



Local Traditions, Community Building, and Cultural Adaptation in Reform Era Rural China

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Local Traditions, Community Building, and Cultural Adaptation in Reform Era Rural China

By

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To

The Sociology Department

in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the subject of
Sociology

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the so-called revival of local traditions in reform-era China. It compares the different paths of adapting local traditions to market transitions and a changing political landscape. Three questions guide this study: 1) given state suppression of tradition, to what extent is power and society in localities still structured by traditional practices? 2) What determines how a particular community can provide support to individual members? 3) Does the cultural legacy of a community constrain how the community can respond to new situations? And how easily can a community reformulate the past to suit the present need?

This study argues that local communities have actively used traditional practices to build community strength and deal with a variety of community issues arising from changes in the political landscape and socio-economic situations. Traditional practices are not nostalgia, but are the base for collective action and social organization in rural communities. The revival of traditional practices constructs community identity, defines how one relates to others, and instructs how one experiences the group to which one belongs.

This study shows that the same sets of cultural practices and symbols with different arrangements can produce different degrees of community solidarity and strength. Variation on the use of traditional practices for building community in different localities is explained through an interactive model with a number of factors jointly shaping the community strength. These are the local legacy, the state, the new market economy, and interests of individual community

members. These factors have different interactive relations in each local community, and result in different degrees of community strength.

This study adds to our understanding of reform era China in two particular aspects. The first is to demonstrate how the collective aspect of traditional practices has worked in rural communities. The second is to demystify the effectiveness of Chinese culture on economic development. My study does not treat Chinese culture as a holistic system. Rather, it shows that in economic behavior there is nothing essentially Chinese, such as using lineage or family networks. Cultural utility, such as strong and effective lineage networks, is a result of complex interaction among top-down state forces, the market, local culture, and individual interests, and cannot be duplicated simply out of functional utility and rational calculation.

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Introduction

China has undergone tremendous changes since the beginning of the reform era in 1978. Among these changes, individualization has been identified as one of the most prevailing social forces, which has led to new kinds of social relations and social formations (Anon 2013; Hansen and Svarverud 2010; Yan 2009). Scholars have moved away from traditional forms of organizations commonly characterized as collective—such as lineages—and from the communist form of collective production unit, to look at the rise of the individual in both public and private spheres (Yan 2005, 2006, 2011, 2013). Rather than celebrating individuality as in West, these authors see the new Chinese individual as the “uncivilized individual” (Yan 2009) and remorse the loss of a common moral ground in society.

The trend of individualization is not only a consequence of marketization and industrialization, but also a result of the state’s hostility toward any non-state-organized form of collective activities. Although the state shifted from totalitarian control to relatively open policies in economic and social spheres in the reform era, the state has continued monitoring activities that might pose threat to the regime, and collective activities have been treated as having the risk to develop into social movements to overthrow the regime.

While the trend of individualization is irrefutable and irreversible, the counterforce coming from society in search for belonging and group affiliation has been observed and recorded (Tang and Cheng 2014; Zhou 1993). This counterforce against individualization is seen in involvement in religious activities and the formation of religious communities, and has arisen as a result of the tolerant attitude from the state (Lai 2006). This is not to say that there is no risk involved in religious activities, rather that more space has opened for religious activity. In

addition, the yearning for religious participation coming out of a background of religious suppression in the Maoist period has led to a flourishing of religious activity in the reform era.

There are a number of studies dedicated to the so-call religious revivals in Buddhism (e.g. Fisher 2012), Taoism (e.g. Dean 1993; Lai 2003), Christianity (e.g. Cao 2011; Harrison 2013; Madsen 1998), and popular religion (e.g. Chau 2006; DuBois 2005; Overmyer 2009). This non-coherent body of literature has enriched our understanding of religious fields in contemporary China (e.g. Kipnis 2001; Sun 2010; Yang and Hu 2012), individual religious experiences (e.g. DuBois 2005; Tan 2006), and the creation of new religious communities (e.g. Penny 2003; Tong 2002). The focus of these studies are the communist religious policy (e.g. Keith and Lin 2003; Lai 2006; Madsen 2003; Potter 2003), contents and belief of religious practices (e.g. Fisher 2008), and forms and patterns of religious affiliation (e.g. Jones 2010). These works do more than just describe movement: they also search for a better ground for future China. Civil society is the most prevalent thesis in these works, which assert that a public sphere, free from the state intervention is the base for moving forward to a democratic society.

Traditional community organizations—such as lineages and rural villages—are often dismissed as a part of China’s future. For scholars of the individualization thesis, market forces dissolve the moral ground of traditional community (e.g. Mao 2000; Zhang 2005), and see these two things as incompatible. For them, traditional communities are destined to be nostalgia of the past. For scholars of the civil society thesis, the traditional forms of ascribed community hinder the development and transformation toward a civil society based on voluntary association and formal rules (Chamberlain 1993; White, Shang, and Howell 1996).¹ In these studies, the

¹ There are alternative models of civility incorporating traditional, ascriptive ties of kinship and religion in creating independent civil institutions. In the China field, some scholars have also engaged in alternative models of civility. For example, Weller (2004) argues that local religion can play a central role in the realization and consolidation of democratic practices, although it has no effect on the transition to democracy. Dean (1997b) illustrates the opening

dichotomy between modern and tradition is taken for granted and reinforced.

Despite the intellectual bias against traditional forms of community, other studies show that traditional communities not only continue to prosper, but also that they protect individuals from the market economy and the state (e.g. Chau 2003; Dean and Zheng 2010; Jing 1997; Wang 1997). The literature has discussed how Chinese communities use collective memory (Jing 1996; Wang 1997), lineage and family network (Basu 1991; Harrell 1985; Oxfeld 1993; Stites 1985), and traditional rituals and symbols (Katz 2005; Watson 1996) to adapt to rapid socio-economic changes. The literature argues that cultural adaptations are responsible for manufacturing collective identity (Jing 1996; Wang 1997, 1997), bringing about direct economic benefits (Chau 2005; Kuah 2000), and establishing new forms of local government (Dean 2001; Tsai 2002; Xiao 2010) to the local people.

This above list of studies has shown that cultural adaptation has a direct and indispensable contribution to the economic transformation in China. These studies, however, also provide contradictory pictures on traditional rural communities, as they demonstrate a wide range of the community strength and functional utility that rural communities can provide. This variation is sometimes used as evidence of the weakening of rural communities, and rural communities are treated as an intermediate stage that is destined to fail (e.g. Hansen and Svarverud 2010).

Instead of treating these rural communities as outliers or as an intermediate stage destined to fail, I argue that the persistence of these traditional communities is an important asset to facilitate a deeper understanding of the composition of a strong community that supports psychological, material and social well-being of its members throughout rapid socio-economic

of space through ritual performance, and urges for the reformulation of multiple public spheres beyond Western models.

changes. In addition, in assessing the base of a strong local community, no better angle can be taken than comparing and explaining different strengths of local communities in adapting to the market economy and the shifting political landscape. This is what my study focuses on.

This research inquires into the extent that Chinese rural communities organized around traditional rituals and symbols, namely ancestral worship and deity worship, have collective strength to maintain and adapt themselves to socio-economic changes and buffer individual members from the direct exploitation by the state and the market. In particular, this research is designed to explore and compare diverse paths of adaptation in Chinese rural communities.

I chose to compare three rural communities that succeed in using traditional rituals to sustain the community in reform era China. These three communities represent three of the most basic village types in rural China today: an entrepreneur village, a village of out-migrant workers, and a village-in-the-city. To set the base for comparison, these three communities, located in the south Fujian, have similar cultural background and traditional practices, namely the territorial cult (deity worship) and the ancestor cult (ancestral worship). In addition, these three communities all have intensive traditional practices that have been revived and routinized in the past thirty to forty years. Despite these culture similarities, however, the community strength of these three communities differs.

The overarching argument of this study is that local communities have actively used traditional practices to build the community strength and deal with a variety of community issues arising from changes in the political landscape and socio-economic situations. Traditional practices are not nostalgia, but are the base for collective action and social organizations in rural communities. The revival of traditional practices aims to construct community identity, to define how one relates to others, and to instruct how one experiences the group to which one belongs.

The study finds great variation on the use of traditional practices for building community in different localities. With specific local contexts in each community, the path of community building moves in different directions. The cases range from a solidified, entrepreneur community having strong sanction power over individual members, to a weak community having no power over individual life other than collective ritual practices.

In investigating the contestation of the effectiveness of traditional practices, three questions guide the detail exploration of each case. 1) With the state suppression over traditional practices, to what extent are the power structures and social composition in the local society still structured by traditional practices? 2) What determines how a particular community can provide support to individual members? 3) Does the cultural legacy of a community constrain how the community can respond to new situations? And how easily can a community reformulate the past to suit the present need?

The traditional forms of community that this study focuses on are communities formed and organized around ancestral worship and deity worship. In the late imperial period, these rural communities were not only religious and social units but also political units with capacity for self-government. In some cases, they were economic units. These traditional communities have undergone changes with the emergence of the modern state since 1911. In specific, in the Maoist period, the implementation of the production teams attempted to put all dimensions of rural community, culture, social, religious and political, under direct state control. All traditional practices were banned, and a series of political campaigns actively destroyed cultural objects, such as temples, ancestral halls, statues of the local deity and any other forms of historical remains.

With the end of the Maoist period and the beginning of the reform era in the late 1970s, two things simultaneously happened in rural Chinese communities. The first: rural villagers revived traditional practices after these practices had been forbidden by the state for almost three decades. Second: with rapid economic transition and a shifting political landscape in the 1980s, local people used cultural resources to cope with changes. Putting these two things together, the so-called traditional practices in China were in the process of reconstruction at the same time they were employed to adapt to new socio-economic situations and a changing political landscape. A more general background of the revival of local traditions will be covered in chapter one.

Significance

The significance of this study can be discussed from three aspects: rural China, the Chinese path toward economic development, and sociology of culture. In what follows, I discuss these three aspects respectively.

First, my work brings back the neglected aspect of rural communities and adds to the current sociological work on rural China. For Chinese sociologists working on rural China, the trending topics are the transition of the social order toward the legal system (emphasizing the effectiveness of the law), the formation and effectiveness of the collective enterprise in the new market economy (township and village enterprises), local governance (the level of provincial, county and township and village) in the post-Mao period (such as tax and financial reform), urbanization of the rural area and land expropriation, and the impact of rural to urban migration.

In emphasizing the organizational and collective aspect of Chinese tradition, my work brings back local tradition as an indispensable part of the power structure in the reform era in

rural China. The local tradition is relevant to issues on social order, local governance and migration, as the local tradition shapes individual life path, personal opportunity and choices. Collective aspect of rural communities is not incompatible with individuality. On the contrary, the collective aspects of rural communities could have been the supporting factor for the development of a more healthy individuality in Chinese societies.

Second, my study contributes to the quest to explain the economic success since the 1980s in Chinese societies. My study demystifies the effectiveness of Chinese culture by presenting various local responses and paths of adaptation to community challenges brought by socio-economic changes. My study does not treat Chinese culture as a holistic system; it shows that in economic behavior, there is nothing essentially Chinese, such as using lineage and family network. By exploring variations among Chinese local communities, I continue the interactive approach proposed by Patterson (2000) and demonstrate a dynamic interaction among top-down state forces, the market, local culture, and individual interests. Cultural utility, such as strong and effective lineage networks, is a result of complex interaction among the above these four factors, and cannot be duplicated simply out of functional utility and rational calculation.

Third, my study adds to sociology of culture through reexamining the unit of reproduction. The commonly assumed unit of reproduction in sociology of culture is the family, and the appropriation of culture is determined by one's position in the class or occupational system or ethnicity. The key goal of the field is to explore the intersection among culture (i.e. individual taste, meaning making), the capitalist class system, and inequality. This current development in the sociology of culture is mostly irrelevant to rural China.

