affairs are usually decided by the secretary and executed by the village head. Villager representatives may get involved in important issues concerning the village.

⁹² Kaiba(开耙) refers to the stirring and cooling of the steamed rice in the jars during the fermenting stage of Shaoxing rice wine making. It is intended to regulate the temperature and supply fresh air so as to better the reproduction of yeast. Kaiba is considered to be the key craft difficult to grasp in the whole process of rice wine making, so it is usually in the charge of fully experienced masters. Kaiba is the key to quality rice wine, so Kaiba masters enjoy high reputation in the brewery. They are often called 'head and brain' among the craftsman.

industry and participated in the Jiuxian Temple Festival. Therefore, his own personal interest may have encouraged the secretary to endeavour to revive the temple festival.

Thus, the revival of the temple festival was not merely for the sake of public interest, but was possibly also a matter of private concern. This is often the case at the grassroots administrative level, where these officials are often charismatic figures with the political expertise and territorial connections to initiate the revival. As Chau (2011b), argues, such local administrators actively participate in:

this new political game [that] involves contending with equally ambitious rivals for the leadership role, fighting off local state agencies' attempts to appropriate or hijack the temple, and being always on the look for state policy changes that might affect the temple as well as opportunities to further consolidate the legitimacy of the temple. (pp. 10-11).

In this sense, officials like the secretary serve as a medium between the weak ordinary people and the powerful Party-state.

As the professionals of knowledge production, scholars, folklorists and related experts are increasingly involved in the heritage industry. As analysed in Chapter 8, the transition from intangible culture to intangible cultural heritage is not simply a change of name; it is a systematic production of public culture. It is a process of knowledge production based on multiple principles of intangible cultural heritage appraisal, such as cultural originality, excellence of artisanship, representativeness of the community, scarcity and political correctness. These principles or criteria control the aesthetics in the evaluation of a certain culture and directly determine how the potential intangible culture is represented in the identification process. In the reinvention of the Jiuxian Temple Festival, scholars, folklorists and other experts were mobilised by the temple and village committees and local government to join in efforts to legitimise this ritual festival.

In September 2011, the Jiuxian Affiliated Association of Shaoxing City Yushun Culture Research Association was founded in Yangchuan Village (Shaoxingshiyushunwenhuayanjiuhui, 2011). The Affiliated Association was founded under the guidance of Professor Yu Rixia, the director of Shaoxing City Yushun Culture Research Association and the deputy director of the School of Zhejiang Local Culture in Zhejiang University (Yu & Yu, 2011, p. 90). The Shaoxing City Yushun Culture Research Association is subordinate to the Academy of Social Sciences of Shaoxing City, which is a collective social organisation sanctioned by the Bureau of Civil Affairs (Shaoxingshiyushunwenhuayanjiuhui, 2010). Since the establishment of the Jiuxian

Affiliated Association, the Jiuxian Temple Festival has been held under its leadership. Although the Affiliated Association was composed of Yangchuan Village committee members,⁹³ the association of the temple festival with academia strategically guaranteed its orthodoxy in the official discourse.

Also in September 2011, the First National Symposium of Wine Culture (全国首届酒俗文化研讨会) was held during the Jiuxian Temple Festival (Wang, 2011). About 50 people attended this meeting, most of whom were scholars and experts from across China. These academics participated in temple-sponsored academic conferences—what Kenneth Dean (1998) called ‘conferences of the gods’ (pp. 261-263)—and lent scholarly credentials to claims of antiquity or cultural significance. This process of ‘academicising the gods’ intensified in recent years, as different temple cults and religious groups competed, with the help of folklorists and other ‘experts’, to get their deity worship or ritual practice recognised (and accredited) by the state as ‘intangible cultural heritage’ to be celebrated and protected (Wang, 2006; Wang, 2008).

Apart from participating in the temple-sponsored meetings, temple festivals and organisational work related to temple festivals, scholars and experts also directly joined in the intangible cultural heritage application for Jiuxian Temple Festival. As Yue (2010, p. 77) explains, for ritual practitioners, the temple festivals in contemporary China are no longer a matter of the presence of or surveillance from the state power; they are now a matter of expecting the involvement of the state power so that temple festivals can gain administrative and legal legitimacy for their existence. To achieve this goal, the narratives concerning the origin of temple festivals and the legends about the status of the deities are of utmost significance. As analysed in Chapter 8, to achieve identification, the applicant of a certain intangible cultural heritage project tends to employ the political rhetoric, attaching to the ritual event the political and cultural importance of fostering nationalism and patriotism among citizens, promoting the construction of a harmonious society or at least strengthening the sense of pride and cohesion of the local community. Further, in preparing the documentation for intangible cultural heritage identification, scholars and experts perform a crucial role. In the case of the Jiuxian Temple Festival, this role was best manifest in the book *Cultural Study of Jiuxian Temple Fair*, which served as an important supporting document for intangible cultural

⁹³ The CPC secretary of Yangchuan Village was the chairman and the village head was the deputy chairman.

heritage identification.⁹⁴ In this book, the temple and winemaking in Dongpu are endowed with a romantic origin associated with the Chinese dragon (see Appendix 10.2).

Culturally, Chinese dragons symbolise potent and auspicious powers, particularly in their control over water, rainfall, hurricanes and floods. Chinese dragons are also the symbol of strength and good luck for people who are worthy of it. Most importantly, Chinese dragons have been worshipped as a totem by Chinese people since antiquity, which explains why Chinese people call themselves the descendants of the dragon. The legend of the origin of Long Kou Temple, which tells that Yangchuan Village was the location of the dragon's head, was employed to explain the good *fengshui* in Yangchuan Village. Many wealthy people and high-ranking officials were villagers in Yangchuan Village. The wonderful *fengshui* brought not only peace and good harvests to this village, but also helped hundreds of textile factories and companies to prosper (Yu & Yu, 2011, p. 70). Here, history and legends, facts and myths joined hands as cultural resources in the construction of place identity and a sense of pride. Consequently, Yangchuan Village, the Jiuxian Temple Festival and the tradition of winemaking in Dongpu were all endowed with a sense of romanticism, mystery and cultural significance.

If the narrative concerning the origin of Long Kou Temple could be viewed as a contemporary innovation for the sake of intangible cultural heritage identification, then the recreation of Jiuxian undoubtedly accounts more clearly for the role of scholars and experts played in the production of this ritual heritage. In terms of the archetype of Jiuxian, there were three different narratives mentioned in the *Cultural Study of Jiuxian Temple Fair*. The first two narratives (see Appendix 10.3) were related to the local villagers who made rice wine in Dongpu, while the third was about the archetype of the new creation of Jiuxian, named He Zhizhang. The following is a brief introduction to the new Jiuxian:

The present image of the Jiuxian at Long Kou Temple is a new creation who has a white face and black beard with one boy holding a rake and another holding a jar beside him. The archetype of this god is a Shaoxing local named He Zhizhang who

⁹⁴ The book was authored by Yu Rixia and his daughter, director of Research Institute of Shaoxing History and Culture. Mr. He told he himself and other local folklorists and experts contributed much to the writing of this book. However, their names were not mentioned at all in the book. Besides, this book has no references and bibliography though it delivered an academic sense with the title "Cultural Study of Jiuxian Temple Festival". In addition, professor Gu Xijia, an expert on intangible cultural heritage in Hangzhou Normal University also helped indirectly in the identification of Jiuxian Temple Festival. See 沈卫莉. (2011). 一个人的“申遗” Retrieved 11-03-2014, from http://epaper.shaoxing.com.cn/sxrb/html/2011-09/22/content_577637.htm.

was a famous poet and high-ranking scholar official in Tang Dynasty. He Zhizhang, bold and unconstrained, wrote excellent poets and essays and had a profound taste for calligraphy. He often composed impromptu poets with Li Bai⁹⁵ and other six poets while drinking wine. Because of their unique life style, this group later got the nickname 'Eight Drunk Immortals'. And He Zhizhang ranked first of this group.

(Yu & Yu, 2011, p. 71)

By comparing the Patron God of Winemaking in the three narratives, it is apparent that the archetypes of the first two gods are directly related to winemaking and are both legendary figures. From the patron god's point of view, it makes sense for both to be personalised and worshipped as the patron god. By contrast, He Zhizhang only loved drinking and had the nickname Jiuxian (wine immortal or drinking immortal). He thus had little to do with winemaking, although he was a real historical figure. Scholars and folklore experts appropriated the nickname of this cultural and governmental celebrity and equalled Jiuxian (wine immortal) to another Jiuxian (Patron God of Winemaking). He Zhizhang's nickname conveyed a sense of brilliance, gracefulness, carefreeness and eternity in the upper world opposed to the banality of ordinary people living in the mundane world. Compared with the first two archetypes of the patron god, the newly created image delivered a closer association with romanticism and local pride, which would be of benefit when the patron god went into cultural production and consumption, particularly in the potential tourism market.

In addition, the image of He Zhizhang as the new Jiuxian helped to establish the place identity of Dongpu as well as Shaoxing. Identity, and especially place identity, has become a policy goal, as public agencies have assumed growing responsibility for shaping these conditions (Ashworth, 2011, p. 19). As Luxun Native Place attempted to strengthen the place identity of Shaoxing City as a renowned historical and cultural city through the performance of Zhufu, Long Kou Temple in Dongpu Town also endeavoured to expand the familiarity of potential tourists with Jiuxian Temple Festival and the ancient town of Dongpu through the spokesman He Zhizhang. As Ashworth (2011) argued, 'much local place identity is a marginal concern of local political and governmental jurisdictions augmenting their legitimacy, or is an instrument of tourism or real estate promoters enhancing place-products through branding places' (p. 24).

In summary, the cultural identity of the historical figure of He Zhizhang has been deployed and employed as a cultural resource to reconstruct the identity of the Patron

⁹⁵ Li Bai, a household name, is well-known as the most romantic poet in Tang Dynasty. He got a lot of titles, such as 'the god of poetry'(shixian 诗仙), 'the god of wine'.

God of Winemaking as well as the place identity of Dongpu. It is thus understandable that the statue of He Zhizhang was carried around the villages during the god parade instead of the statue of the woman god who was actually placed next to the new Jiuxian in Long Kou Temple. He Zhizhang had already replaced the household woman as the origin of Jiuxian in the official discourse.