My study shows that traditional practices, as a cultural model, are the base for organizing community members. Symbols, norms, principles and ritual practices are developed as part of

the local tradition in service of providing a base for people to organize, and for socializing people into a community. The cultural model is a collective phenomena, and symbols and meanings are collectively constructed and publicly shared. In other words, the cultural model constitutes webs of significance that orient individuals to one another and their world (Keesing 1987: 161).

My study also suggests that communities practicing ancestral worship and deity worship do not share the same set of tool kits to deal with the socio-economic transition. The diverse adaptation (cultural advantage) is because communities are equipped with different tool kits, not because communities choose different tool kits. In addition, communities of similar wealth or living standards do not share the same set of tool kits, as the existing literature demonstrates (i.e. L. L. Tsai 2007a).

In short, the cultural model of Chinese local tradition has two features. The first is that the basic unit is a local community. The second is that the cultural model provides rules and norms to organize people. I do not deny the existence of a semiotic community of people practicing ancestral worship and deity worship, but to go beyond the current understanding on the interaction between cultural advantages and the economic development I stress the fact that not every Chinese community has the same sets of tool kits.

My study initiates a conversation through the following questions: How can we conceptualize a relationship between culture and the capitalist system in the ways other than where culture is the reproduction of the unequal structure of a class society? How can we develop a collective approach toward culture to account for differences among communities?

Chapter Organization

This study is organized into six chapters. Chapter one provides a brief introduction to specific Chinese local traditions under investigation and reviews the three main themes on the revival of local traditions. Chapter two discusses the research design and introduces the three cases of this study. Chapters three, four, and five discuss the three cases of this study, respectively. Chapter six concludes this study by providing a comparison among the three cases based on the three themes identified in the chapter two.

Chapter 1: Continuity and Change in the Revival of Local Traditions

This dissertation examines the so-called revival of local traditions in reform-era China, and compares different paths in adapting local traditions to a changing political landscape and market transition. This chapter reviews the three main themes in the literature on the revival of local traditions and rural communities. The first is whether traditional authority still has the power to sanction in rural communities. The second theme addresses to what extent Chinese rural communities have collective strength to adapt themselves to socio-economic changes. The third theme inquires into the malleability of the past as a service to present interests. Together these three themes attempt to examine how much the present situation in rural China is affected by the past practices and the past social and cultural structures.

The scope of the inquiry of this study is defined by these three themes. I look at how the same sets of traditional practices lead to diverse development of community (in terms of the traditional authority, the functional utility of traditional practices, and the malleability of the past) in different localities. This study sees the revival of traditional practices—namely ancestral worship and deity worship—as the ground for the moral community, which provides principles and norms for collective cooperation.

This chapter is organized into three sections. The first section provides a brief introduction of the specific Chinese local traditions under investigation: the lineage and territorial cult. The second section discusses the three main themes on the revival of local traditions. The third section turns to two analytical strategies applied to the investigation of traditional practices of this study.

[I] The Historical Development of the Lineage and the Territorial Cult

To talk about local traditions in rural China requires an understanding of the specific context of Chinese rural communities. In the late imperial period, most rural communities were formed and organized around sets of ritual and religious symbols, namely ancestral worship and deity worship.¹ These two organizations and their corresponding practices are the locus of tradition in rural China. What is identified as subjects of Chinese culture are either practices of ancestral worship and deity worship, or their corresponding organizations, the lineage association and the temple association. This section provides a brief background of the historical development of the lineage and the territorial cult. First, a brief introduction of basic ideals of these two forms of social organizations is given in the next two paragraphs.

Rules of the descent line (*zongtiao zhidu*) constitute the basic principle of the lineage (Chen 1984, 1991).² These rules do three things: create a particular vision of the group, where the group has an origins in a common ancestor who gives life to the whole group; define the

¹ There are two addition kinds of traditional religious organization: the secret society and the sect. These two kinds of organizations flourished in pre-modern China and into the republican period. They were both seen as threat by the state, and remained under state supervision. The communist stated wiped out all of these organizations in the 1950s, and still imposes very strict laws against any such organization. However, there are some continuous practices of the sects in China. These continuous practices are integrated into communal religions. For a discussion of surviving sect practices see DuBois (2005) and Dean (1993).

In this study, I do not distinguish among the three religious traditions—Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism. While these three traditions have shaped ancestral worship and deity worship, the impact of these traditions differs in different locations. I examine practices of ancestral worship and deity worship without documenting which religious traditions these practices come from, for the origin of a particular practice does not change my overall argument. In addition, the three cases of this study do not have significant differences in the origin of local traditions.

² This definition departs from the functional explanation of Freedman and his followers in that it centralizes the importance of descent rules in forming a lineage. In contrast, Freedman sees genealogical expression only establishing temporary alliances, and thus a lineage needs a structural arrangement (shared common property) to sustain the group (Freedman 1958). Social historians (Faure 2007; Szonyi 2002) have shown that there were fictitious lineages, and that these lineages formed as a result of state policy in using lineage for local control. As Faure points out, “whether the genealogical linkage claimed is real or fictitious is beside the point for the purpose of lineage or organization: it matters only that members of the lineage are prepared to accept the lineage as real. (Faure 1986:2)” Yet these lineages were arranged according to descent rules and after the establishment of lineage; they followed rules of the descent lines and are constrained by them.

transmission of ancestral rites and the obligations between father and son; and constitute the social structure of the group, whereby the group has a hierarchical continuity between ancestors and descendants.

In the territorial cult, a certain area or region is believed to have a deity, which possesses authority over that area (Dean and Zheng 2010). The group of people residing in this territory believe their fates to be bound together, and only the territorial deity has jurisdiction over this place to secure it against dangers menacing boundaries and the thresholds within them. Residents of a certain spatial territory are obligated to pay respects to local deities and attend communal rituals, in which they congregate and act as a corporate body.

With no precedent before the tenth century (Szonyi 2000), the lineage and the territorial cult are the two most basic forms of social organization in late imperial China. Both of them center on ritual practices—ancestral worship and deity worship—and these ritual practices define relationships and obligation among members, as well as relationships with outsiders. The Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) governments co-opted these organizations for political control, and depended on them for local governance (Faure 2007; Szonyi 2000; Zheng 2001).³ Ideologically, the state identified itself with the principles of kinship obligation and filial piety (Kuhn 1975). As for the political structure, the state penetrated lineages and the territorial cult by using them as an adjunct to the local police and census system (*baojia*) and tax system (*lijia*)

³ Local governance or autonomy of lineage and the territorial cult refers to “the ability of a social unit to govern certain spheres of its internal affairs according to its own procedures and using its own people” (Kuhn 1975:258). Local governance does not mean that the social organization is independent from the state. Rather, I use this term to capture the fact that lineage and the territorial cult are integrated organizations with the capacity to perform ritual, economic and political functions. At the same time, I am aware of the fact that these functions were authorized or tolerated by the state, and in most circumstances lineage and the territorial cult acted jointly with the state (Faure 2007; Wakeman 1993; Zheng 2001). In this sense, local governance is different from the claim that these social organizations form civil society. This position is different from the claim that equates local government with civil society (e.g. Dean 1997a, 1997b; Feuchtwang 2000).

(Kuhn 1975; Szonyi 2000).⁴ State officials were not involved in lineages and territorial cults, which gave them autonomy in their internal affairs. These traditional organizations took over administrative tasks, including mediating local disputes, collecting taxes, repairing of irrigation, roads, and bridges, organizing for the community crop watching, protecting the community from bandits, establishing local schools, operating of charitable estates to provide temporary relief for disaster and loans for peasants (Overmyer 2009; Wong 1992), and the construction of public buildings dedicated to the earth god and other popular deities. By the Qing, the local government depended heavily upon lineages and the territorial cults to create the infrastructure of the local social order.

At the turn of the 20th century, state-society relations underwent a radical transformation, leading to an expansion of state control over lineages and the territorial cult. The state expanded its authority over many sectors of social and economic life as a response to the state-making needs of the twentieth century. The state extended its administrative power in local society in order to penetrate and absorb local resources. As a consequence, officially recognized local authority was shifted from traditional organizations—lineages and territorial cults—to local bureaucracies (Duara 1988). In 1926, the Republican state launched the first policies to curb local autonomy and penetrate villages. Local elite were replaced with “entrepreneurial brokers” in managing local affairs and tax collection.⁵ Religious property and institutions were

⁴ In the Qing dynasty, the lowest link of the regular bureaucratic system was the county seat (xian). Below the county seat, the local government depended on realigning bureaucratic units to conform to natural forms of coordination. For example, the baojia (police and census) system was an official design to organize local society. In theory, a baojia unit was based on a group of a hundred households. However, in practice, a baojia unit was based on the natural village (Kuhn 1975:259).

⁵ Duara used a dual-brokerage model to explain fiscal arrangement in the Qing. Entrepreneurial brokerage refers to brokers who acted as agents for a fee. Protective brokerage, leaders of community organizations, collectively and voluntarily undertook leadership roles to fulfill tax and other state demands to avoid dealing with entrepreneurial brokers. In the state-making process, the heavy taxes made the job of assessment and collection unrewarding for village leaders. In the end, the Chinese state depended on entrepreneurial brokerage to extract resources from the

transformed into components of a purely political public sphere. In contrast with the modern state, lineages and village temples were labeled traditional or feudal.⁶ These policies marked the beginning of the separation between the formal political structure and traditional social organizations.

After the establishment of People's Republic of China, the Communist state not only continued this policy, but also aimed to demolish lineage and the territorial cult. As a consequence, China experienced a rupture from its cultural past in the Maoist period with political campaigns that banned all kinds of traditional practices in the public sphere, and actively destroyed cultural objects, such as temples, ancestral halls, genealogy and any other forms of historical records. The state attempted to replace the traditional social structure with new political institutions—namely, the commune, brigade, and the production team.

The struggle between the modern state and the traditional organization is not a zero-sum game. The state might have greater power in alternating the leadership structure of a locality by confiscating the property of lineages and temples and forbidding the practice of public commemorative rites. However, as a number of studies demonstrate, the social bases for popular practices were not completely destroyed, and lineages and the territorial cult still performed the function of self-governance.⁷

locality. The policies of formalizing agencies of the state and heavy taxes alienated rural elite from the state (Duara 1988: 42-85).

⁶ My distinction between modern and traditional in this research is not an intellectual issue. This contrast between modern and traditional institutions arises frequently in the narratives of local people. From the village perspective, modern refers to the recent institution of a secular and positive political government, while traditional institutions are how villagers identify their ancestral past and construct their senses of history and identity (also see Feuchtwang 1998).

⁷ A number of studies show that traditional sources of authority such as the lineage and the territorial cult constituted an indivisible part of power even at the height of the Maoist era (Potter and Potter 1990; Wang 1996). Wang Mingming has explored the intersection and interaction between the state and the lineage organization, and between the state and the local religious community, in rural southern Fujian from the late 19th to the end of the 20th

Social relations based on lineages and territorial cults, and the symbols and ideology of these social organizations, persisted through informal and private channels.⁸ For example, family rituals, such as ancestral worship, funerals, and weddings, were continuously performed under the guise of private activities. Beliefs in the spirits of ancestors and local deities were preserved through secret worship and storytelling. Instead of class, rural community social relations came to be defined by genealogical order. In this stage, some elements of traditional social organizations underwent change, while others remained.

Because the collectivization period lays the groundwork for understanding the reform era, the collectivization period deserves further exploration. In what follows I will draw on existing studies to discuss the implications and consequences of agricultural collectivization on lineages and territorial cults.