The narratives concerning the origin of Long Kou Temple and the archetype of Jiuxian may come from local folklore experts, ordinary people or even university scholars. Some narratives were old, while some were quite newly invented. More importantly, university scholars and researchers produced knowledge, which then became the narrative and discourse about the temple festival. From the viewpoint of intangible cultural heritage identification, the key here consisted much in choosing which narrative could be best appropriated by policy makers, heritage managers and developers of cultural industry or the inheritors of ritual tradition for their own purposes. Over time, it even became possible for ordinary people to adopt the academic language of ‘intangible cultural heritage’ to legitimate their ritual practice.

Scholars and local folklorists did not only legitimate the temple festival through the book *Cultural Study of Jiuxian Temple Fair*; they also more directly associated the temple festival with politically correct values in the application document for intangible cultural heritage appraisal. Heading the project introduction (see Appendix 10.4) is the highlighted purpose for the project application: *respect country and love family, foster civilisation, construct harmony, promote development, benefit the country and people, and transmit traditional culture to generations forever*. As Chau (2011b) revealed, ‘one of the easiest yet most effective strategies of dissimulation is to proclaim one’s patriotism despite the questionable ideological orientation of one’s religious practices’ (p. 7). These phrases in the application document are politically correct tactics specially designed for the identification of intangible cultural heritage. They completely conform to the dominant official ideology.

As the sacrificial ritual tradition dedicated to the Patron God of Winemaking, Jiuxian Temple Festival naturally attracted entrepreneurs in the rice wine industry to become involved in the heritagisation of this ritual event. In the Jiuxian Temple Festivals held from 2010 to 2013, Kuaijishan Shaoxing Wine Company, Ltd.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ The predecessor of Kuaijishan Shaoxing Wine Company, Ltd was Yunji Shaoxing Wine Workshop founded by Mr. Zhou Jiamu in 1743. In 1915, Mr Zhou Qin, who was the fifth generation inheritor of this wine workshop, took Yunji Shaoxing wine to America to participate in the Panama Pacific World Exposition and won the first prize of International Golden Medal for Shaoxing Wine. See 会

sponsored the festival. In return, the company's name was shown on banners during the festival and the general manager was invited to participate in the sacrificial ritual. As he commented in a television interview: 'Shaoxing rice wine is the everyday consumer goods for ordinary people. But what we are mainly concerned about now is to inherit and transmit the wine culture to people and let more people know the historical development of our wine through the sacrificial ritual' (Shaoxingtai, 2013). The manager's comment reveals that the temple festival was consciously interwoven into the economics of commodity. Ritual as a form of culture was employed to add a cultural element to the common commodity of rice wine. This added value from the narrative of time-honoured tradition and history could help to serve as a selling point in a fiercely competitively market.

Meanwhile, the sacrificial ritual attended by the general manager indicated a perfect combination of the modern and the traditional. The general manager's comments implied that his participation in the sacrificial ritual delivered the least sense of worshipping Jiuxian, the Patron God of the Winemaking industry. The modern winemaking industry is of course heavily dependent on rational modern technology rather than on "irrational" supernatural power from a patron god. This may contribute to the reinvention of the image of Jiuxian from the legendary ordinary winemakers to the renowned historical literati official He Zhizhang. In other words, the worship of a true Patron God of Winemaking has given way to the worship of the wine-consuming immortal He Zhizhang, leaving contemporary winemaking in the hands of modern technology. Regardless, it is a useful brand marketing strategy to combine a commodity such as Shaoxing rice wine with its long history and cultural tradition. In this way, traditional culture, such as temple festivals, can be refreshed and innovated as alternative modernities.

Another stakeholder group in the innovation of the Jiuxian Temple Festival that should not be ignored are the local villagers. In safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage, villagers are the genuine bearers and inheritors of this ritual tradition. They donated money for the renovation of the temple; gave their time to learn and practice the folk arts such as the dragon and lion dance; and participated as ordinary ritual practitioners and fun-seeking audience members during the temple festival.

In summary, different social actors became involved in innovating the Jiuxian Temple Festival into intangible cultural heritage. Although these heritage players can all be considered as participants and stakeholders of the intangible cultural heritage, their significance in their respective roles differs in degree and nature. Specifically, the village committee and the government of Dongpu Town performed a leading role. Scholars and experts provided the academic and intellectual support. Entrepreneurs in the wine industry participated in the ritual event as the plausibly indispensable worshipper. Finally, ordinary local villagers played their part in the performance of folk arts and in the worship of deities for their well-being in their everyday life.

These stakeholders gained what they respectively expected from the temple festival. The village committee, the government of Dongpu Town and even the Shaoxing Municipal Government made political achievements; the scholars and experts obtained first-hand experience and data for their research and had the opportunity to put their academic talent into the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage; the entrepreneurs expanded the reputation of their companies and wine products; and ordinary villagers could enjoy themselves in the *renao* (热闹) event and perform their rituals openly to seek a blessing for their overall welfare in everyday life.

From the viewpoint of rendering the temple festival as intangible cultural heritage, these stakeholders cooperated or even conspired with one another, despite possible contestations and conflicts among them. Here, intangible cultural heritage functioned as a field of discourse in which all the players and stakeholders in the local community joined together to creatively construct the temple festival into ‘a useable past’ and ‘a form of cultural property’ (Brosius & Polit, 2011, p. 2).

10.5 Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage

This section explores the transformation of the Jiuxian Temple Festival from a traditional cultural practice into contemporary cultural performance in the discourse of intangible cultural heritage. This section also investigates problems with safeguarding intangible cultural heritage using the case study of the Jiuxian Temple Festival.

10.5.1 Jiuxian Temple Festival from Practice to Performance

As analytical concepts, practice and performance help to clarify the transformation of the Jiuxian Temple Festival from intangible culture to intangible cultural heritage. Indeed, most practice has a performative aspect (Austin, 1975; Bauman & Briggs, 1990; Butler, 1997) and almost all performance can be viewed as a form of practice in Bourdieu’s (1977, 1990) sense. Nonetheless, a differentiation between practice and performance can be helpful at the analytical level so as to

understand the dynamics of consciousness and objectification inherent in the process of producing heritage.

Shneiderman (2011) defined practice as ‘embodied, ritualised actions carried out by individuals within an indigenous epistemological framework to achieve localised goals’ (p. 207), while performance is ‘ritualised actions carried out within a broader discursive context created by political, economic or other kinds of external agendas’. Accordingly, the ritualised actions in practice and in performance display two different cultural expressions. Manuela Carneiro da Cunha (2009) and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2004) make a fundamental distinction between the two regimes of existence of cultural expressions. The former refers to implicit habitus and the ways in which people make their lives in a society. The latter is a reflexive meta-discourse on culture whose characters and values are made explicit and objectified. This objectification turns culture into a political tool and a weapon that can be utilised for identity claims or cultural rights advocacy. Comparing the differentiation of two cultural expressions and the difference between practice and performance shows that there is a high degree of conformity between them. Moreover, they are both pertinent in analysing the transformation of the Jiuxian Temple Festival from traditional intangible culture to contemporary intangible cultural heritage.

According to the differentiation above, the celebration of the temple festival before 1949 can be equated to the ritual event practice and the first regime of cultural expression, while the innovation of the temple festival in the contemporary discourse of intangible cultural heritage should be seen as the ritual event performance and the second regime of cultural expression. As such, the temple festival before 1949 was ritualised actions carried out from a sense of habitus and with a sincere wish for Jiuxian to bless them and their community, especially in winemaking. The intended audience included the local villagers and the syncretic pantheon of animistic, Taoist, Buddhist and even territorial deities that comprise the Dongpu people’s divine world.

In the contemporary temple festival, the ritualised actions are performed largely to promote the wine industry and develop tourism. Compared with the traditional temple festival before 1949, the contemporary Jiuxian Temple Festival is an innovation in the changed time-space and recreated image of Jiuxian for the ritual event as well as in its invited audience and widespread media coverage. From the viewpoint of getting this ritual event identified as intangible cultural heritage and achieving certain economic purposes, the ritual event is principally targeted towards the invited guests, including government officials such as the Director of the Bureau of Religious Affairs and the

Director of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding Centre, as well as professors and scholars from across the country and entrepreneurs from the wine industry.

Crucially, the contemporary temple festival is also performed for media reporters. In our media society, any events not reported or exposed in the media can be said never to have happened. For a ritual event that attempts to be identified as intangible cultural heritage and to attract potential capital invested in developing the event as a tourism project, ‘attention economy’ through high media exposure is often given the first priority. In this sense, the performance of the temple festival is the production of contemporary visitability (Dicks, 2003), the purpose of which is to tap the potential of folk cultural tourism and temple or religious economy.

From the perspective of communal belief in Dongpu, the contemporary Jiuxian Temple Festival has to an extent lost its initial impetus in worshipping Jiuxian because the past tradition of making wine manually by a relatively small number of local people has long since been replaced by mass production heavily dependent on modern technology. Consequently, the mystery and worship of the power from Jiuxian has, in the face of the modern technology of winemaking, become disenchanting. As disclosed by the general manager of the wine company, the contemporary Jiuxian Temple Festival serves more as a cultural artefact that helps to exhibit the long history of winemaking in Dongpu.

In the face of these changes, people’s self-representations in the temple festival have shifted. While in the first regime people merely inhabited culture, in the meta-discursive regime of ‘culture’ they represent themselves as cognisant culture bearers and transmitters. The contemporary Jiuxian Temple Festival has become ‘a point of reference for what people understand as their “culture”’, which ‘can be owned and traded as a form of capital in the Bourdieuan sense’ (Brosius & Polit, 2011, p. 2). By means of performance, people in the community own the ‘culture’ and create their cultural place. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2004) maintains that ‘heritage is a mode of cultural production that gives the endangered or outmoded a second life as an exhibition of itself’ (p. 56). In other words, the meta-cultural nature of heritage describes precisely the shift from the spontaneous culture to the consciously objectified and instrumentalised ‘culture’.

10.5.2 Problems in Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage

Section 10.4 above presented an analysis of how the Jiuxian Temple Festival was produced as intangible cultural heritage through the joint efforts of multiple stakeholders. From that section, it might seem that the practice of intangible cultural

heritage brings positive benefits all around. However, this section investigates some of the critical problems that arose from the heritagisation of the Jiuxian Temple Festival. Pertaining to these problems are two questions: a) what should really be safeguarded in the Jiuxian Temple Festival? and b) what consequences do the practices of intangible cultural heritage bring to other similar intangible culture practices in the community? To address these questions, a discussion is now conducted about the purpose and approach in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.

Firstly, from the perspective of cultural awareness and cultural autonomy, cultural sectors and heritage managers did not know exactly what needed to be safeguarded in ritual events such as temple festivals. This involves a misunderstanding of the purpose of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. UNESCO's *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* explicates the purpose of the *Convention* in Article 1:

- (a) to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage; (b) to ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage of the communities, groups and individuals concerned;
- (c) to raise awareness at the local, national and international levels of the importance of the intangible cultural heritage, and of ensuring mutual appreciation thereof; (d) to provide for international cooperation and assistance.

(UNESCO, 2003)

However, it does not explain much about the purpose of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.

This raises the question of what is the real purpose of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. One possible answer may be that it is of great significance in 'helping to enrich cultural diversity and human creativity' and 'bringing human beings closer together and ensuring exchange and understanding among them', as stated at the very beginning of the *Convention*. Indeed, this is of tremendous importance considering the cultural homogeneity due to the influence of economic and cultural globalisation. However, if the community, groups and individuals—the cultural bearers and transmitters—are placed at the centre of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, then the significance stated above seems overly abstract and disconnected from ordinary people. Another answer may be premised on the consensus that intangible cultural heritage has some fundamental value to humankind such that it needs to be safeguarded. If this is the case, what is the value of intangible cultural heritage?

Presently, heritage managers tend to identify the inherent value from the heritage itself, such as historicity, nationality and scarcity, as stated in many cultural policies.

However, these attributes of inherent value in intangible cultural heritage are no more advantageous than other cultural forms and phenomena and cannot justify the taking of special safeguarding measures. Instead, the value of intangible cultural heritage should be sought from the relationship between the intangible cultural heritage and its cultural inheritors. In other words, the value of intangible cultural heritage is substantial only when the intangible cultural heritage can be used as a resource to enhance the welfare of intangible cultural heritage inheritors economically, socially and spiritually (Yutaka, 2009, pp. 106-107).

Although UNESCO's Convention does not clearly emphasise the use and application of intangible cultural heritage, intangible cultural heritage has long been used to serve economic and commercial purposes by governments at all levels worldwide. The problem here is that, more often than not, commercial considerations outweigh the social and spiritual benefits for the inheritors of that intangible cultural heritage. Consequently, the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage usually becomes a means to the attainment of the hierarchical honour, from city to national and even world recognition (Iwamoto, 2010, p. 106). This recognition further promises the potential and legitimacy for the intangible culture to be used in areas such as tourism.

However, the pursuit of this recognition for sole guardianship of certain intangible cultural heritages has the potential to bring conflict between nations and regions. An example is the conflict between China and North Korea over the ownership of the cultural property of the Duanwu Festival.⁹⁷ This conflict can be attributed to the identification of the intangible cultural heritage as a narrowly understood territorial property, despite the acknowledgement in folklore studies that cultures do not only involve the transmission from generation to generation within a certain territory, but also the diffusion across regions and nations (Sakurai, 2010, p. 106). Consequently, contemporary practices of intangible cultural heritage become, to some extent, the

⁹⁷ The Dragon Boat or Duanwu Festival is a traditional and statutory holiday originating in China. The festival now occurs on the 5th day of the 5th month of the traditional Chinese calendar, the source of its alternate name, the Double Fifth Festival. The focus of most celebrations involves eating zongzi (sticky rice dumplings), drinking realgar wine (雄黄酒), and racing dragon boats. The widespread origin theory of this festival is to commemorate the death of the poet and minister Qu Yuan (c. 340–278 BC) of the ancient state of Chu during the Warring States period of the Zhou Dynasty. A cadet member of the Chu royal house, Qu served in high offices. However, when the king decided to ally with the increasingly powerful state of Qin, Qu was banished for opposing the alliance and even accused of treason. During his exile, Qu Yuan wrote a great deal of poetry. Twenty-eight years later, Qin captured Ying, the Chu capital. In despair, Qu Yuan committed suicide by drowning himself in the Miluo River. It is said that the local people, who admired him, raced out in their boats to save him or at least retrieve his body. This is said to have been the origin of dragon boat races. When his body could not be found, they dropped balls of sticky rice into the river so that the fish would eat them instead of Qu Yuan's body. This is said to be the origin of zongzi.

safeguarding of the exclusive cultural property ownership, thus potentially depriving ordinary people of pursuing welfare by learning and practising cultural forms from other people.

In the case of the Jiuxian Temple Festival, the committee of Yangchuan Village as well as the scholars and government officials participating in the festival all emphasised the utilisation of this event as a tourism resource and economic booster. The central government in particular requires that temple festivals adopt newer advanced culture as their soul, enhance their scale, and foster a more open self-organisational mode, thus rendering temple festivals a new point of economic growth in the sustainable development of religious and cultural tourism (Yu & Yu, 2011, p. 4). In terms of the transformation of temple festivals in contemporary China, one scholar suggests that people consider the economic globalisation and diversification in the twenty-first century and establish modern temple festivals with advanced cultural ideas concerning human beings according to the market rule, to tap the sustainable social resources in the traditional temple festivals that conform to the socialist construction of modernisation, thus avoiding blindness and strengthening our initiative in cultural development (Liu, 2001).

Here, the transformation of temple festivals was carried out within the Party-state project of developing 'advanced culture'. This project was part of the bigger national project of the 'great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation', promoted by former Chinese President Hu Jintao and the latest 'Chinese Dream'⁹⁸ promoted by Chinese President Xi Jinping. In its report to the Sixteenth Chinese Communist Party National Congress, the Communist Party of China pointed out that the development of an advanced culture in today's China is:

to develop a national, scientific and popular socialist culture that is oriented towards modernization, towards the world, and the future. To develop an advanced culture, we must keep on the track of serving the people and serving socialism, and at the same time stick to the principle of letting 'a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend', while simultaneously highlighting the trends of the time and diversity. We must educate people through scientific theory, provide

⁹⁸ The Chinese Dream is a new term within Chinese socialist thought and describes a set of ideals in the People's Republic of China. In 2013 the Communist Party (CPC) General Secretary Xi Jinping began promoting the phrase as a slogan, leading to its widespread use in the Chinese media. Xi has described the dream as 'national rejuvenation, improvement of people's livelihoods, prosperity, construction of a better society and military strengthening.' He has stated that young people should 'dare to dream, work assiduously to fulfill the dreams and contribute to the revitalization of the nation.' According to the party's theoretical journal *Qiushi*, the Chinese Dream is about Chinese prosperity, collective effort, socialism and national glory.

people with correct media guidance, imbue people with lofty ideals, and inspire people by excellent works of literature and art. We must exert ourselves to develop an advanced culture, support a healthy and useful culture while at the same time changing what is backward and resisting what is decadent. An advanced culture of today should proceed in accordance with the basic principles that our Party has fixed in line with the primary stage of socialism, and also generate a culture that can motivate China's economic reform and modernization drive. An advanced culture should be a positive, healthy and growing culture that carries forward the national spirit and bring together the will and power of people of all ethnic groups. An advanced culture should be Chinese styled culture that inherits and carries on all the outstanding cultural traditions of the Chinese nation. An advanced culture should also be a culture that keeps learning from other cultures and absorb what is excellent from them.

(CRIENGLISH, 2007)

Simply speaking, advanced culture as defined by the Chinese Party-state's cultural politics is 'a healthy and useful culture', 'a national, scientific and popular socialist culture' and 'the outstanding cultural traditions of the Chinese nation'. The opposite is 'backward and decadent'. However, the question becomes: Who is responsible for deciding and choosing what is advanced and what is backward culture? If the principle of letting 'a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend' is to be truly implemented, then are cultural bearers and inheritors not the legitimate subjects to determine what forms of culture is in the best interests of their everyday life? Although the practice of intangible cultural heritage enabled local villagers to practice rituals openly, as demonstrated by the case of the contemporary Jiuxian Temple Festival, the ritual was mainly revived for the purposes of political and economic agendas on the part of government and heritage managers.

A lack of cultural awareness was also evidenced in what exactly should be preserved in ritual events. Rituals unavoidably deal with the supernatural and 'superstitious' elements such as worship, divination and witchcraft. Further, private beliefs are based upon one's psychological inner world, which is invisible and changeable. Therefore, it becomes very difficult for heritage managers to preserve these rituals with a set of objective criteria. To make the matter worse, these 'superstitious' elements are often considered as harmful and wasteful by the authorities. Consequently, the authorities only supported those unharmed and 'clean' elements in the ritual events such as the performance of folk arts. Attention was usually paid to the safeguarding of

tangible artefacts such as temples, while those aspects truly pivotal to intangible culture—such as ideas about deities and spirits, the outlook on nature and the ritualised actions including the verbal expression and bodily practice (Sakurai, 2010, p. 116)—remain outside the consideration of the authorities.

Secondly, the practice of intangible cultural heritage gave rise to the classification and inequality between different elements of an intangible culture as well as between similar intangible cultures. According to Article 2.1 and 2.2 of the UNESCO Convention, the intangible cultural heritage means:

the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith—that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage’ (that is) ‘manifested in the following domains: (a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; (b) performing arts; (c) social practices, rituals and festive events; (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; (e) traditional craftsmanship.

(UNESCO, 2003)

However, this does not mean any intangible cultural forms defined above can become intangible cultural heritage. Rather, identification is the very first step of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. In other words, intangible cultural forms will not be safeguarded in the name of the local/state power unless they are first identified as intangible culture heritage.

As analysed in Chapter 8, identification is a complicated process of cultural production. Due to various considerations, such as the limited funds and resources available for safeguarding, the identification of intangible cultural heritage unavoidably includes some intangible cultures and excludes others based on selection criteria such as cultural originality, excellence of craftsmanship, representativeness of the community, scarcity and political correctness. From the analysis of how the Jiuxian Temple Festival was innovated for the identification of intangible cultural heritage, it is apparent that the potential of the temple festival for serving economic and tourism purposes played a determinant role for heritage managers in determining whether it should be safeguarded. Therefore, concerning the identification of intangible cultural heritage, questions need to be considered: who is in charge of identifying intangible cultural heritage and what problems are there with the process of identification?