Instead of being destroyed, traditional social organizations were incorporated into the new political system in communist China (Perry 1985; Shue 1988). After a short period of experiment, the state discovered that integrating existing social organizations into a production unit was the most effective way to reduce the impact of the transition to collectivization and to stabilize state control over the locality (Han 2007, Shue 1988, Zhang 1988).⁹ Under

century. In his study, traditional authority was transformed but not destroyed from late imperial China to the present. Li Huaiyin's (2005) research shows that in the same time frame as Duara's research, local communities were able to provide a safety net for community members, while still fulfilling financial obligation to the state.

⁸ The persistence of traditional social organizations in the Maoist period might have regional variation. The south, particularly Fujian and Guangdong provinces, has most evidence in the persistence and continuity of the lineage and the territorial cult from the Maoist period to the reform era. In contrast, data from regions other than the south displace ambivalent trends. Some studies show the continuity of the lineage and the territorial cult (e.g. Chen 2009; Han 2007; Mao 2000; Zhang 2005), while others show discontinuity of these traditional practices (e.g. Qian and Xie 1995; Ruan, Luo, and Huo 1998).

⁹ In some places, there were attempts to ignore the original population fabrication and reorganize the basic administrative unit. However, studies show that these attempts ended up in chaos, and the local state had to resume their original groupings (Han 2007). Yet, we do find that members of the weaker lineage might be appointed to the leader of a brigade in order to overturn the stronger lineage (Chan et al. 1992, Huang 1998). Either way, this does not change my point in saying that original groupings were maintained in the collectivization period.

collectivization, a production unit (the production team, brigade, and commune) was assigned a territorial jurisdiction. Land was redistributed to the adjunct production unit, and leaders of a production unit were chosen from local party members. As kinship groups often clustered together, a production unit sometimes coincided with kinship affiliation. In other words, the new political system created a perfect congruence among the unit of taxation, the ownership of land, and the structure of authority. The new administrative unit in the collectivization period still corresponded to the general pattern of aligning the bureaucratic unit to the forms of social organizations of the late imperial period.

There were two main influences of agricultural collectivization, one negative and one positive. The negative one is that by the end of the collectivization period, higher-order lineages were dissolved. This situation was caused by land reform that confiscated collectively owned property, the suspension of the formal organization of the lineage,¹⁰ and a restriction of people's interaction outside of the production team. In addition, leaders of lineages were replaced by party cadres who prioritized their loyalty toward the communist party over the local community.¹¹

The positive impact of the agricultural collectivization on lineages was the intensification of identity and importance of cohabitant agnatic groups. Under agricultural collectivization, villagers were forced to give up their previous careers and became peasants assigned to

¹⁰ In reality, this period of time is not blank. Local people still built temples or practiced commemorative rites (e.g. Huang 1998; Wang 1996; Yang 2006). Yet, commemorative rites on a large scale were not held as a regular event, as they had been in the Republican period. Some public commemorative rites transformed into secret activities that were hidden from local cadres. Furthermore, in some cases, local cadres took up the responsibility of leading the commemorative rites of a descent group, such as paying a visit to the graves of the common ancestor of the group.

¹¹ Whether prioritizing loyalty towards the communist state was a discursive move or a reflection of true ideology is a complex question. In most cases, local cadres had conflicting loyalty. In order to be promoted by higher officials, they had to dedicate themselves to the state. However, to gain support from the locality, they were confined by community norms. Thus, it is not uncommon to see local cadres engaged in activities of the lineage or deity worship in the collectivization period. Some of them did end up losing their jobs for participating in these activities (e.g. Jing 1996; Zhu 2011).

production teams without the freedom to move. Individuals were, therefore, forced to attach to an ascriptive agnatic group, usually in the unit of the descent group.¹² Activities of the descent group with territorial affinity were tolerated by the state.¹³ These descent groups retained the character of self-governance. Lineage identity became fragmented and restricted, and yet small range agnatic affiliation still dominated social life.

Members of a descent group were obliged to help in life cycle rituals, such as funerals and weddings. Life cycle rituals were defined as private, and the state never attempted to forbid these rituals. The most the state did was make rules to simplify these rituals. In practice, local cadres limited themselves from too much intervention in these rituals, because they were family members as well. In practicing life cycle rituals, interpersonal relations based on genealogical order were retrieved and reiterated, and belief in the past was preserved. The economic side of the lineage, which was an important function of the lineage in the late imperial period, was absorbed into the new political institution: the collective.

The other important social organization, the territorial cult, faced different political constraints, and underwent a different transformation during the collectivization period. As the formal organization was dissolved and commemorative rites were suspended, activities related to local deity worship became secret and sporadic. It is harder to trace any systematic effects of deity worship on the political structure during the collectivization period. Nonetheless, ordinary

¹² I do not mean every rural resident had an ascriptive agnatic group. The description here is restricted to individuals who had an ascriptive agnatic group. In some part of China, especially in the north, there were local communities that were not based on agnatic groups. My description here does not necessarily apply to these communities.

¹³ By definition, a lineage is a group of people who claim common ancestry. It does not require cohabitation. Thus, a lineage can be a group of people who regularly gather together to memorialize their common ancestors. However, this kind of alliance was prohibited in the collectivization period. Localized lineage—a descent group that resides in the same local area—was the only kind of lineage that still mattered in daily life. The descent group is the fundamental unit of the agnatic group. Five-generations is a common cultural idea to define people who are relatives and share ritual responsibility toward each other's life cycle rituals, especially weddings and funerals.

people retained a strong belief in supernatural power, which became the primary motivation to initiate a revival at the end of the Cultural Revolution.¹⁴ In contrast, the most important effect of lineage on people's life was to instruct interpersonal relations and social interaction.¹⁵ By the end of the Cultural Revolution, lineages were better preserved and more active than the temple institution.

[III] Overview of Three Main Themes

This section provides a brief overview of the intertwined themes on studies of revivals of lineage and the territorial cult: A) the fate of traditional authority; B) adaptation of the local community in the face of political and socio-economic transition, and C) the malleability of the past. These three main themes guide the basic inquiry of this study. The concluding chapter will draw on cases of this study to make interventions in these three themes.

A) The Fate of Traditional Authority

With dramatic changes in political institutions and economic organization since the turn of the twentieth century, the persistence of the authority of lineage and the territorial cult has been a persistent inquiry in China field. Revivals of lineage and the territorial cult further

¹⁴ Here I emphasize the effect of the lineage and the temple on the formal political structure. This does not mean that deity worship was less important in people's lives. One of my informants said, "being a peasant who relies on the weather makes it impossible not to believe in spirits and gods. When all religious practices were forbidden, we still found ways pay our respects to Heaven." Deity worship formed no less important a worldview than ancestral worship. These two beliefs are complementary to each other.

¹⁵ This is not to say that the lineage institution has no supernatural power. Ancestral worship and beliefs in the supernatural power of deceased ancestors, as some scholars claim, are a central component of the lineage institution. However, because the lineage institution had both secular and sacred sides, in the collectivization period the lineage at the local level was preserved by using a secular discourse. The sacred side was avoided in public discourse to avoid further political persecution.

contribute to this inquiry. How much are individuals embedded in the traditional networks of family, kinship, and community? To what extent, do the symbolic values and behavioral norms of lineage and the territorial cult still guide individual behavior and belief of the present day? To what extent, can lineage and the territorial cult provide legitimacy for local leadership? Do lineage and the territorial cult have any impact on the economic organization in the new market economy?

The debate has focused on the transition from traditional society to the modern world, and whether lineage and the territorial cult will lose its authority and retreat to have only symbolic meanings. Or will these two traditional organizations persist and continue to be an inevitable, integrated part of political and economic spheres? This question of the continuity of the authority of lineage and the territorial cult is not just a simple question about culture, it is a question about the capacity of the modern state to penetrate local society. Does the socialist state replace the traditional source of legitimacy with the new socialist political institution?

Since the reopening of China for scholarly research in the reform era, a number of studies show that Chinese rural communities are still organized around traditional norms, rituals, and symbols (e.g. Madsen 1984; Parish and Whyte 1978; Shue 1988). The socialist state has not destroyed lineage and the territorial cult, and the new political institution coexists with these traditional social organizations and Confucian values. In specific, four core concepts of Chinese interpersonal relations are often identified as the guideline for individuals to navigate in Chinese societies: xiao (filial piety), renqing (literally means human emotion), guanxi (social relations), and reciprocity. Xiao (e.g. Ikels 2004) and renqing (e.g. Hwang 1987; Yan 1996a, 1996b) were the two major concepts that defined obligations and regulated interpersonal relationships, with filial piety regulating family relationships, and renqing regulating relationships outside the

family. Guanxi, the Chinese term for social relations, encompassed both relationships within the family and outside the family. Reciprocity, characterized by the norm of giving, receiving, and returning gifts in the long run, and was the basic norm guiding all kinds of Chinese social relations. Guanxi and norms of reciprocity, therefore, were the organizational medium through which Chinese societies were constituted (Chen 1994; Fei 1992; King 1991; Kipnis 1997; Yan 1996a, 1996b; Yang 1989).

The persistence of the traditional authority is particularly evidenced through studies on southern China (e.g. Chen 2004; Dean 2001; Pan 2006; L. L. Tsai 2007a; Wang 1996, 1997). In specific, southern China refers to Fujian and Guangdong province and in some cases is expanded to include Guangxi, Zhejiang and Jiangxi (e.g. Xiao 2001, 2010) provinces. Historically speaking, these areas had the strong lineage organizations and the territorial cult, compared to the rest of China in the late imperial period. These areas not only were the first to revive lineage and the territorial cult in the reform era, but also have the intensity and scale of revivals that cannot be matched by the other part of China. This phenomena is furthered referred as the southern model, based on the south-vs.-north model.¹⁶ The north model refers to the absence of land-holding cooperative lineages that exist in the south.

In the south and north comparison of the traditional authority, historical legacy is

¹⁶ The south-vs.-north model comparison has been the thrust of historical and anthropological research. Cohen's article on "Lineage organization in North China (1990)" offers the best summary on the contrast between the north model and the south model. He calls the north China model "the fixed genealogical mode of agnatic kinship." By which, he means "patrilineal ties are figured on the basis of the relative seniority of descent lines so that the unity of the lineage as a whole is based upon a ritual focus on the senior descent line trace back to the founding ancestor, his eldest son, and the succession of eldest sons." (ibid: 510) In contrast, the south China model is called "the associational mode of patrilineal kinship." In this mode, all lines of descent are equal. "Access to corporate resources held by a lineage or lineage segment is based upon the equality of kinship ties asserted in the associational mode." (ibid: 510)

However, the distinction between the north and the south model is somewhat arbitrary. Some practices of the south model are found in north China. Meanwhile, the so-call north model is not exclusive to north China. The set of characteristics of the north model (a distinctive arrangement of cemeteries, graves, ancestral scrolls, ancestral tablets, and corporate groups linked to a characteristic annual ritual cycle) is not a system. In reality, lineage organizations display a mixture between the south and the north model.

commonly singled out as the main factor in determining the departure of these two regions. An unspoken implication of the southern model is that lineages and territorial cults in the south are expected to continue having authority over local people's lives, and in shaping the path of the local economic development and local governance. This simplified southern model has a strong implication for the mechanism of continuity of the local organization. This is to say, historical legacy matters most in explaining the continuity of the local organization. (Communities with stronger local organizations in the late imperial period are more likely to revive strong local organizations in the reform era, while communities with weaker local organizations in the late imperial period are less likely to develop a strong local community in the reform era.)