The Convention stipulates the role of states parties in safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage at the national level:

(a) take the necessary measures to ensure the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory; (b) among the safeguarding measures referred to in Article 2, paragraph 3, identify and define the various elements of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory, with the participation of communities, groups and relevant nongovernmental organizations.

(UNESCO, 2003)

The Convention above tells that the identification of intangible cultural heritage is the responsibility of the states parties and that it should be carried out within the UNESCO framework. However, who or what organisations in the national government should be responsible for the identification? Should this responsibility fall to the museums, Ministries of Culture/Tourism, university scholars or other agencies or organisations? The answer is not clear.

Additionally, to ensure identification, one or more inventories of intangible cultural heritage need to be developed. According to the Regulations on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Zhejiang Province, the intangible cultural heritage at the provincial, city and county level is identified and inventoried by experts organised under the cultural administrative departments of the People's Government at the corresponding level (Zhejiangshengwenhuating, 2007). These experts may be, among others, anthropologists, linguists or folklore specialists specialising in areas such as religions, craftsmanship, folk music or dance. Crucially, the most important agents of the intangible cultural heritage—the local communities, groups and ordinary individuals—are often excluded from the identification process, even though the Convention suggests that the identification and definition of 'the various elements of the intangible cultural heritage' should be conducted with the participation of communities, groups and the relevant nongovernmental organisations.

Identification within the UNESCO framework means inventorying, listing, grouping and categorising cultural practices and beliefs. These measures are traditional museological techniques for preserving representations of heritage. As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2012) argues, 'Heritage is created through metacultural operations that extend museological values and methods (collection, documentation, preservation, presentation, evaluation, and interpretation) to living persons, their knowledge, practices, artefacts, social worlds, and life spaces' (p. 199). These measures of categorisation and inventorying bring about the problematic consequences that they itemise heritage expressions, add non-source/local values to expressions and exclude other heritage expressions. For example, in the case of the Jiuxian Temple Festival, the economic

function was highlighted while the ‘superstitious’ elements were downplayed or disregarded. As a result, the extracted essence becomes the traditional culture, which is used as a superior resource for multiple purposes, while the remainder is eliminated as wasteful and harmful superstition.

The classification process also led to inequalities between different temple festivals. As mentioned in the Section 10.2 of this chapter, the Tianyi Temple Festival was also restored in Dongpu Town. The revival of this temple festival was accomplished completely and spontaneously by some enthusiastic local villagers. Compared with the Jiuxian Temple Festival, the Tianyi Temple Festival did not gain much attention or support from the Government of Dongpu Town, the media or heritage managers and experts. Thus, a hierarchy was apparent in what traditional folk culture was preserved. While one festival was identified as a valuable cultural resource, another was ignored and yet others may continue to be suppressed in the name of anti-superstition. In reality, it is difficult to make a distinction between traditional culture and superstition (Sakurai, 2010, p. 123). Even if this distinction were made by the authorities and imposed on ritual practitioners, they would probably not accept it. Instead, they value all the ingredients that constitute their cultural tradition because those ‘inferior’ resources are often viewed as the pinnacle by ritual practitioners in their everyday life.

10.6 Conclusion

The practice of intangible cultural heritage provides a means to legitimate the Jiuxian Temple Festival, thus promoting the revitalisation of this traditional cultural ritual. The festival enriches people’s everyday life with the performance of local arts such as the dragon and lion dance. It is also an expression of cultural diversity that promotes inter-generational communication in the community. Moreover, it serves to convey cultural knowledge from one generation to the next (Wulf, 2011, p. 76). By means of staging and performing the temple festival, forms of cohesiveness and intimacy of communal solidarity and integration are produced among the villagers. The local community is distinguished not only by a collectively shared symbolic knowledge, but to an even greater degree by ordinary people’s cultural activities, in which they stage and perform such knowledge in the practices of intangible cultural heritage, thereby expressing the self-projection and reproduction of culture (Wulf, 2011, p. 79). All these are constructive in the sense of providing an alternative to modernity in response to the increasingly globalised world that is potentially characterised by homogenous cultures.

However, the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage carried out by the state power channelled top-down from the central government to local governments may give rise to cultural hegemony. Due to the classification of intangible cultures into superior and inferior resources according to the idea of developing an 'advanced culture' and the principle of market economy, some intangible culture practices are legitimated and safeguarded as intangible cultural heritage, while other intangible cultures may remain subject to ideological suppression as feudal superstition. The expert-centred mechanism of intangible cultural heritage identification rules out the cultural autonomy of genuine inheritors of intangible cultural heritage. This may undermine the vision of 'promoting respect for cultural diversity' in UNESCO's *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*.

Regarding the negotiation between the power of the Party-state and ritual practitioners, the discourse and practices of intangible cultural heritage provides both the strategy for state power to accommodate temple festivals into its social, cultural and political agenda as well as providing the tactics for local power and cultural inheritors to legitimate and sustain their ritual traditions. These strategies and tactics work in synchronicity in the cultural production of the Jiuxian Temple Festival into intangible cultural heritage. On the one hand, the heritage managers employed the discourse of intangible cultural heritage to develop the tourism industry and the local economy. On the other, ritual practitioners took the opportunity of the revival of ritual events to make offerings to deities and to make and return wishes for their everyday life. Therefore, there existed a public script and a hidden script (Scott, 1990) during the temple festival. The public script is that the restoration of temple festivals fulfils economic, social and political agendas; the hidden script is the continued worship of deities among ordinary people.

Intangible cultural heritage is a field of discourse, contestation and cooperation between state power and ritual practitioners in China. The safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage spearheaded by the administrative and jurisdictional power of the central and local government suggests that a more open China has been attempting to restore confidence in its traditional culture. The negotiation of cultural autonomy between state power and ritual practitioners continues, and some rituals such as the Tianyi Temple Festival have been ignored in the process of identifying and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Nonetheless, practitioners have been likely to appropriate the discourse of intangible cultural heritage to gain legitimacy for their cultural expressions.

Part Four Religion, Heritage and Power

Chapter 11: Religion as Heritage and Everyday Life

11.1 Introduction

This chapter starts by discussing the findings by briefly summarising the analysis in the main chapters (Chapter 5 to 9). Then, the significance of this research is explained, along with some suggestions for approaching religious everyday life. Thirdly, a reflective discussion of de Certeau's theory of *The Practice of Everyday Life* is presented based upon this research. Finally, I consider the limitations of this research and the avenues for further research leading from this project.

11.2 Findings

Inspired by and conducted within the theoretical framework of Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*, this research explored the relationships between religion, heritage and power. Specifically, each of the main chapters in this thesis involved the analysis of spatial practices and specific religious practices within the analytical themes of strategy/dominance from the state and tactics/resistance from ordinary people. Based upon the analysis, this project has produced three main findings.

The first finding was that the practice of the religious life of ordinary people in everyday life exercised resistance to the hegemonic official culture of the state power of the Communist Party of China. The second finding was that tension exists not only between religion in the town of Dongpu as a whole and the state, but also between the Christian community and the practitioners of traditional Chinese rituals within the town of Dongpu. The third finding was that the practice of intangible cultural heritage in contemporary China was the result of combined power from the global heritage movement spearheaded by UNESCO and China's domestic political, cultural and economic agenda. These three findings are summarised as follows.

Firstly, both the practitioners of traditional Chinese rituals and the Christian community deployed tactics, albeit not necessarily consciously, to resist the strategic power of the state. For practitioners of traditional Chinese rituals, what they resisted was the official 'advanced culture' under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. In the name of the 'advanced culture', traditional Chinese rituals were defined as feudal superstition, except for those identified as intangible cultural heritage and state rituals.

Although these rituals were often termed as popular/folk religion/belief in domestic and international academia, they were seldom recognised as legitimate in and by official discourse. Nevertheless, people in everyday life continued to observe these rituals, as evidenced by the case study of the rituals in a household Guanyin Shrine and ancestor veneration in private houses, ancestor tombs and ancestral halls. Additionally, funeral culture in the official discourse is intended to eliminate elements of the traditional culture, such as *fengshui*, in order to advocate a 'scientific, environmental and civilised' funeral culture. However, ordinary people continue to observe their traditional rituals, even if they do not strictly adhere to them. Therefore, it is clear that ordinary people were still practicing the ritual traditions that they inherit and transmit as part of their cultural heritage from their ancestors to their offspring. Traditional Chinese rituals do not prevail, as commonly believed, merely among the 'uneducated peasantry'; they are in fact practiced by the vast majority of ordinary people. In this sense, this popular culture has a widespread grassroots foundation, which exerts itself as a resistance to the official hegemonic culture characteristic of the atheism and materialism under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, enforced in the name of the nation-state project of modernisation.

For the Christian community, they resisted politicised Christianity, characterised by registered churches under state sanction through having joined the TSPM/CCC, which sought to bring Christianity into accordance with the official discourse of patriotism and socialism. Politicised Christianity also consisted in the theological construction that featured the replacement of 'justification by faith' with 'theology of love' and the adaptation of Christianity to socialism. Alongside this, the Christian community was contending with the atheist, political and ideological education implemented among schoolchildren through the Chinese Communist Party's education and propaganda systems. In response to all of these hegemonic strategies, the Christian community clung to their own tradition and gained some degree of autonomy through tactical spatial and religious practice.

Regarding the second finding, apart from the power relation between the religious culture and official culture, a tension existed between the Christian culture and Chinese ritual traditions within the Han Chinese community itself in the town of Dongpu. This tension does not necessarily mean the dominance of Christian culture over the Chinese ritual traditions in terms of the influence in the community, but refers more to the sense of discursive legitimacy and orthodoxy from the perspective of state-recognised 'religion'. In Chinese religious policy, Christianity is one of the five state-recognised

religions, while Chinese rituals, such as rituals to deities and ancestor veneration rituals, are not recognised as religion in the narrow sense. Additionally, in the doctrine of Christianity, Chinese rituals are defined as superstition and idol worship. In this sense, it could be maintained that Christianity is a hegemonic religious culture over the Chinese ritual tradition, at least at the discursive level. Thus, the state power and Christian culture have contributed to rendering most Chinese rituals as lacking in status, although some Chinese rituals have gained legitimacy as intangible cultural heritage. While the Christian community may spread the gospel and their selfish love to ‘superstition believers’ in an attempt to deliver goodwill, more desirable is an attitude of mutual respect and understanding, as embodied in the true sense of freedom of religion.

Thirdly, ordinary people adopted a subtle way to negotiate with the local/state power in response to the practice of top-down imposed intangible cultural heritage launched, thus gaining the legitimacy of practicing these rituals. By participating in the production of intangible cultural heritage such as Zhufu and the Jiuxian Temple Festival, ordinary people and the local community could take advantage of the intangible cultural heritage as an opportunity to revive and practice their own rituals in their everyday life. In this way, they could practice the Zhufu ritual in their actual life world and spontaneously organise the Tianyi Temple Festival, thus keeping a relative distance from the state-led project of intangible cultural heritage.

11.3 Contributions

Based upon the three findings summarised above, this research contributes to present knowledge in two respects.

11.3.1 A Poetics of Everyday Life

Firstly, this research validates de Certeau’s *The Practice of Everyday Life*. De Certeau’s theory is of great significance in that ‘everyday practices, ways of operating or doing things, no longer appear as merely the obscure background of social activity’ (de Certeau, 1984, p. xi). Instead, the everyday life of ordinary people is foregrounded and is shown to exert itself as a self-evident entity and heterogeneous culture. In de Certeau’s theory, everyday life becomes the cultural experience of alternative modernity and the arena of cultural autonomy, which is never simply equivalent to that which might seem the homogenising ambitions of any power, such as capitalism, atheism or materialism. Everyday life becomes an arena for cultural survivals and revivals and the reconfiguring of specific traditions under the domain of the modern. In Harootunian (2000)’s words:

If modernity was driven by the desiring machine of capitalism, promising to install its regime of production and consumption everywhere, the everyday, serving as a minimal unification of the present and signaling the level of lived experience and reproduction would, in fact, negotiate the compelling demands of homogeneity through the mediations of a past that constantly stood in a tense, often antagonistic, relationship to the present of the new. (p. 63)

My research followed de Certeau's agenda and provided another case study of a poetics of the weak and the oppressed. By doing so, this study emphasises the centrality of human agency and the possibility of resistance to the dictates of coercive power through the practice of everyday life. In the foreword to his book, Michel de Certeau (1984) dedicates his book:

To the ordinary man.

To a common hero, an ubiquitous character, walking in countless thousands on the streets. In invoking here at the outset of my narratives the absent figure who provides both their beginning and their necessity, I inquire into the desire whose impossible object he represents. What are we asking this oracle whose voice is almost indistinguishable from the rumble of history to license us, to authorize us to say, when we dedicate to him the writing that one formerly offered in praise of the gods or the inspiring muses? (p. v)

This research is also dedicated to ordinary people with whom I am familiar. By presenting how the people in the town of Dongpu practiced their religious life, this research has achieved the goal of discovering the peculiar logic at work in their everyday practices.

11.3.2 Religion, Heritage and Power

The second contribution of this thesis is that it provides an overall perspective on the relationships between religion, heritage and power. This perspective helps better understand and address the relationship between religious culture as popular culture among the majority of ordinary people and the official culture imposed by the ruling government. It also promotes a constructive understanding of the desirable relationship between Chinese ritual tradition and Christian culture. Finally, it clarifies the relationship between religious culture and heritage practice.

Generally, the relationships between religion, heritage and power can be revealed in Figure 11.1 below.

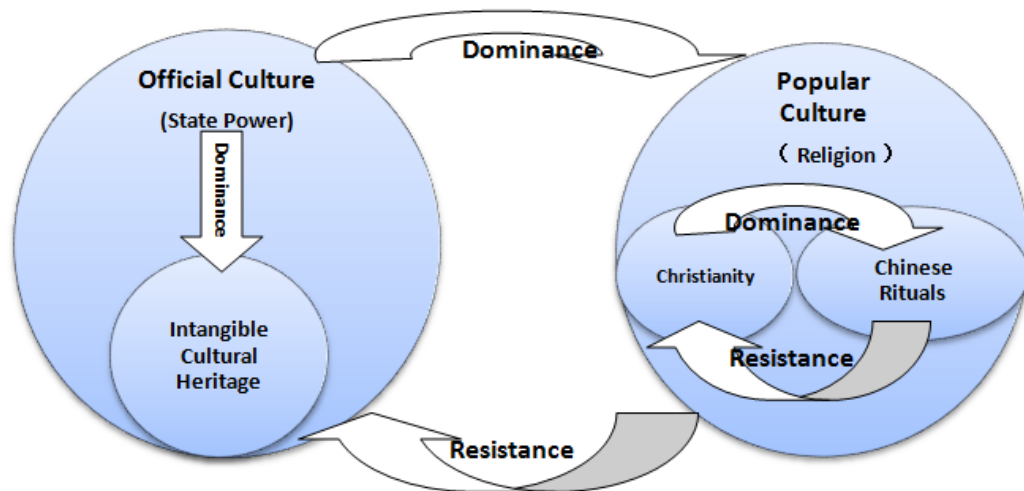


Figure 11.1 The Relationships between Religion, Heritage and Power

As indicated by Figure 11.1, state power (official culture) and religion (popular culture) constitute the first pair of dominance–resistance relationship, while Christianity and Chinese rituals constitute another pair within the domain of religion itself. Meanwhile, state power dominates the practice of intangible cultural heritage. Here, Chinese rituals are viewed as part of religion in its broadest sense, while religious culture is viewed as a category of popular culture, considering its widespread popularity among ordinary people. In this sense, the popular religious culture is a site at which power and resistance are played out. It has to be pointed out that the dominance–resistance relationship is merely a convenient way of describing the situation. The reality is a complex and dynamic process typified by negotiation and compromise, although violent repression and resistance still exist.

11.3.2.1 Religion and Power

The dominance–resistance interaction between the official culture and the religious culture can be viewed as the struggle between the cultural leadership of the ruling Party and the cultural autonomy of the masses. In contemporary China, culture is usually classified into official culture, elite culture and popular culture. From the government’s perspective, the state under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party always attempts to exert its official culture as the mainstream/dominant culture. However, according to Glansci’s (1995) theory, official culture has to gain its cultural leadership before it becomes the dominant culture. This cultural leadership can only be attained based on voluntary recognition by the majority of people through non-violent

means such as democratic negotiation, rather than through forced submission to the hegemonic and monochromatic values and governing policies of the ruling Party.

Religious culture as part of popular culture has a solid and widespread popular foundation. The spatial and religious practices of ordinary people in their everyday life have shown that religious culture in contemporary China has its own survival logics and tactics in response to the state power. To cite Foucault's quote, 'where there is power, there is resistance'. Therefore, for the sake of constructing an open, democratic and harmonious society, respect for individuals' religious life equates to respect for their human rights and cultural autonomy and diversity.

11.3.2.2 Chinese Ritual Tradition and Christianity

The interaction between Christianity and Chinese rituals can be considered as a conflict and negotiation between an imported foreign religious culture and indigenous ritual tradition. This struggle has an even longer history, as indicated by the Chinese Rites Controversy analysed in Chapter 8. Compared with the religious orthodoxy of Christianity, Chinese rituals are still in a disadvantageous position under the dual discursive repression of idol worship and feudal superstition. This discursive repression arises from the monotheistic model of religion on the part of Christianity and the linear history of progress on the part of the Chinese ruling Party. Therefore, in terms of Chinese ritual tradition, it actually involves the issue of how to deal with the relationship between China and the West (Chinese indigenous rituals and Christianity) and the relationship between tradition and modernity.

In addressing the relationship between Chinese indigenous ritual tradition and Christianity, mutual respect and mutual understanding are needed. Confucius said, 'The gentleman aims at harmony, and not at uniformity. The mean man aims at uniformity, and not at harmony'. From ancient times until today, 'harmony in diversity' and 'don't do unto others what you don't want others to do unto you' have been cherished as the golden values in personal relations in China, and more recently have become the values informing international diplomatic relations. If the golden values can be cherished by the ruling party as well as every individual, then a harmonious society can be expected and is achievable.

11.3.2.3 Religion and Heritage

The relationship between religion and heritage actually involves the relationship between religion and power; and the relationship between heritage and power. Heritage, or specifically the practice of intangible cultural heritage, adds another variable to the

power relation between religion and Chinese government. The following discusses this in details.

The analysis of Chapters 9 and 10 shows that the practice of intangible cultural heritage in contemporary China was both part of the global heritage movement within UNESCO's framework of safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage and part of a project by the Party-state to serve political, economic and cultural agendas. As Lei (2014) argues, the revival of traditional Chinese culture during the first 10 years of the twenty-first century, was a manifestation of the shift in the state's ideological nationalism, which since the founding of the Chinese Communist Party in the 1920s had denigrated and destroyed traditional Chinese culture as feudal dross and backward culture. The purpose of selectively reviving aspects of traditional Chinese culture on the part of the central government was to establish a cultural autonomy and soft power that could be deployed as a defensive instrument against Western values on the one hand, and a cultural leadership and effective ideology to serve as a shared cultural identity and set of values among the domestic masses on the other (2014, p. 12). The practice of intangible cultural heritage can thus be viewed as an indispensable constituent part in this revival, which was itself part of the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

However, from another perspective, the revival of traditional culture indicated the intensifying domination of culture by the totalitarian state power, which accommodated traditional culture into the discursive system of national strengthening, patriotism, socialism with Chinese characteristics, enhancement of national cohesion and national cultural security. The interweaving of traditional culture into the state ideology revealed the intricate relationship between state power, scholarship and culture, which reflected the Chinese Communist Party's manipulation of and increasing dependence on the traditional culture to re-establish its ruling legitimacy (Lei, 2014, p. 12).

Admittedly, traditional Chinese culture, including intangible cultural heritage, has been revived fruitfully with strong support from the central government and local authorities. However, as analysed in Chapters 8 and 9, the practice of intangible cultural heritage was inherently a selective cultural production based upon a set of somewhat problematic criteria. This contributed to a lack of attention on, or even denial of, other forms of cultural expression. In this sense, the identification of intangible cultural heritage was a process of selecting the 'heritage in perception' from the 'heritage in essence' (H. Yan, 2011). Heritage in perception is the heritage identified within the contemporary heritage framework based upon UNESCO's Convention, while heritage

in essence can be understood as the heritage with its self-evident value to ordinary people. This value consists in the potential of the heritage to be inherited and transmitted as a cultural resource by ordinary people to sustain their cultural identity and enhance the welfare of their everyday life. The relationship between heritage in essence and heritage in perception is shown by Figure 11.2 below.