Scholarship on southern China does acknowledge diverse paths of the development of the traditional organization (e.g. L. L. Tsai 2007a; Xiao 2001). A wide set of factors are identified to jointly determine the outcome of the particular path a community takes, such as local economic and political conditions, the complexity of local social groups and their interactions, the depth and variety of localized ritual traditions, and the role of local elites in negotiating space for growth from officialdom (for detailed discussion see Dean 2003). Lacking a more generalizable formula, the complexity of south China, which also boasts rural communities that lack these traditional organizations, is often overlooked when it comes to the north and south comparison, or it is used as evidence of the general trend of the decline of the traditional authority.

In contrast to the southern model, another trend of research argues for the loss of the traditional authority over individuals with the penetration of the modern state, in particular the communist state and the spread of the market economy in the reform era. Although this view has prevailed since the 1980s (e.g. Duara 1988; Friedman, Pickowicz, and Selden 1991; Siu 1989),

Yunxiang Yan presented the best-theorized argument in explaining the basic characters of Chinese society. He argues that in the second half of the twentieth century, the rise of the individual was a reflexive part of China's state-sponsored quest for modernity, beginning with the establishment of PRC in 1949. This state program, he says, led to the individualization of Chinese society (Yan 2009, 2010). The process toward individualization, according to Yan, has been further accelerated with the market force in the reform era. Rural-to-urban migration uproots the foundation of the traditional organization, as villagers are no longer bound by the natal village they were borne into. Individuals can leave or break the collectives, and therefore, the traditional authority is completely dissolved. Tradition can no longer provide moral ground or pose moral constraints on individual behaviors. Although tradition does not die out, it is left with nothing more than tool kits that individuals draw on for their own benefit (Yan 2009). In this perspective, there is no community in present-day China that retains traditional authority, for even remote rural communities are well integrated with the market economy through the provision of cheap labor. Some studies targeted the southern model and showed that rural villages have undergone the process of individualization that Yan described (e.g. Hansen and Pang 2010).

Through further examining the criteria of evaluation on the power and effectiveness of traditional authority, I find that the individualization perspective employs the individual level analysis and examines the behavior of individuals and individual's values and belief to demonstrate the absence of traditional authority and the loss of shared moral ground in rural China. The traditional authority is only considered effective when individuals obey the moral teaching and norms of the community, and when individuals value and interpret traditional symbols as in the old days (e.g. Hansen and Svarverud 2010). For example, Mao (2000) and Siu

(1989) both argued for the decline of the traditional authority by showing that the younger generations do not hold the same understanding of traditional symbols and do not obey the same community norms as the older generations.

With this understanding in mind, my take on the substances of the individualization perspective is that it correctly points out the change of the understanding of morality and the change of the moral sanction power in rural communities. Nonetheless, I have reservations about the conclusion of the dissolution of the traditional authority. I contend that changes in the strength of the moral sanction and the individual's understanding and interpretation of morality are not equal to the complete dissolution of traditional authority. Furthermore, individualism might coexist with collectivism, as Ikegami (1995) demonstrated in the case of Japanese samurai.

The wide variety of literature on traditional authority in contemporary China shows, on the one hand, the persistence of lineage and the territorial cult in shaping villagers' daily life and structuring the local community. On the other hand, the traditional authority, no matter how we define it, has no unified or consistent force across rural communities. Therefore, I argue that we need to develop a framework to explain the diverse force of lineage and the territorial cult on local communities.

B) Adaptation of the Local Community

Research on revivals of lineage and the territorial cult is relevant to a second theme—the adaptation of rural communities to socio-economic changes. To what extent do rural communities based on ancestral worship and deity worship have collective strength to adapt to

the new market economy and buffer individual members from the direct exploitation by the state and the market?

A variety of studies demonstrate different functions that these traditional organizations provide to their members in response to the retreat of the communist state from totalitarian control of daily life and the emerging market economy. Their focus is symbolic, political, and economic resources generated by these traditional organizations. In what follows, I discuss the provision of these three kinds of resources respectively.

Ancestral worship and deity worship provide ground to form a symbolic community to deal with local communities beyond regularly residing together. For example, the symbolic community can link members living in the village with members working in the urban factory (e.g. Xiang 2005; Zhang 2001), or it can link members living in the ancestor village in mainland China with oversea Chinese (e.g. Kuah 2000).

As for political resources, these traditional organizations can supplement some major functions of the local government in securing the welfare and interests of the local populace, such as mediating local disputes, taking charge of communal affairs, providing care for marginalized groups, and providing public goods for the community (Dean 2003; Tsai 2002). The moral community formed around ancestral worship and deity worship also held the local cadre more accountable to their administrative performance at the level of the administrative village (Tsai 2002; Xiao 2010:201; Yang 2006).

In addition to the political aspect, the traditional organization also contributed economic resources. Kinship ties are widely known as a powerful model for business adventure and capital accumulation in the form of private loans (e.g. Chen 2004; Xiang 2005). Temple donation from individual worshippers—could be villagers, non-villagers of nearby neighborhood, and overseas

Chinese with kinship ties to the village—is important economic resources not only for practicing ritual and building temples, but also to direct local infrastructure projects and support charity program (Dean 2003; Kuah 2000). In addition, kinship ties also brought in investments from oversea Chinese. Most recently, tourism and pilgrimage that were attracted by the local temple generated prosperity for the local economy and income for the local state (Chau 2005: 245).

With evidence of functional utility of traditional practices in the reform era, a fundamental question of studies arguing for functional utility of Chinese tradition is left unanswered: what makes a local community build a stronger and effective traditional organization, while thousands of hundred of communities lack any traditional organization? This unanswered question also points to a characteristic of studies in this theme: they are mostly case studies of a descriptive nature rather than explanatory. Not much explanation is given on the various level of the revival of the local tradition and on the different functional advantages of the territorial cult and lineage in different localities. Lily Tsai (2007a, 2007b), who provided the most systematic exploration of the local community by comparing over three hundred villages in four provinces, also took the strength of the local community as given. She made a good case that the local community can benefit from a strong traditional organization. Nonetheless, she left the question unanswered of why not every community builds a traditional organization if it is so effective. My study attempts to take on this question of what makes a local community build a stronger and effective traditional organization.

C) The Malleability of the Past

A third theme that is relevant to revival of lineage and the territorial cult is the malleability of the past. To what extent is the past constructed based on the needs and concerns

of the present? Halbwachs gives a classical statement, “the past is not preserved but is reconstructed on the basis of the present. . . . Collective frameworks are, to the contrary, precisely the instruments used by the collective memory to reconstruct an image of the past which is in accord, in each epoch, with the predominant thoughts of the society (1992: 40).”

Hobsbawm and Ranger’s *The Invention of Tradition* (1983) is particularly influential on the theme stressing the malleability of the past. They illustrate how new traditions and rituals are invented in the sense of being deliberately designed and produced with a view to creating new political realities, defining nations and sustaining national communities. After the publication of *The Invention of Tradition*, the phenomena that traditions can be newly constructed for political and social function of the state have been of interest to all fields of social science. This term also impacts the China field. In particular, China underwent a period of cultural rupture in the Maoist period and the term appears often in studies relating to culture and economic development.

In particular, studies on commodification of cultural heritage for tourist industry in China are concerned with how the state creates or appropriates cultural heritage (could be fabricated, cultural remnant or living practices) for economic development and to maintain discursive control over the realms of cultural production and national identity construction (Oakes and Sutton 2010). The politics of cultural production, the key to these studies, involves state organizations of various levels, and international/global institutions. The state here refers to a number of different organizations, such as China International Travel Service, the Nationalities Affairs Council, and the state Cultural Bureau and different levels of the government (central, provincial, county and township) (Airey and Chong 2010; Oakes 2000). The most influential international players are the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

(UNESCO) and the World Heritage Project of UNESCO, and the World Bank (more discussion of these international organizations see Hevia 2001; Shepherd 2006).

Cultural heritage, whether genuine or invented, tends to become a frozen cultural object (Oakes 2010) that is deprived of a dynamic expression of faith or belief. Along this line, another concern for studies on cultural heritage is the impact of commodification of culture on local cultural practices (MacCannell 1994:99–102). Examining existing literature, the response from the local people is polarized. In some studies, local people are almost treated as passive receivers of the cultural appropriation, although they might benefit economically. Local residents consume the official narrative of the relationship between the locality and the nation as much as tourists (e.g. Hevia 2001; Huang, Wall, and Clare J.A. Mitchell 2007; Shepherd 2006). In contrast, some other works record complicated social processes in negotiating display, interpretations and reconstruction over the local tradition, such as an old community temple (e.g. Flower 2004; Kang 2009; Sutton and Kang 2009).

The overemphasis on instrumental and functional aspects of the past on these studies raises the questions concerning the degree of malleability of the past and variation in what respects and under what conditions the past is malleable. A recent theoretical position advanced by collective memory studies states that the construction and reproduction of the past is an ongoing process of negotiation and is limited both by the context in which it is undertaken and by the available past (Olick 1999; Olick and Levy 1997; Olick and Robbins 1998; Schwartz 2000; Zelizer 1995). While typically recognizing the constructed nature of history, Schudson (1989:106–7) argues that the past is “highly resistant to efforts to make it over” and that the structures of available pasts, of individual choice, and of social conflict limit our abilities in the present to alter images of the past.

The common character of Chinese tradition is that tradition is employed with permutation of older forms and relationships in new situations, no matter if the cultural object or practices are a continuation of the past,¹⁷ is recycled from the cultural past,¹⁸ or a fabrication.¹⁹ This character is better captured by the term “inventiveness of tradition (Sahlins 1999:408)” than the term “invented tradition,” which is commonly associated with free malleability of the past. In this understanding, the question for the China field on the malleability of the past is to explain why some pasts are suppressed while others are recovered or even invented, why some pasts persist little changed while others are altered beyond recognition. The collective memory studies that I just mentioned above could provide new insights to develop an analytical framework toward these questions.

Conclusion

A recurring issue in these three themes is the dynamic relation between continuity and change. The first theme on the persistence of traditional authority involves the question of how the authority of lineage and the territorial cult can continue in a changing political and socio-

¹⁷ Citation 17, 18, and 19 are three categories of genealogy of cultural object and practice, according to their relation with the past. The continuous category refers to cultural practices and objects having continuation from the past, such as the minority nationality regions, like Tibet (see Shepherd 2006), historic and religious sites, such as Mount Tai (such as Mount Tai, see Dott 2010), and ritual practices, such as Dixi (such as Dixi, see Oakes 2010). The term continuous here does not mean what is presented to tourists is genuine and was previously practiced. All studies I mention here show the makeover of the local culture by the state and UNESCO. Yet, the local culture does have a continuation from the past, although it might have been under serious revision.

¹⁸ The second category of the genealogy, recycling, refers to the cultural object that had once been part of the local practice but was stopped or abandoned, and was rediscovered as a tourist attraction in the reform era. The most famous example is the Chrysanthemum festival studied by Helen Siu (1990).

¹⁹ The third category of the genealogy, fabrication, refers to the cultural object or practice that is newly invented as part of the local or national past. This category includes cultural objects that are falsely said to have a past (such as building a new Buddhist temple), and cultural objects that are newly conceived as part of the past. The communist revolutionary history and the construction of red tourism premised on the commemoration of sacred sites of the Communist revolution are examples of the latter kind (e.g. Yu 2010). The fiction of local practices are well known by locals, and are often not even disguised from tourists.

economic landscape. The second theme on the adaptation of local communities relates to the question of what changes lineages and territorial cults have undergone to reorder their internal social relations and power structure and to pursue strategies for surviving and continuity of the group (Cohen 2005; R. Watson 1985). The third theme on the malleability of the past relates to the question of how much the past can be changed to still claim to be the past and to suit the present needs.