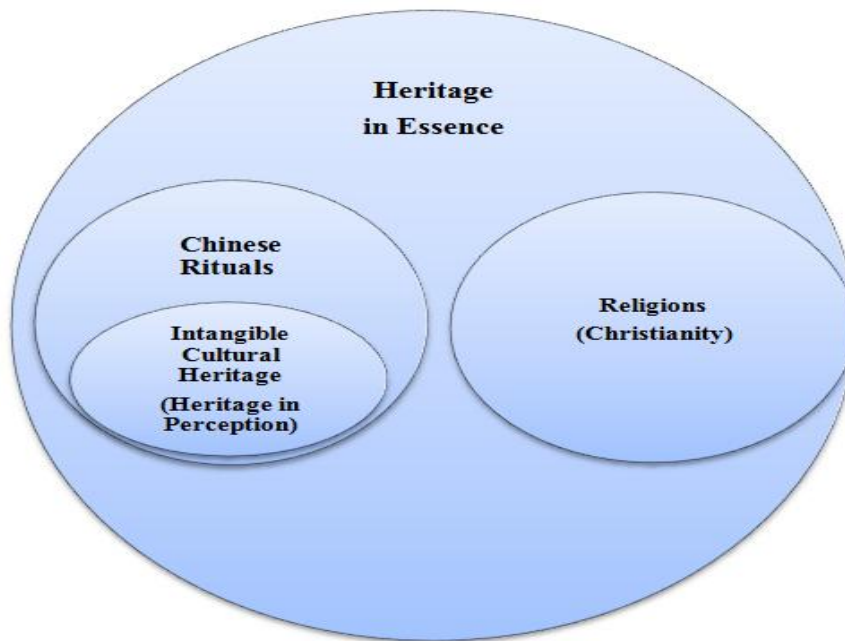


Figure 11.2 The Relationship between Heritage in Essence and Heritage in Perception

Admittedly, inventorying is presently the primary and most effective way of safeguarding historical and cultural heritage. However, inventorying is in essence a selective production usually carried out by experts from disciplines such as archaeology, history and folklore studies. From the perspective of global convention of heritage practice, this process of selection is determined by the Western ‘Authorized Heritage Discourse’ (AHD), underlying which there is a modern historical consciousness originating from Romanticism and the Enlightenment, with a cultural logic, way of thinking and aestheticising that are predominately Eurocentric, and which reflect the appetites and aspirations of upper- and middle- class white men (Smith, 2006). For instance, the discursive practice of the notions of ‘authenticity’ in many international heritage bodies tends to favour a Western fetishism of the ‘monument’ and stone construction, which could easily deny the value of vernacular heritage, in which we may discover locally situated life of authenticity. This expert-centred mode of heritage practice is also followed by heritage managers in contemporary China, which rules out the cultural autonomy of genuine inheritors of cultural heritage and those officially deemed ‘inferior’ cultural heritage.

As indicated by Figure 11.2, heritage in perception constitutes only a fraction of the heritage in essence, implying a simultaneous process of deheritagisation alongside the heritagisation of intangible cultures. While this could be attributed to practical reasons such as the limited technical, human and financial resources for safeguarding intangible cultures, the lack of recognition in government policies and support in public discourse for intangible cultures such as Chinese rituals might be the greater reason. Compared with the selected and officially identified intangible cultural heritage, the larger proportion of heritage is the unrecognised heritage in essence, which constitutes the solid foundation of ordinary people's cultural expression in their everyday life. The heritage in essence, in this sense, can be termed as 'homeland heritage' (Peng, 2008), which, in contrast with the discursively represented intangible cultural heritage, is the shared ordinary culture and way of life among ordinary people in a certain community. Homeland heritage carries the true meaning of 'home' to ordinary people instead of the representation in official discourse of 'advanced culture'.

The practice of intangible cultural heritage also has the potential to bring conflict between nations and regions for sole guardianship of certain intangible cultural heritages. An example is the conflict between China and North Korea over ownership of the cultural property of the Duanwu Festival.⁹⁹ This conflict can be attributed to the identification of the intangible cultural heritage as a narrowly understood territorial property, despite the acknowledgement in folklore studies that cultures do not only involve the transmission from generation to generation within a certain territory, but also the diffusion across regions and nations (Sakurai, 2010, p. 106). Undeniably, intangible cultural heritage, particularly the world-level intangible cultural heritage, represents the best cultural forms in a country and actually becomes the world heritage shared by the whole human society. Therefore, intangible cultural heritage has become a national and international honour which can be used by nation-states to enhance sense

⁹⁹ The Dragon Boat or Duanwu Festival is a traditional and statutory holiday originating in China. The festival now occurs on the 5th day of the 5th month of the traditional Chinese calendar, the source of its alternate name, the Double Fifth Festival. The focus of most celebrations involves eating zongzi (sticky rice dumplings), drinking realgar wine (雄黄酒), and racing dragon boats. The widespread origin theory of this festival is to commemorate the death of the poet and minister Qu Yuan (c. 340–278 BC) of the ancient state of Chu during the Warring States period of the Zhou Dynasty. A cadet member of the Chu royal house, Qu served in high offices. However, when the king decided to ally with the increasingly powerful state of Qin, Qu was banished for opposing the alliance and even accused of treason. During his exile, Qu Yuan wrote a great deal of poetry. Twenty-eight years later, Qin captured Ying, the Chu capital. In despair, Qu Yuan committed suicide by drowning himself in the Miluo River. It is said that the local people, who admired him, raced out in their boats to save him or at least retrieve his body. This is said to have been the origin of dragon boat races. When his body could not be found, they dropped balls of sticky rice into the river so that the fish would eat them instead of Qu Yuan's body. This is said to be the origin of zongzi.

of national pride and develop tourism economies. The narrow understanding of culture as cultural property largely results in the nation-state's and local region's pursuit of this exclusive honour. Thus, the practice of intangible cultural heritage may actually hinder the cultural reciprocity and communication by which people absorb cultures from other regions and nations to benefit their well-being in their everyday life. Intangible cultural heritage is a modern concept. By contrast, the Chinese rituals and customs have been observed and transmitted for thousands of years. The transmission of Chinese culture is not limited to through the identified cultural heritage and state rituals, but encompasses the full range of rituals and customs observed across hundreds of millions of ordinary households. These millions of ordinary people are the genuine writers of the Chinese culture and civilisation.

Under the present UNESCO framework of heritage practice, the world religions, including Christianity, are not considered as part of intangible cultural heritage. This is because UNESCO's *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* was based directly upon the *Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore* of 1989 (Sakurai, 2010, p. 106), which does not include the practices of the world religions. Similarly, from the government's viewpoint of religious policy, Christianity is recognised as one of the five state-sanctioned religions and thus it has been granted some level of legitimacy by the state power. However, if the definition of intangible cultural heritage in UNESCO's *Convention* applies, then broadly speaking, Christianity could be understood as intangible cultural heritage:

The 'intangible cultural heritage' means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith—that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

(UNESCO, 2003)

Even if Christianity is not understood as intangible cultural heritage according to UNESCO's framework of heritage practice, Christianity could still be understood as heritage in essence, as Christianity for the Christian community in the town of Dongpu is 'transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities

and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity'. Therefore, the present UNESCO framework of heritage practice is problematic. Its narrow definition of intangible cultural heritage needs to be expanded to resemble more closely heritage in essence.

In summary, religion remains a sensitive issue in contemporary China. Even in the contemporary official discourse of constructing a harmonious society, a multitude of ritual practices and Christians churches are still unrecognised by the state. China has a long way to go before its people can finally enjoy true freedom of religion. The attainment of this freedom lies in the establishment of a civil society in which the autonomy of people's cultural practices and religious life is achieved through democratic negotiation between the ruling government and the masses. It is until then that religious culture can be practised and transmitted as a self-evident ordinary culture and intangible cultural heritage by ordinary people in their everyday life.

11.4 Reflections on the Theory in *The Practice of Everyday Life*

This thesis applies, and mostly validates, de Certeau's theory in *The Practice of Everyday Life* to analysing the practice of religion among ordinary people in the town of Dongpu. As shown by the analysis throughout the main chapters of the thesis, ordinary people, including the Christian community and practitioners of Chinese rituals, employ a variety of tactics to resist the dominant official culture from the state power on the stage of everyday life. In this sense, the findings of this research evidenced that ordinary people resist being reduced to 'the grid of "discipline" [which] is everywhere becoming clearer and more extensive' (de Certeau, 1984, p. xiv). It is a poetics of everyday life. Such a poetics emerges from the practices of everyday life and allows those practices to become visible and audible. The practice of everyday life of ordinary people shows that their ordinary culture is not reducible to structures of domination. While everyday life is often under the suppression of power, it was not necessarily squeezed into a passive or lifeless entity. On the contrary, ordinary people could still pursue their ideal life. In summary, the theory presented and elaborated in *The Practice of Everyday Life* helped to answer the research questions for my project.

However, when completing this thesis and considering again some findings of my research, I had cause to reflect on de Certeau's theory. Firstly, de Certeau does not discuss the differences in the consciousness of resistance among ordinary people. The focus of de Certeau's theory was on the hidden and evasive resistant behaviours of ordinary people, analogous to Scott's (1990) 'hidden script', rather than on public

resistance. Compared with the clear consciousness in public resistance, hidden and evasive resistance does not show the transparent awareness of resistance among ordinary people. In the highly ideological society of contemporary China, which is dominated by the propaganda system of the Chinese Communist Party, there is not much space for ordinary people to express criticism and discontent in public. In many circumstances, ordinary people may not be kept informed through the media and thus may not have an informed reason to exercise their resistance. As such, the resistance by these ordinary people is unlikely to have been evoked by their awareness of suppression by state power; instead, it may be resistance largely out of habitus—the learned, fundamental, deep-founded, unconscious beliefs and values, taken as self-evident universals. With this in mind, ordinary practitioners of Chinese rituals may take for granted that going to temples for solutions to everyday problems and performing ancestor rituals on Tomb-Sweeping Day are a natural and unquestionable part of everyday life. They may not consider the performing of rituals as resistance to the discursive suppression of ‘feudal superstition’. As an example, my mother would sometimes say ‘I am going to do the superstitious things’ to refer to making offerings to deities such as Guanyin for her children and grandchildren’s well-being. However, even without awareness of resisting discursive violence, such actions exert resistance in a silent way from the viewpoint of their practical effect.

In other cases, ordinary people have some awareness of their resistance. In such cases, what are the factors underlying their awareness? Although my research did not particularly investigate this question, consideration of the different attitudes towards the state-sanctioned churches between the old Christian woman and several primary school teachers in the church might help to answer it. In Chapter 9, the old woman expressed her satisfaction with her present life owing to the blessing of God and the reform and opening up policy of the government. Her comment, ‘Thank the Lord, thank our government’, can be understood as a heart-felt feeling shared by a great number of older people who have lived through hardships in their life and who thus do not particularly care about political issues. By contrast, the primary school teachers were critical of the government’s religious policies. Clearly, differences exist among ordinary people in terms of their awareness of their resistance, with contributing factors including educational background and social status.

Secondly, de Certeau seemed to overestimate the influence of resistance among ordinary people. De Certeau’s theory focuses on the discovery of ordinary people’s wisdom in everyday life and the foregrounding of ordinary people in the historical

narrative. He admitted the existence of domination, but he was more optimistic about creativity in the practice of everyday life. It is here that his theory has been criticised by some commentators. Wu (2009) argued that de Certeau overestimated the power and effect of resistance and ignored the manipulation and accommodation of the practice of the masses. I partly agree with these comments. Consider the ancestor rituals as an example. While people in rural areas and even some urban areas still perform ancestor rituals, another trend is that an increasingly number of people, especially the young, are migrating from the countryside to cities. Their isolation from the ancestor tombs and adaptation to the urban lifestyle brought by secularisation and modernisation has transformed this tradition. When thinking about my own situation, I am doubtful that I will observe this tradition when living my life in another country. If the tenacious observance of one's cultural tradition can be viewed as a kind of resistance to industrial modernity or frenetic over-modernisation in the sense of de Certeau's theory, then the abandonment of this tradition may reveal one's transformation of values rather than submission to the power of official culture.

11.5 Limitations and Prospects

This research situated religious practice in the everyday life of ordinary people and interpreted their possible resistance to the dominant official culture within the theoretical framework of de Certeau's theory in *The Practice of Everyday Life* to investigate the relationship between religion, heritage and power. This research partially validated and added value to de Certeau's theory. However, it also had some limitations.

Above all, this research was limited by the chosen case studies of ritual practices and intangible cultural heritage. Due to limited research time, this research focused on only two cases of ritual practice (i.e., a household Guanyin Shrine and the ancestor rituals performed in ordinary people's everyday life) and two cases of intangible cultural heritage (i.e., the typical heritage rituals of Zhufu and Jiuxian Temple Festival). This is despite the multitude of Chinese ritual practices in ordinary people's everyday life. In this sense, the analysis and interpretation of these rituals were largely dependent on the particular context and do not necessarily apply to other cases. Moreover, in terms of investigating the interactions between the Chinese ritual practitioners and the Christian community, insufficient quantitative evidence was collected to provide a clear picture of the attitudes of these groups towards each other. Perhaps if surveys or questionnaires had been used in the fieldwork, it would have been possible to generate a statistically reliable sample and mobilise stronger support for my findings. Finally, this research was limited due to being conducted at a single, relatively self-contained site. A comparative

study between the religious behaviours at multiple sites, and perhaps between rural and urban areas, would provide a more dynamic and diverse picture.

Considering the research that has been done and the limitations discussed above, prospective research could involve an additional multi-site project on Chinese community to see whether similar results can be found by comparing groups and using mixed methods and approaches. In light of the increasing mobility of China's population, the observance of rituals and the cultural identity of individuals are increasingly uncertain. Therefore, further research could also be conducted to investigate the status of ritual observance among the Chinese diasporas living apart from their hometown or home country. Another focus of future research might be to explore how Chinese Christians in another country such as Australia deal with their identity issues. This could follow Yang's (1999) work *Chinese Christians in America* so as to conduct a comparison study of how Chinese immigrants attending Christian churches in Australia undergo the construction and reconstruction of their three identities: Christian identity, Australian identity and Chinese identity. In this increasingly globalised world, an individual's cultural identity in a culturally diverse environment is faced with ever more challenges. How ordinary people respond to secularisation and modernity in a complex cultural and living environment is a worthwhile topic for further research.

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Appendices

Appendix 6.1 Book of Ancestral Rituals

Date	Ritual event	Ritual place
17 Jan.(lunar)	Deathday of my grandmother (my mother's mother in Dongpu)	At my uncle's in Dongpu
4 Feb. (lunar)	Birthday of grandfather (my mother's father)	At grandmother's
12 Feb. (lunar)	Birthday of my mother's grandmother)	At grandmother's
28 Mar. (lunar)	Birthday of my grandmother (my father's mother)	At own house
Around 5 April, Qingmin Festival (Tomb-Sweeping Day)	My grandparents(my father's parents)	At home and the graveyard
4 April (lunar)	Birthday of my grandfather (my father's father	At own house
18 April(lunar)	Birthday of grandmother (my mother's mother in Dongpu	At my uncle's in Dongpu
13 June(lunar)	Deathday of my grandmother (my father's mother)	At own house
27 June(lunar)	Deathday of grandfather (my mother's father)	At grandmother's
3 July(lunar)	Deathday of my mother's grandmother	At my grandmother's
The Ghost Festival 15 July(lunar)	My grandparents (my father's parents)	At own house
24 July (lunar)	Deathday of my grandfather (my father's father)	At own house
20 Oct.(lunar)	Birthday of my grandfather in Dongpu	At my uncle's in Dongpu
16 Dec.(lunar)	Deathday of my grandfather in Dongpu	At my uncle's in Dongpu
winter solstice, around 22 Dec.	My grandparents (my father's parents)	At the graveyard
Family reunion on New Year's Eve	Three generations of ancestors previous to me	At own house

Appendix 8.1 Pastor's Sermon during the Funeral Service

How to lead a meaningful life? With Jesus, our life meaningful; and with Christ, our life is valuable. Life is short, life is limited. Believe Jesus, and then our life has its meaning. Without Jesus, our life is like the pendulum in the clock. To the left, it is emptiness; to the right, it is boredom; when it stops, it is death. If we believe in Jesus, then our life is grace on the left and truth on the right and eternity at the stop. The difference it makes is we have eternal life if we believe in Jesus. Although we believe in Jesus and will also leave this world with a limited life, yet thank God, what God bestows us is the eternal life. Believe in Jesus, then the life of Jesus stays in us. Our soul lives forever and never perishes.

Although we have a limited life expectancy in the world, and our soul will depart our body, yet thank God, our souls are protected because we believe in Jesus. Our elder sister passed away and her soul and body departed, but our belief is true. We know her soul is escorted to our father by angels. Her face is different. If you don't believe, you can go inside and take a look. Her face looks really peaceful. She was taken away by angels. That's why her face is peaceful. It's the very difference in believing Jesus. Those who do not believe in Jesus are really unfulfilling. Now many people are polytheistic and atheistic. There are only a few who know the true only God. To be fulfilling or unfulfilling depends on whether we have belief. We need to pray for those unfulfilling. Then Jesus spoke out again, 'I am the light of the world. The one who follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.' People will go to heaven after they leave the world if they go to church in their life; but they will go to hell if they go to temples. (field notes, 2 September 2012)

Appendix 8.2 Pastor Quan's Sermon on the Funeral Farewell Ceremony

Thank lord. Looking from our belief, the passing away of our elder sister from this world is a blessing because she has been relieved from her trouble and hard work in the world and starts to enjoy the eternal blessing. I want to share with you some verse from the Bible as mutual encouragement: *Psm 90:10 As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, Or if due to strength, eighty years, Yet their pride is (but) labour and sorrow; For soon it is gone and we fly away., 90:12 So teach us to number our days, That we may present to You a heart of wisdom.*

The theme of my sermon today is 'life is short but eternity is attainable'. There are four points I would like to make. The first point is labour and sorrow. Our elder sister had her long and strong life of 84 years. But as said in the Bible, what she experienced was but labour and sorrow. Her eldest son just now recalled her difficult life in bringing up her children. I was deeply moved. This is the life to everyone with labour and sorrow. Our elder sister's sons are successful. Someone is boss, and someone is secretary. But their life is all full of labour and sorrow. Our elder sister's life is labour and sorrow. But what relieves us is that she is a believer in Jesus Christ. Now her life of labour and sorrow has ended and she is enjoying the eternity in the heaven.

The second point is soon it is gone. Her life was gone very soon. So is the life of everyone. We can't take away anything. Neither the house nor the money. This is our life. It's empty in the east. It's empty in the west. It's empty in the south. It's empty in the north. But it's not empty in the love of God. Our elder sister's life was full of labour and sorrow, but thank god, her life was not empty because she believed in Jesus Christ and she had God in her heart. Today, so many brothers and sisters come to hear the gospel and see her off. They also attended the funeral church service in the past three evenings. Her life is not empty.

The third point is we fly away. And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgement. Everyone dies. So do I as a pastor. We all finally turn into dirt. The spirit of our elder sister is gone to the Lord. We are all composed of three aspects: spirit, soul and flesh. Spirit is the depth of our life. Soul is the ideas, emotions and will. Flesh is our body. The spirit of our elder sister is gone and her body will turn into dirt. Soon her body will turn into dirt. This is the conclusion of our life. The Bible says we fly away and it is gone. But thank God, her spirit has gone to the Heaven of glory and enjoyed the eternal blessing.

The last point is to know Jesus Christ as our saviour so as to have a heart of wisdom. This is a wise thing to do. Thank God. Although our elder sister had little culture, she had Lord and she obtained the heart of wisdom and she was on this blessed journey. Today, I would like to especially encourage the family of our elder sister to walk on this blessed way. Hope you will esteem God and have this true and loving God. By doing this, we will surely see our parents again in the future in heaven. This is what the Bible tells us. In the future we will be definitely blessed in Lord. But if you do not believe in Jesus Christ, you will not have the opportunity to meet your mother again. So I pray to God and hope God encourages the whole family of our elder sister to be Christians in the future. Let these who haven't believed be true believers and these believers hold on to our faith and this blessed way. Let the whole family be the glory and testimony of our Lord. (field notes, 3 September 2012)

Appendix 8.3 Pastor Quan's Family Got Converted to Jesus Christ

Before I was born and my father got married, we hadn't believed in Jesus Christ. My father had another wife before. Because of the tradition of superstition in the family, we used to believe in feudal superstition. My grandmother and aunt were very mean and snobbish. As a result, my previous mother hanged herself dead. The parents and relatives of my previous mother came to revenge for the death of my previous mother. In a local folk way, they uplifted the body and let her small feet stand on a copper plate. They pushed and slid the body to every corner in the whole house. The implication of doing this was that the curse was cast on my family since then. People in the world said that devils were coming to your house and they would make their appearance again and again.