This research does not engage in the debate on the continuity or discontinuity of local tradition, and takes the position that there is no question about the continuity of local tradition. This continuity is what Patterson called “qualitative continuities” (Patterson 2004:79). He explained, “What we observe at any given moment will be a bounded complex of inter-related qualities, but it is only a socio-temporal stage, a sampled occurrence of many closely similar, adjoining occurrences of this complex along the historical line that constitutes, in its entirety, the identity of the cultural object in question (ibid).” In other words, nothing needs to be exactly the same for the local tradition to claim its continuity. We do not need to prove the form of the organization, nor the level of the traditional authority, nor norms and rules to be identical to claim the continuity of Chinese culture from pre-modern society to the capitalist system. Change and continuity is two sides of a coin, instead of an either-or category.

[III] Toward an Explanation of Diversity

Through reviewing a variety of studies on revivals of lineage and the territorial cult in the previous section, I demonstrate that it is impossible to come to a unified conclusion on the traditional authority, functional utility and the malleability of the past. I argue that we need to

take the diverse development of traditional practices seriously and develop a framework to explain diverse development in local communities regarding revivals of lineage and the territorial cult and the political, social and economic consequences of these revivals. For this angle, I also aim to deepen our understanding on the dynamics between change and continuity. In this section, I identify two analytical strategies in this goal. Before starting the discussion, I first define local tradition.

I see ancestral worship and the territorial cult as “communal religion” (Dean 2003; Faure 2007; Feuchtwang 2001; Yang and Hu 2012). That is, the fundamental effect of these traditional/religious practices is to produce collective solidarity and group cohesion. In other words, people who practice ancestral worship or deity worship together not only form a semiotic community, but also attempt to form a moral (real) community: meaning that the participants more or less agree about their moral and emotional evaluations of given symbols, and they are bounded by solidarity.

In addition to forming a moral community, lineages and territorial cults provide the base for organizing people. They provide principles for social interaction and norms of organization (e.g. Freedman 1958; Gates 1996; Oxfeld 1993; Sangren 1984). Symbols, norms, principles and ritual practices are developed in service of providing a base for people to organize and cooperate, and of socializing people into a community. In other words, the aspect of lineage and the territorial cult of my concern is not about individual belief, taste, or cultural objects. It is about how one relates to the others and how should one relate to the others.

In contrast to an individualistic view of cultural utility, I emphasize the collective aspect of ancestral worship and the territorial cult. The above description of the collective aspect of traditional practices might overstate the unity and harmony of the group, but it is an ideal. In

practice, tradition can also be used as a means for suppression and social control. For example, it is common that in a lineage, branches are differentiated by wealth and political power (e.g. Watson 1985). In addition, tradition does not always lead to the consolidation of a group identity, for inappropriate or outdated symbols, norms, principles and ritual practices can lead to the dissolution of a group. With all these possible failed situations, however, I emphasize that the use of tradition must be collective action, not individual action.

Practical function is a necessary component of lineage and the territorial cult, according to some scholars (e.g. Faure and Siu 1995; Szonyi 2002; Watson 1982), and is used by powerful individuals in the group to benefit themselves. However, I argue that the instrumental aspect of local traditions is only effective in the unit of a community and needs to be reproduced within the community. An individual cannot make use of a local tradition without the other members' involvement and cooperation. When individuals strategically use local tradition, it means that the local tradition is reproduced, although not necessarily in the most ideal situation as a strong and solidifying community. When a local tradition loses its community ground it becomes irrelevant to individual in all regard. There is no such thing as the local tradition losing its community ground; but individuals can still use it for their benefit, as the individualization perspective claims.

In sum, this study uses the general term “local community” to refer to a group of people that conceive of themselves as a group, no matter their base of community, be it ancestral worship, deity worship, or a mixture of these two practices.²⁰ I do not look for local communities

²⁰ There are Christian communities going back the fifteenth century in rural China, which have similar functions as communal religion. To simplify my discussion, I do not touch on this kind of Christian communities, given that the number of Christian communities formed before the twentieth century were relatively low compared to local communities based on ancestral worship and deity worship. However, note that these Christian communities also underwent a similar process of revival. For an example see Harrison (2013).

that must fit into a certain scholarly definition of lineage or the territorial cult. In practice, these two sets are usually mixed together in a community, as recorded by a few studies (e.g. Jing 1996; Szonyi 2002; Wang 1996). We know little about how these two sets work together, or contradict each other in forming a local community. It was possible that a lineage was formed according to a set of standards in the Qing dynasty, when lineage was an official category of taxation at the local level. In contemporary Chinese societies, however, a lineage is a self-identified group that is not regulated by a universal set of standards.

Given this situation, revivals of ancestral worship and deity worship are attempts to build strong local communities (Han 2007; Wang 1996, 1997, 2000). Functional utility is a side product in service of maintaining the moral community. Jun Jing has a convincing example of this community building process (1996, 1999) in the revival of the Confucius lineage temple in a village in Gansu province. In his case, the Kong-surnamed villagers sought political, moral, and cultural redress for their suffering and mistreatment in the collectivization period by rebuilding the lineage temple and other deity temples. On the one hand, the process of rebuilding temples effectively generated political resources for addressing and confronting problems of the present. On the other hand, at the center of rebuilding temples, a moral community was constructed by retrieving memories of the lineage.

In literature on community building in Chinese rural communities, community building is expressed as an abstract concept of community identity. This treatment assumes that traditional practices have same effect on the sense of community across communities. I, however, argue that we need to disaggregate the concept and process of community building. There are different approaches, understandings, and ritual arrangements of community building in local communities. The diverse development in local communities regarding traditional authority,

functional utility, and malleability of the past is caused by different approaches toward community building. For the rest of this section, I discuss two analytical strategies to approach traditional practices: A) forms of traditional practices and B) the work of traditional practices.

A) Forms of Traditional Practices

The traditional practices of concern in this study are lineage and the territorial cult. In theory, these two forms of social organization have different sets of symbols, employ different sets of communicative media, and set social relations in different ways. In practice, groups employ both forms of social organizations in a rather unsystematic and arbitrary way. The choice might be limited by the past historical trajectory, it might reflect the current social structure, or it might simply be a random factor. Therefore, the first step toward understanding the link between traditional practices and community building is to examine what are different forms of traditional practices that community members can choose from.

I summarize traditional practices into three complementary forms according to existing studies (Connerton 1989; Glassberg 1996; Olick 1999; Schwartz 1982, 1996): mnemonic objects, historical inscription, and commemorative rites.²¹ Shared meaning and shared emotion are symbolized as actual mnemonic objects, such as temples, ancestor halls, and ancestor shrines, graves and statues of local deities, to store the community's memory and collective sentiment on a person or a group of people or an event. In addition, mnemonic buildings are a space to conduct commemoration, perform rituals, and gather to address community issues. Historical

²¹ There is a fourth type, the simple act of traditional practices, including a wide variety of activities that are excluded from commemorative rites, such as performing folk dances, retelling proverbs and stories, singing old favorite songs, and eating traditional foods. These activities are viewed as the proper traditional ways of doing things and may be self-consciously selected over more "modern" ways. In doing so, the past has an intimate relation with practitioners. But this type of media is not as important as the other three types in shaping the general path of community building at the collective layer. This type is private activity made the past visible in daily life, but has less force in altering the direction of the collective at a short period of time. Therefore, I will skip this type in my general discussion on communicative media.

inscription, such as inscriptions on steles, genealogies, and local gazetteers, provides documents for the collective, records community property and ritual processes, and inscribes regulation and agreement on the rules of social interaction. Commemorative rites, such as temple festivals, ancestral sacrifices, commemoration at graves, are performances in which people define community boundaries, practice social interactions, and affirm inscribed rules and regulations.

Table 1.1 lists different sets of communicative media employed by lineage and the territorial cult.

[Table 1.1] Three Sets of Communicative Media of Lineage and the Territorial Cult

	Lineage	The Territorial Cult
Basic ideas	Rules of the descent line	Jurisdiction of the local deity over a certain locality
Communicative media		
A. Historical inscription	Inscriptions on steles, and genealogies	Inscription on steles and local gazetteers
B. Commemorative rites	Death ritual, ancestor worship, and commemoration at graves	Temple festivals, procession and pilgrimage
C. Mnemonic objects	Ancestral halls, ancestral shrines, tablet, graves and the old house built by the common ancestor	Temples and statues of local deities

Different forms of traditional practices make up an integrated expression of the community: the community in objects (mnemonic objects), the community in words (historical inscription), and the community in practices (commemorative rites). Usually an event involves two or all three forms of traditional practices. For example, to practice the annual sacrificial rite involves ancestral hall/temple (place), ancestral tablet, ritual manuals, and the sacrificial rite.

It is not uncommon that messages conveyed in these three forms of traditional practice are incoherent. Possible explanations for incoherence are that purposes of making these traditional practices are different, or that these practices were made in different periods of time. For example, groupings in ritual practices reflect the demographic process of lineage history. In contrast, genealogical records are concerned more with genealogical continuity, thus

genealogical order is the only guideline for grouping. As time goes on, groupings in ritual practices might not be identical with groupings in genealogical records. The discrepancy among different media is a result of the changing present, when some groups might be too prosperous and need to further divide into two or more groups, while some weaken or even die out.

In addition to discrepancy among different practices, different practices might have different weight in shaping members' cognition and action. As shown in ritual studies and collective memory studies, ritual or so-called commemorative rites might out-weigh other forms of practice in shaping participants' cognition and action. I will pay attention to this question in my analysis of different forms of traditional practices and will come back to it in the concluding chapter.

B) The work of traditional practices

This last part categorizes traditional practices into three different forms and discusses how different forms represent different aspect of the group. This part turns to three different dimensions that traditional practices work in building a strong community: through arousing individual's affective state (psychological dimension), through reproducing framework of expressive symbols and community norms (cultural dimension), and through promoting particular social patterns (social dimension). These three dimensions are summarized from ritual studies. In what follows, I discuss how traditional practices work in these three dimensions respectively. Note that, as the purpose of this category is to help us to understand how community building could have been structured and arranged differently given the same sets of cultural resources, I will not engage in the debate on the foundation and function of ritual in

Anthropological study. I only discuss the surface application of the three dimensions of the work of ritual.

The first dimension of the work of ritual is to arouse individual's affective state to serve as the base of collective identity. According to Durkheim (Durkheim 1995), experiencing sensation of the divine—"collective effervescence" is Durkheim's original term—members develop the conscience collective, and the group is intersubjectively perceived as a single entity. In addition, this sacred sentiment is attached to the ritual symbols, and these symbols preserve intense collective emotion to everyday life. To sustain the sentiment, however, group members have to gather periodically to engage in ritual to recharge with collective effervescence and to renew the ritual symbols that represent the group. Along the line with Durkheim, scholars emphasize the importance of common participation and emotional involvement over the specific rationalizations by which participants account for rituals (Collins 2004:200; Kertzer 1988; Summers 1986). For example, Kertzer argues for the power of ritual to produce bonds of solidarity without requiring uniformity of belief (Kertzer 1988:68).

The second dimension of the work of ritual is that ritual models ideal relations and structures of expressive symbols (Geertz, T. Turner, Douglas, and Lukes). Ritual defines social norms and presents them for participants to internalize (Bell 1992:175). Ritual also organizes people's knowledge of the past and present, as well as their capacity to imagine the future. Ritual, Lukes argues, "helps to define as authoritative certain ways of seeing society: it serves to specify what in society is of special significant, it draws people's attention to certain forms of relationships and activity. At the same time, it deflects their attention from other forms, since every way of seeing is also a way of not seeing" (1975:301-2).

The third dimension of the work of ritual is that ritual encodes, realizes, promotes, and

regulates social relationships. Ritual can become an important means to structure and maintain power relations, as shown in Lane's study on the USSR (1981). She concludes that ritual in the USSR is used as a tool of cultural management and as a means of glossing over conflicting social relations. Ritual can be seen as a type of social strategy to model valued relationships or promote legitimation and internalization of those relations and their values (Bell 1992:89).

In addition to the three dimensions of the work of traditional practices, I also see the work of traditional practices in an accumulative process. In particular, I emphasize that patterns of social interaction and framework of expressive symbols and community norms have undergone an ongoing process of production and reproduction. For the convenience of discussion, I use the term social process (of traditional practices) to refer to "the ongoing process of interactive behavior" (Geertz 1993:145) that is practiced, rehearsed and performed in the act of making ritual possible. The cultural process (of traditional practices) is used to refer to the ongoing process in using and modifying the existing framework of expressive symbols and community norms to represent the ideal community in traditional practices. These two processes are highly interrelated—they are two separate processes that could work against one another.

In conclusion, traditional practices in local communities might emphasize different dimensions of the work of traditional practices, and the social and cultural processes might relate differently to each other in different local communities. Together these two aspects of the work of traditional practices guide my analysis of the effect of traditional practices on community building.

Chapter Two: Research Design and Three Cases

This study asks how traditional practices enable and constrain local people in adapting to new socio-economic changes. In particular, I focus on diverse paths of development in Chinese rural communities. As discussed in chapter two, existing studies have shown that communities with similar local traditions are not necessarily equipped with the same cultural resources, and can have diverse developmental paths (in terms of the traditional authority, cultural adaptation and the malleability of the past). The reproduction and adaptation of the local tradition involves complex social and cultural processes, which cannot be reduced to self-calculating strategies. These social and cultural processes are what my study aims to explore.

This chapter is organized into three sections. The first section discusses the research design. The second section explains how data was collected and what kind. The third section introduces the three cases of this study.

[I] Research Design: Case Selection and the Unit of Analysis

This section discusses the research design, including the rationale behind the case selection and the unit of analysis. This research attempts to establish a systematic understanding of diverse paths of cultural adaptation in local communities—namely, what cultural and social processes led a local community to adapt in a particular way? Chapter one argued that we have limited knowledge on patterns of functional advantages of the local tradition. What we do know is a list of functional advantages that the local tradition can provide. Given the limitations of the existing theory, I designed a study of small-case comparisons based on ethnography. An

ethnographic approach aims for an in depth understanding about the cultural logics that are hard to get at with survey research approach. The comparison approach enables a sorting out of patterns that are harder to notice in a single case study.

As for case selection, in theory, any rural community in China with some traditional practices could serve this project. The interpretation and comparison of findings, however, should correspond to existing studies. Furthermore, given that this research aims to understand patterns of various functional advantages of local tradition, cases with intensive traditional practices were required. This design does not exclude my findings as having implications to a community losing traditional practices, which I will explore in the conclusion chapter.

The case selection was biased toward cases of local tradition, and imprecise in the type of village selected. Nonetheless, this bias and imprecision does not undermine my argument, which is presented in the form of mechanism/processes rather than causation.

With the background of rapid economic transition, and an emphasis on the strong force of the market in the current trend of China study, I single out economic conditions as the criterion for comparison and select cases with similar characters corresponding to aspects that I discuss below. The following explains the criteria of case selection.

Economic conditions are often understood to have a strong impact on the continuity of the local tradition and the functional advantages of the local community (Bell 1973; Inglehart 1990, 1997). There are two criteria to judge the impact of economic conditions: the wealth of the community and types of work. In the market economy, one's relation to the market determines the demographic process a community undergoes. The local tradition is more likely to be approached differently with different demographic processes of the local community. One's relations to the market is, therefore, more crucial than wealth as the criterion for the choice of

cases.

With this criterion in mind, I chose to study three types of village: Village-in-the-city, the village of out-migrant workers, and the entrepreneur village. This is not an exclusive list of village type in rural China, although these three types of village are found all over China. In what follows, I introduce the three village types.

The village-in-the-city is a village type that emerged in reform-era China. With the rapid industrialization and urbanization, the government and the industry were in need of land to expand the industrial zone. Rural communities adjacent to the city were developed into industrial zones under state planning. In most villages of this village type, arable lands were expropriated by the state, and villagers received a one-time compensation. In addition to the compensation, villagers can rent out rooms to migrant workers who work in village factories. The income is often significant to the degree that villagers do not need to work. The downside of this kind of village is that the local community is left with the burden to deal with non-villagers living in the village, and non-villagers living in community territory usually outnumber registered villagers. In addition, villagers usually suffer from structural unemployment due to the loss of arable lands.

The village of out-migrant workers is the most common type of village in the inland. These are villages based on agriculture. These villages relate to the market by exporting cheap labor forces to the city. Adult villagers leave the village for blue-collar jobs in the city, while they are still officially registered under their natal village. These migrant workers are at the bottom of urban social structure and economic system. The household registration system, which segregates citizens from villagers, and imposes strict restriction for villagers to become citizens, further discriminates villagers from social benefits and welfare in the city, such as the eligibility of the medical care system, and accessibility to schools in the city for school age kids. The

household registration system keeps migrant workers connected to their natal villages; they also rely on villages to cut down their costs in the city and cope with the instability of their work (such as leaving kids to their parents in villages, and leaving aging parents in villages). This type of village is commonly known as a village of elder and minors, as all working adults have left to work in the city.

The entrepreneur village is the most successful type of village of reform era. Villagers either open family factories in the village or neighboring areas, or open shops in other part of China. The main character of this type of village is that of solidarity and trust. Furthermore, the networks among villagers are important assets that contribute to economic success. Villagers rely on each other to make private loans, gather business information, learn business skills, and acquire political leverage for business. Villagers focus on one or a limited number of businesses, and cluster their businesses in the same part of a city. Structurally speaking, entrepreneurs are discriminated by the household registration system as migrant workers. However, with more money and social networks, in contrast to migrant workers, entrepreneurs are usually more successful in navigating their life in the city (such as acquiring urban citizenship, and putting their kids in schools in the city). Their natal villages also provide them with childcare and elder support. The village of the entrepreneur is also commonly left with elders and minors as regular residents, while the communal affairs and public facilities are well taken care of with monetary contributions made by entrepreneurs.

I targeted one of each type of village. Although it is impossible to control variables in a qualitative study, I tried to find cases with characteristics as similar as possible. This setup aims to put the study in dialogue with existing literature providing a base for explanation and comparison. First, to explain variation in functional advantages of local communities, I chose

cases from similar local traditions and limited my choices to communities showing signs of a strong presence of the local tradition. A common way to detect the strength of the local tradition is to look for the existence of the temple committee or the lineage committee and for regular annual communal rituals (as employed in Tsai 2007). In addition to this criterion, I also looked at the scale of annual communal rituals—the more magnificent and more money spent, the community might have stronger presence of the local tradition.

In addition to the economic and political conditions, Dean (2003) points out that the complexity of local social groups and their interactions, and the depth and variety of localized ritual traditions are factors that impact the development of the traditional organization in a particular locality. I hence chose cases from similar cultural and ritual backgrounds. In addition, I chose to study communities of single lineage type, or that are predominated by one lineage, as studies point out the group dynamics of the single lineage and multi-lineage community are different in shaping the local tradition (e.g. L. L. Tsai 2007a). I further chose to study communities with longer inhabitation history. This criterion is also a response to the southern model that I discussed in chapter one (e.g. Wang 1996). Under this perspective, the local tradition tends to be stronger in the areas where it was historically strong.

The communist state has made the formal political structure uniform across the country. For informal state behavior, Tsai found that the temple committee and the lineage association hold the local state at the village level more accountable than these communities without the temple committee and the lineage association (Tsai 2007a). I limit the study to communities with a strong local tradition, and Tsai's finding does not apply to my case selection.

With all these village characters in mind, I further limit my scope to south Fujian. Fujian and Guangdong province have long been known for its dedicated traditional institutions, lineage

and the territorial cult in late imperial China (Faure 2007). In addition, the earliest wave of revivals of traditional and religious practices began in this part of China (Dean 1993). These two provinces are also the first and most industrialized and capitalized part in China. Although traditional organizations have been reported all over China, no other area can match the intensity and the scale of the revival of these two provinces. Yet the reason to settle in south Fujian rather than in other part of Fujian or Guangdong is a personal reason. That is, I can speak southern Fujian dialect. The background introduction of each selected community will be introduced in the finding section. In what follows, I discuss the unit of analysis.

The Unit of Analysis: Multi-layers of the Community

In chapter one, I argued that the basic unit for the local tradition is a local community. The boundary and formation of a local community is shaped by at least three forces: communal rituals, the state, and the market forces. For the cases that I study, communal rituals, namely ancestral worship or deity worship, are the bases of local identity. Therefore, I emphasize that the basis of a local community is ritual alliance. The ritual alliance is multi-layer, from a neighborhood or an agnatic group to natural village and then to multi-village alliance. Alliances of the lower layer cooperate together to form the alliance of the higher layer, and individuals are ascribed to the lowest layer in the unit of family according to patrilineal logic or residence. As for the higher layer of alliance, membership is in the unit of the lower layer, not the individual or individual household.

To explore the strength of a local community, all layers of the ritual alliance must be taken into account. My research shifts among four different layers: multi-village alliance, the administrative unit, natural village, and the descent group. In what follows, I briefly introduce

each layer. The top layer of grouping in this study is the multi-village alliance. These are groups of villages performing regular common rituals, such as ancestral worship or deity worship. A community temple or lineage temple is built accordingly to host community deities or common ancestors. In addition, these villages hold festivals and parades in honor of their local deities, to receive blessing from local deities, and to strengthen their alliance. Multi-village ritual alliance is the most popular method in rural China to ally several surnames. It is also common that villages within a ritual alliance belong to a single surname.

The next layer is the administrative unit that is imposed by the state for administrative purposes. Literally, this layer is called the administrative village, or *xingzheng cun*. However, in order to make a clear distinction from the natural village, throughout this research I refer to this layer as the administrative unit, and reserve the term village only for the natural village. An administrative unit usually includes a number of natural villages. For large surname groups, an administrative unit could include natural villages of the same surname group. The administrative unit is an artificial category for political control, and in itself does not create a community with collective identity. Because it determines resource distribution and political relations among natural villages, this layer does affect the grouping dynamic of natural villages and cross-village ritual alliance. Furthermore, the party secretary of the administrative unit (*cun zhishu*) and the head of the administrative unit (*cun zhang*) are usually key players in the local community. Therefore, this layer is mentioned when it is necessary for the understanding of the power dynamic in the locality.

The lower layer of the administrative unit is the natural village, or *ziran cun* in local people's common usage. The natural village is the basic residential unit, and it forms the basic territorial local community. The natural village in south China is often composed of a single

surname. It is a hamlet that is developed through voluntary habitation, and becomes a historical unit involving settlement rights, and original settlers are distinguished from later immigrants. Settlement rights involve more than residence. Settlement rights—“the rights to exploit common resources defined within a territory” (Faure 2007: 4)¹—define memberships of a village. Usually memberships manifest through a participating community of commemorative rites.