After this, the family of my father's first wife didn't come any more, but my family was doomed. My mother and grandma told me that devils showed up frequently since then. From the perspective of Christianity, this is the evil spirits. My grandma often saw them. This brought the psychological terror, but on the other hand evil spirits did do their work. In order to escape from the demons, we moved a couple of times, but nothing helped until we met an uncle. He was a Christian and told us that the devils would stay and the curse from the evil spirits would remain in one generation after another in our family unless we got converted to Jesus. Even under this circumstance, my grandma still did not believe in Jesus. She wouldn't because traditionally we practiced superstition all the way. We followed the tradition of eating the vegetarian food, chanting the Buddhist scripture and bowing to ancestors. How could we turn around and believe in Jesus? We wouldn't despite neighbours' persuasion.

That was before 1949. My father's first wife died. He felt bitterly painful. He worked in Shanghai. A boss from Shandong province persuaded my father to go to church with him. Without any other possible solution, my father got converted to Jesus. He came back home happily and told my grandma: 'Mother, I get converted to Jesus. People in the church told me that we won't have a new life without Jesus. We can do nothing but believe in Jesus.' My grandmother rejected angrily: 'You are my only son. I name you Changgen and hope you can keep the blood of our family. If you believe in Jesus, you are not my son.' This is what we believe in our tradition. If we believe in Jesus, then our ancestors will be simply forgotten and abandoned. And our family will be doomed without ancestors. (field notes, 11 July 2012)

Appendix 10.1 Temple Festivals in the Town of Dongpu before 1949

Lunar Date	Event
10 th -13 th February	Longkou Temple Festival(Earth God)
10 th -11 th February	Xuedu Temple Festival(Earth God)
3 rd March	Hushang Xinggong Temple Festival(Huang Lao Xianggong: Plague Marshall)
2 nd -3 rd April	Houshe Panhu Temple Festival(God of East Mountain)
5 th -6 th April	Qingdian Lake Temple Festival(Huang Lao Xianggong: Plague Marshall)
24 th April	Xinggong and Xuedu Temple Festival(Zhutian Buddha)
3 rd May	Shangfang Jieding Temple(Dragon King)
5 th May	Shangfang Jieding Temple(Plague Marshall)
13 th -14 th May	Zhaitang An(Plague Marshall)
16 th May	Gaoqiao Temple Festival (Baogong)
19 th -20 th May	Hushang Temple Festival (Zhutian Buddha)
21 st -22 nd May	Xuedu Temple Festival (The Filial Daughter Cao E)
16 th June	Jianlong Temple Festival (Baogong)
7th July	Zhangjia An and Jieding Temple Festival (Tianyi Huatuo: the Divine Doctor)
6 th -8 th July	Jieding Temple Festival (Jiuxian: the Patron God of Winemaking)

Appendix 10.2 Legend of Long Kou Temple

Long Kou Temple boasts of a time-honoured legend. It's recorded in *The Records of the Grand Historian*¹⁰⁰ that there were two dragons, male and female, living in the Yellow River and the Han River in the late Xia Dynasty (about 2000 BC -1500 BC). The two dragons were captured by the people sent by Kongjia, the emperor of Xia, but no one could raise the dragons. A man called Liulei, the descendant of the emperor of Yao (2377BC-2259BC), had the capacity of taming the dragons. He was then ordered by Kongjia to raise the dragons. The two dragons were living and swimming freely in the two huge pools built by Kongjia. Liu Lei was patient with the two dragons. They grew strong and powerful. But one day, the female dragon suddenly died. Liu Lei was very fearful. Instead of reporting the truth to the emperor, Liu Lei minced the dragon meat secretly and cooked it for Kongjia. The meat was so delicious that the emperor could hardly find words to sing his praise for it. A couple of days later, the emperor wanted to eat the meat again, but Liu Lei escaped with great fear. The officials saw Liu Lei and reported to the emperor. Kongjia raged and ordered three hundred warriors to capture the male dragon with the intention of killing and eating it. The three hundred warriors arrived at the pool and drained the water away. The moment they intended to start the capture, the dragon rolled its body over and swept the three hundred warriors into the pool. Instantly, the sky got dark and heavy rain poured. The dragon disappeared amidst the clouds.

Legend goes that the male dragon escaped to the town of Dongpu and transfigured itself into a mud dragon. The head was in Yangchuan Village and the tail was in Long Wei Mountain (literally, Dragon Tail Mountain). Since then, the weather was always favourable, the crops grew well in ample harvest and domestic animals all thrived in the town of Dongpu. Moreover, because the water of Dongpu was directly from the Dragon mouth, the rice wine made in Dongpu was distinctively mellow and fragrant. Consequently, the local people built Long Kou Temple to worship the Dragon King.

Appendix 10.3 Narratives about the Origin of Jiuxian

¹⁰⁰ The Records of the Grand Historian, also known by its Chinese name Shiji (史记, literally 'Historical Records'), written from 109 to 91 BC, was the magnum opus of Sima Qian, in which he recounted Chinese history from the time of the Yellow Emperor until his own time. The Yellow Emperor, traditionally dated around 2600 BC, is the first ruler whom Sima Qian considered sufficiently established as historical to appear in the Records.

Narrative 1

At the beginning of Qing Dynasty, there was a man in Dongpu. He could drink a lot of rice wine even when he was a little boy. The man and his family ran a wine shop. Their wine tasted sweet and mellow and was reputed near and far because of their special yeast inherited from their ancestors. Therefore, their business was very good.

Soon some robbers got to know that the man had the miraculous yeast. One day, the robbers came to the man's house for his treasure. The man refused to give the yeast to the robbers, who thus took his daughter hostage. The man was not weakened by the threat. Instead, he swallowed rice wine from a big jar. The robbers were mad and shouted, 'give us the yeast, or your daughter is going to die.' With this, the robbers put a knife against his daughter's neck, waiting for his answer. The man was furious. He wiped his red face and threw the wine jar at the robbers with all his strength. The robbers were crazy with rage and cut off the girl's head. Losing his daughter, the man drank wine all day long in the grief. Thereafter, he made wine with the yeast at the cost of his daughter's life and named the rice wine 'Nuerhong'¹⁰¹ to commemorate his daughter.

The villagers in Dongpu made and placed a statue of the man at Jieding Temple. The statue got a golden body, red face and black beard. They also held temple fair every year to remember the man. From then on, the man became the patron god of winemaking in Dongpu.

Narrative 2

Before 1949, Jiuxian temple festivals were held both at Jieding Temple in Shangfang village and Long Kou Temple in Yangchuan village. The former temple almost disappeared only with a small part of remaining walls. But the legend about the archetype of the patron god still remains among the local people. The god at Jieding Temple was an image of a woman. She had her long hair coiled and wore a garment with the style of Tang Dynasty. On the two sides of the Guardian stood two boys. The left one gripped a rake and the right one held a jar with two hands. It was quite reasonable that the god was a woman because the local rice wine used to be home-brewed for self-consumption. And the making of wine was mainly the house chore of

¹⁰¹ Nuerhong is the pinyin for Chinese 女儿红, literally 'daughter red'. Here in this story, readers may associate the colour with the blood of the daughter. But more likely, the colour red in Chinese culture is often used to symbolize happiness as often seen in a wedding ceremony or Chinese Knot. Additionally, according to the local custom, winemakers often bury home-brewed rice wine underground in the year a baby girl was born. On the day the girl was married the wine would be dug up for consumption or serve as a dowry with its container decorated with bright-colored carvings and traditional patterns.

woman in the local community in the past, which suggested the origin of rice wine making dating back to the reign of emperor Shun about 4300 years ago

Appendix 10.4 酒仙庙会申报项目简介

申报项目简介

旨在：尊国爱家，传承文明，构建和谐；

促进发展，利国利民，世代永传。

此俗缘起于清咸丰初年，当时名曰：酒仙神诞演庆神会。由赏祊酒作坊主刘墨香发起，在赏祊戒定寺后进设酒仙神殿，供奉酒仙菩萨。每年农历七月初六——初八日三天迎神庙会，村村演戏，家家办酒，延请宾客，盛况空前。

由此同时，杨家汇头（今杨川村）龙口庙内后进也供奉着酒仙菩萨，每年正月初一，集居杨家汇头的在东浦八家大作坊当开耙师父的人都聚集在酒仙殿内烧香燃烛，祈求今年酒质酒量能高出一筹。在八月十八这天更是热闹非凡，这天是酒仙生辰，当地村民都在庙内办斋演戏。

此俗到抗战时停顿了几年，抗战胜利后重修庙宇，此俗又兴旺了起来，直到解放初渐渐消失。但杨川龙口庙祭酒仙活动始终未听过，就连在文革期间神像被毁，庙宇改做他用，但老百姓还是暗暗地进行祭祀活动。在 2000 年由镇政府牵头，举行了一次大规模的祭酒仙活动。此举给杨川村一个很大的启发，为弘扬民间民俗文化，经过较长时间的筹划，由众善男信女慷慨解囊，纷纷捐资，终于在 2010 年，重建龙口庙和重树酒仙神像工程顺利完工，并组织搜集、挖掘原酒仙迎神庙会的相关资料，经过精心筹划于 2010 年农历七月初六举行神像开光仪式（由道教开光），农历八月十五日举办了首次酒仙迎神庙会。2011 年 8 月 15 日举行了第二次酒仙迎神庙会，又新增了龙舟、神舟等水上巡神项目。这二次活动规模之大、会伙之多、规范有序，受到了北大、浙大、杭师大、绍兴文理学院等相关教授、专家、学者的盛赞。

附：杨川在各大酒坊、酒厂开耙技工名单

杨川酒业工人名单