The most fundamental grouping in this study is the decent group. In common usage, the decent group refers to relatives of five generations of a common ancestor, and it is the fundamental unit of the agnatic group. Five-generations is a common cultural idea to define people who are relatives and share ritual responsibility toward each other’s life cycle rituals, especially weddings and funerals. In practice, however, the five-generations is not absolute. In fieldwork, I have seen as few as three or four generations, or as many as eight generations. Affairs within this group are considered domestic, in contrast with publicity of affairs involving whole lineages. Historically speaking, a lineage sometimes prospers and sometimes ends, according to the external environment or the internal development of the group. However, the descent group seldom stops performing corresponding rituals. This is true during the collectivization period, as people were able to frame it as a private or domestic sphere and be free from direct state intervention.² It is not surprising to find that the basic unit to revive

¹ In a greater detail, settlement rights include the right to open up land that was not privately claimed for cultivation; the right to build houses on wasteland; the right to gather fuel from hillsides; to collect fish and mollusks in small quantities from streams or the seaside to supplement one’s diet; to go to market; and to be buried on land near the village (Faure 2007: 4).

² Take Du village as an example. In the collectivization period, the ancestral temple and ancestral halls were demolished, common property of these organizations was confiscated, and all rituals in these organizations ceased. Here the communist state did succeed in destroying higher-level lineage structure. Under the name of feudal superstition, public rituals and commemorative places (such as temples and ancestral halls) were under strict regulation. Social relations grounded by this structure became less and less important and began to fading away from memory. As graves were removed and destroyed in the name of regional development in the late 1950s, higher-level lineage alliances received a mortal blow.

traditional practices after the end of the Cultural Revolution started from the decent group.

This study works to understand the adaptation and reproduction of local tradition, the unit of analysis has to be multi-village ritual alliance and the analysis has to include the lower layers of groupings. It pays particular attention to the dynamic among these sub-groupings.

[II] Data Collection

This section explains the collection of data. First, I explain how data was collected. Second, I explain what kinds of data were collected. To explain the data, I have to mention the population of three communities of this study. The three communities vary: Zhu stronghold has a population of 18,000, and includes three administrative units with twenty-three natural villages. West Mountain has a population of 9,000, and includes six administrative units with about forty natural villages. Du village has a population of 2,300, and is a natural village belonging to an administrative unit with five natural villages. With such a population in each community, I had to be more strategic in data collection. In each community, I chose a lower layer of ritual alliance as the base of the local community from which to do ethnography. The choice of the unit of this ritual alliance shifts according to the local context. I tended to choose stronger units of the lower

In contrast, the descent group and the ancestral hall were retained as the fundamental unit in community life. The change of a political regime could not change people's fundamental belief in death, afterlife and the past. These cultural beliefs were strong; they had been preserved and passed down even at the height of state ideological intervention. In all of the three cases in this research, private commemoration and life rituals had never been forbidden even through the Cultural Revolution. When I asked why this was the case, a former party cadre of Du village said, "life and death are still of private concerns. The state could not and was not willing to intervene. Even if the state wanted to forbid people from practicing life rituals, the state did not know where to start."

The descent group was the basic unit to collaborate in daily life and to deal with life rituals, especially death. No one family could accomplish it by itself. To perform a life ritual properly, the family needed intensive labors, the knowledgeable elder to instruct the procedure, collective funds, and a patriarch to host rituals. A life ritual is collaborative by definition. The very idea about lineage is preserved in the descent group, and this group was also the most important foundation of the revival movement in the 70s and 80s.

There were some subtle impacts of state regulation, however. For example, the death anniversary was called *jiri* (忌日), which has connotations of spiritual life. At this time, local people called it *jiniandri* (紀念日), which is translated as "memorial day," and lacks the spiritual connotation.

layer of ritual alliance because these units were where the major local leaders live; staying with these leaders helped me to enter the field easier. Nonetheless, the choice of the lower layer of ritual alliance should not affect my findings, as the general state found in the lower layer of ritual alliance is representative in the whole community. In what follows, I describe the situations in each community.

The Plateau descent group of Downhill village is a lower-unit ritual alliance of Zhu Stronghold. Downhill village has a population of approximately 2,100 persons, and the Plateau descent group has a population of 500. Downhill village is one the two strongest villages of Zhu Stronghold and the Plateau descent group is the most coherent descent groups of Downhill village. I stayed with a family of a wealthy businessman of Downhill village. I chose the Plateau descent group as a focus is because residents of members of the Plateau descent clustered together, while the rest of the descent groups of Downhill village did not cluster together. In addition to Downhill village, I also stayed with the president of Zhu Stronghold temple when there were events at the temple. The president's village is next to the temple, and I stayed there out of convenience to observe late night and early morning rituals. In addition, the living room of the president of Zhu Stronghold temple was the place for the local leaders to gather at the time of ritual events. Thus, staying in his place helped me to observe the interaction among local leaders and to interview them.

As the lower unit of ritual alliance in the West Mountain I chose Puddle village of the Eastside administrative unit, one of the six administrative villages of the West Mountain. The Eastside administrative unit has seven natural villages and all members share the Lu surname along with their spouses. The Eastside administrative unit has a population of 1800, and Puddle village has a population of 300. As will be discussed, the major leaders of temple festivals

switched from the local patriarch to the local cadres, especially the village head and the party secretary. I got to know the village head of the Eastside administrative unit through a temple event, and he kindly offered me accommodations. His family lived in Puddle Village of the Eastside administrative unit.

The Melon sub-branch of Du village is a lower-layer ritual alliance in Du village. The Melon sub-branch has a population of 200. It is one of the most coherent agnatic groups of Du village. When I did my fieldwork, the Melon sub-branch was reconstructing their sub-branch hall. Some members of the Melon sub-branch hall gathered together everyday at the sub-branch hall to supervise the project and held meetings regularly to discuss the reconstruction project. With all these activities, members of the Melon sub-branch were more accessible than any other agnatic groups in Du village. One of the patriarchs of the Melon sub-branch kindly offered me accommodation with his family.

My data collection can be divided into two parts. The first part is the village life of the lower unit where I stayed. In addition to attention to ritual practices, private and public, I also talked to people about their daily concerns, ranging from making money to child-raising and domestic life. The second part is ritual alliance. I attended as many public rituals as possible; the scope included all public rituals of the community. Ritual events were the occasions to meet local leaders, some of whom became my key informants, and I conducted unstructured or semi-structured interview with them.

I gathered five data sets. First, I gathered general community level information, such as local socio-economic history, geographic feature, political structure, and local social structure through interviewing local officials, local intellectuals (such as elementary and high school teachers) and local leaders, and collecting official statistical records and publication on the

region. Second, I collected stories of the revival movement—both of success and failure—in each community. I traced sequential activities that were revived in the name of the local tradition and sought to know the key advocates and leaders—why they wanted to revive certain activities, how different groups of people in the community came to participate in the activity, what resources they mobilized to host the activity, and what problems were solved. Third, I collected fifteen life stories in each community (from people in their twenties to elders in their eighties, both male and female), and participation observation on local people’s daily life. Fourth, in each lower unit of choice, I did a survey on the residents’ current occupation, proximate income, educational background, and marriage status. Fifth, I collected available products and records of cultural representations, such as genealogy, CDs of community festivals, conference records, stone inscription, historical records and individual diaries on community activities.

[III] Three Cases: General Background

This section provides the general background of each community. Figure 2.1 locates the three villages on the map of Fujian province. To help organize important categories for three-case comparison, table 2.1 summarizes the general background of the three cases.

[Figure 2.1: Map of Fujian province and the three villages]
 (source: Johomaps)



[Table 2.1] General background of three communities

	Du village	Zhu Stronghold	The West Mountain
Village type	The-village-in-the-city	The entrepreneur village	The village of out-migrant workers
Location	In South-east Fujian coast, close to Xiamen city	In middle south Fujian, in east coast	In west Fujian of mountainous area
Population	2300	18000	9000
Community composition	A natural village belongs to an administrative units with five natural village	23 natural villages of three administrative units	Six administrative units
Surname	Single surname of Du	Single surname of Zhu	Dominated by Lu lineage with seventy percent of the population, and there are nine other surname groups
Changes of live mode	1. 1980s: fishing and oyster cultivation 2. 1988: special industrial zone of Taiwanese factories 3. 2000s: rents from migrant workers living in the village	Emergent business class since 1970s	1. 1980s: Craftsmanship 2. 1990 to the present: low skilled migrant workers in cities
Regular residents	Other than collage students most people live in the community. In addition, non-villagers live in the community is between five to ten times more than the villagers.	One third, the rest is doing business spreading all over China	One third, the rest only comes back on Chinese New Year and the annual ritual event

A) Du village

Du village is a successful case of rebuilding solidarity and collective identity through the revival of traditional practices in the reform era. The success of Du village is attributed to the overseas Chinese council of Du village (OCC), which was transformed from a semi-official organization into a grass-roots organization that hosts traditional practices. In addition, OCC took over the responsibility of the local state, such as maintaining social order in regards to outnumbered non-villagers living in the village, and consolidating its authority in managing community affairs. The authority of OCC is restricted to cultural and social domains, and the state still controls the boundary of these two domains.

Du village, a natural village, is located at Cape Crab and is the smallest community of the three cases. The community has a population of 2,300. Apart from three households with the

Chen surname, the rest of the officially registered residents are of the Du surname. The Du family migrated to Cape Crab in the 14th century and has become one of the strongest lineages in the local area. With population growth, descendants of the Du surname expanded to nearby areas and formed eight other villages of the Du surname.

Du village is located at the coastal area facing Xiamen island, one of the major cities in south China, and part of the frontier facing Taiwan. With this geographical location, Du village has been under the strictest state control among the three cases and benefited from state planning since the 1950s. The political, cultural and economic domains have been closely monitored and developed under state planning. Among the three cases, traditional practices in Du village suffered from the most serious disruption in the Maoist period, and the lineage structure was broken down.

Villagers of Du village have been working under a limited cultural sphere defined and permitted by the state to revive traditional practices and reestablish traditional authority. The regional government established an overseas Chinese council (OCC) in 1982. The purposes of the OCC were to receive and communicate with overseas Du people and help them realize their projects for Du village, usually in forms of reconstructing ancestral halls and recovering ancestral worship. Later on, with further release on the governmental control over traditional practices, villagers started to revive deity worship publicly and the OCC of Du village became the organization taking charge of both ancestral worship and deity worship. The OCC of Du village became a strong grass-root organization that was capable of monopolizing community-wide religious activities and providing public goods to the community.

Socio-economic changes in Du village started from the decollectivization in 1984, and villagers made money by fishing and oyster cultivation. A fundamental transition occurred when

the area was developed by the state into an industrial zone for Taiwanese factories in 1988. Eighty percent of land in Du village was expropriated by the government. Villagers were transformed from farmers into workers and landlords, and some of them, especially middle-age people suffered from structural unemployment. The very last of the agricultural land was expropriated in 2003, and in 2006 Du villagers officially became an urban population. The most stable income of villagers in the new economy is rent from migrant workers working in local factories. (Unofficial estimation of workers living in Du village is between fifteen thousand and thirty thousand.)

B) Zhu Stronghold

Zhu Stronghold is an extraordinary case, as its lineage authority was not undermined in the Maoist period, and it was ready to manage community affairs in all regards, including economics in the reform era when the state released its control over local politics and economic organizations. The community strength of Zhu Stronghold is further intensified with ritual events in the reform era; traditional practices are intertwined with not only local politics but also business practices. In other words, political and social domains are largely structured and ordered by local cultural logic.

Zhu Stronghold developed into a community of entrepreneurs in the reform era. It was one of the wealthiest communities in the county. Relying on lineage networks, local people do business all over China and of the Republic of Kirgizstan. Their major businesses include tire repairing business in all mining fields all over China, renting steel tubes in Shenzhen, running oil stations in Xinjian, cell phone retailing business in Xingjian and the Republic of Kirgizstan, and real estate development in Yuannan province. More than seventy percent of locals between the

ages of twenty and fifty have an education equivalent to high school or below, started to work between the age of fifteen and eighteen, and got married around twenty. They worked at their relatives' shops or companies and tried to save enough to startup their own business. Every adult male sees himself as a businessman or a businessman in the making.

The success of lineage networks for doing business is due to the strong traditional authority and communal solidarity throughout the Maoist period. The implementation of new administrative structures and new economic and social organizations—the production team—did not result in undermining the lineage structure in Zhu Stronghold. The inner politics and social structures mirrored lineage politics and the lineage structure of the republican period. The major difference in the Maoist period was that public rituals were forbidden, and the local people were forbidden from freely moving outside the community. Nonetheless, private rituals, particularly spirit possession, continued to be practiced throughout the Maoist period.

With continuity of traditional authority through the Maoist period, the revival of public traditional practices at the end of the Maoist period is not about rebuilding the local community that was weakened in the Maoist period, as the case of Du village. Instead, it is about using traditional practices and cultural resources to make the best use of new opportunities. In the reform era, community building in Zhu Stronghold equals economic development. On the one hand, a strong lineage network is the main resource that local people relied on to start a new business. On the other hand, the economic benefits of strong lineage network further solidify the lineage network. Therefore, being a wealthy community equals a strong community in the case of Zhu Stronghold.

C) West Mountain

West Mountain represents a case where a new collective is built in the reform era to adjust to the new social structure. The new community is put into practice when the procession of the Temple of Benevolence (hereafter, the Procession) was revived in 1993. The practice of the Procession was modified with the new context of the locality, which was a transformation from highly stratified groups based on land holding to a community emphasizing egalitarianism among different surnames and different villages. Nonetheless, the construction of the new community was still a process, and traditional authority was only held in ritual practice. This limited success of the new community provided a new hometown identity that was particularly important for community members, who are mostly migrant workers in the new market economy.

West Mountain community, located deep in the mountainous region of western Fujian province, is a newly formed ritual alliance—with a population of nine thousand residents—through the revival of the eighth day and the fourth month procession (the Procession) in 1993. This newly formed alliance aims to construct a new collective identity, although most residents and their ancestors moved to the area no later than the late nineteenth century. Not to mention that Lu lineage, the dominant lineage in West Mountain area, settled in the thirteenth century.

The West Mountain area underwent a rapid socio-economic transition in the reform era, transforming into the hometown of migrant workers. Without much natural resources or any other economic advantage, local people previously migrated out to other areas. With de-collectivization in the 1980s, local people once again had opportunities to work outside the local area. Other than being farmers, in the 1980s, the most prevalent outside community work was construction work. At this time, construction workers worked in neighboring areas where they

could travel back to their home every day. Two or three months in a year, they traveled to other areas to work and were temporary absent from the village. Later on, in the 1990s and toward 2000s, working as unskilled factory workers in the industrial zone in south China province became the primary path for local people. People of working ability are mostly absent from the local area, and the local area is left with children and elders.

In this transition, individual networks narrowed and broadened at the same time. The importance of blood ties is narrowed to include only one's direct relatives and their families. Relatives sharing the same ancestor beyond five generations, termed the descent group, no longer means anything to individuals. Furthermore, lineage identity, which was weak to begin with, was further weakened. Nonetheless, friendship based on affection and shared hometown identity became more important for individuals to provide material and emotional support to deal with difficulties and hardship in the city. Friendships from youth, such as playmates and classmates in elementary and high school triumphs blood ties. This shift in personal relationships went hand in hand with the formation of the new collective in 1993 through the use of an old temple ritual in the republican era—the Procession.

This transition would not have been completed without the effort of local cadres. Local cadres were not concerned with the past history and the authenticity of traditional practices as were the local elites. Instead, their primary concern was the social and political order. In the de-collectivization period, the local cadres were short of means to mobilize local people, and at the same time, they discovered that by encouraging and leading deity worship, they gained legitimacy and moral ground for their ruling. Furthermore, with changes in the demography and structure of the local community under the new market economy, the local cadres found that ritual practices were the most effective solution to managing a community, where a majority of

its registered residents lived outside the community. Participating in deity and ancestral worship strengthened individuals' emotional ties and social networks to the local community. Stronger social ties allowed local cadres to better know of activities among community members, even if they reside outside the community. (This method is particularly important for local cadres to enforce the birth control policy, as most married women live outside the community.)

Conclusion

As discussed in the first section on research design, I chose cases with similar lineage structure and characters (single lineage, long inhabitation history, and a strong presence of traditional practices). With these similarity, and based on the existing literature, I expected to find variation in functional advantages according to the mode of living in each community; meanwhile, I expected to find similar strength of the traditional authority, for I was able to control most other aspects that the existing studies suggested being the cause for the variation in the community strength. In addition, I also expected to find similar power relations among the traditional authority, the local state, and the economic sphere. Furthermore, as these cases were chosen from similar local traditions, I expected no major difference in the cultural ideal of the community.

Chapter Three: Zhu Stronghold—A Strong, Solidifying Community

Zhu Stronghold represents successful adaptation of local tradition in the market economy. Lineage networks were transformed into intensive business networks, and the Zhu Stronghold temple council mediates community issues and internal disputes of all aspects: religious, social, economic and political. The economic, political, and social domains are structured and ordered by local cultural logics. The strong community with clear social order and capacity for mobilization is the base for community members to get ahead in the market economy.

This chapter shows that the integration among different domains—economic, political, religious, and social—is arranged and achieved through a sophisticated system of traditional practices. This sophisticated system of traditional practices is discussed from two sets of practices: ritual practices and a system of spirit possession. Ritual practices emphasize demonstrating a high level of community solidarity through complex and extravagant rituals. In contrast to the secular aspect of community mobilization of ritual practices, the system of spirit possession emphasizes the sacred force by demonstrating the magic power of the local deity. Through the shared experience of fear of the local deity, spirit possession creates the base of shared emotion for community members and provides the ground for community morality.

These two sets of practices, although demonstrating different aspects of community, secular and sacred, jointly present a coherent understanding of the community and one's obligation to the community. The core of the ideal community includes the following three aspects: the pre-existence of the community emphasizing the limitation of individual; one's obligation toward community building; and one's fate and success in market economy determined by his contribution to the community. In brief, community members hold the idea

that one can only prosper when the community is strong, and that one has to work as hard as possible to make the community strong.

The success of Zhu Stronghold as an entrepreneur village since the turn of 1980 has deep roots in its traditional practices, and it is also advantageous from the continuous lineage authority and the preservation of the practice of the spirit possession in the Maoist era. With the intact cultural practices and structure, when the revival movement began in the early 1970s, cultural resources were ready to be used to respond to economic situations that community members faced at the time.

This chapter focuses on analyzing traditional practices and explaining the link between traditional practices and the economic success of the community members. The chapter is organized into four sections. The first section examines the logic and arrangement of ritual practices. The second section examines the system of the spirit possession. The third section subtracts the collective ideal of community from the first section and the second section. The fourth section discusses a system that developed from traditional practices and structuring one's responsibility, obligation, role and status in the community. I call this the honor system, and it covers economic, political, social and religious aspects.

The chapter is not organized chronologically, but analytically. Due to the limited space, I do not cover the development of traditional practices in the reform era. Instead, I explore the complexity of traditional practices, and only mention past examples to demonstrate the analytical points. The development of traditional practices is mostly linear in Zhu Stronghold. There are no transitions in the use or practice of traditional practices, as for the other two cases. As a result, the explanation of the case will not be undermined by not recounting the details of the development of the revival movement.

[I] Collective Action of Ritual

This section shows how ritual contributes to the high level of solidarity in Zhu Stronghold. The construction of high level of solidarity demonstrates community coherence in ritual and allows a subgroup to lead ritual practices. On the one hand, ritual is a demonstration of community unity. On the other hand, subgroups are not equal in community leadership or their representation in ritual. Strong groups dominate the temple committee council and hold more important ritual positions. The status as a strong group is not pre-determined. Each group has to demonstrate the strength of the group and maintain the status of the group by making greater contribution to community ritual, such as providing people to take part in the temple procession or by donating more money.

Competition for leadership leads to more and more complex and extravagant communal rituals, as every subgroup wants to increase their importance in ritual practices. The increasing complexity of the ritual then makes all social groups of different villages, of different descent groups, and of different social status (i.e. the political elite, the patriarchs, the ritual specialists, and the businessmen) interdependent to each other. Due to the intricacy of the ritual practice, no one social group can host the ritual without cooperation from the other social groups, which includes twenty-three villages with a population of 18,000. Ritual expenditures amounts to 300,000 RMB or more for a ritual event, and necessitates external community communication with the township and county government and more than forty neighboring villages. Furthermore, secret rituals need to be arranged. To pull all this off, different social groups must cooperate.

This chapter shows that solidarity is not a psychological state resulting from a ritual that has nothing to do with secular life. Rather, solidarity is built into the social process of ritual practices, and this social process is recognized, designed, and modified by members of the community. In demonstrating this point, this section discusses two guidelines of traditional practices that direct the development of the revival movement in Zhu Stronghold; it examines the ritual arrangement that makes the coexistence of community coherence and subgroup competition possible. The section begins by outlining the basic community structure in Zhu Stronghold.

A) Basic Community Structure

Zhu Stronghold has twenty-three natural villages. In Communist China, Zhu stronghold is divided into three administrative units: the Seashore unit, the Sea-peace unit, and the Mountain-surrounded unit. The Seashore unit has eight natural villages, and all the residents are of the Zhu surname. The Sea-peace unit has nine natural villages, with some non-Zhu residents. The Mountain-surrounded unit has eight natural villages, and six of these eight villages are from the Zhu family. These three administrative units are dominated by the Zhu lineage. In the 2000s, the population was around 18,000.

In illustration of the basic social structure and composition of Zhu Stronghold, this part introduces two main kinds of social groups. The first is where one is ascribed when one is born. In this ascription category, one is attributed according to village and descent group affiliation. The second is that of social status; the four dominating groupings are the political elite, ritual specialists, patriarchs, and businessmen. In what follows, I introduce these two kinds of social groups.

The first kind of social group is a combination between territorial affinity (namely, village) and agnatic affinity. From bottom to top, the levels of the community are a descent group within a village, a village, an administrative unit, and the Zhu lineage. Within a village, the agnatic affinity is the primary criterion for grouping, and the descent group is the basic unit. The importance of the genealogical order is restricted to the boundary of the village. There is no substantial alliance among a lineage branch of different villages. In addition, what allies descent groups of a village is the village temple, not ancestral worship. The village temple is also the base for multi-village alliance. The Zhu Stronghold temple leads twenty-three village temples.

The second kind of social group is the leadership in Zhu Stronghold. This is the political elite, the patriarch, businessmen, and the ritual specialist. In what follows, I discuss who they are and what they do for the community. The political elite includes current party cadres, retired party cadres, retired managers from state-owned enterprises, retired school principals, and retired officials from provincial or district governments. Their leadership skill and political connections with the local government, which they have accumulated throughout their career, is the asset for the community. They specialize in external community negotiations, including the local government and villages nearby Zhu Stronghold. Because these local leaders all share a similar experience of serving in the communist party, this group forms the most coherent entity of the four kinds of local leaders.

The second kind of leadership is the patriarch of strong descent groups of each village. Politics in each village is based on descent groups. The strongest descent group represents other descent groups of the same village in community affairs. In other words, the patriarch of the strongest descent group of each village represents their village in the community leadership, and

his position toward community affairs is structured by the power and interests of his descent group and village.

The third kind of the local leader is the wealthy businessmen. Businessmen have been involved in the revival movement and local social welfare programs since the beginning of the formation of this class in the turn of 1980. By providing financial support, wealthy businessmen shape the path of the revival movement, and they lead local social programs in activities such as building elementary schools, roads, and public graveyards. Because they are away from Zhu Stronghold for most of the year, they are not involved in managing the Zhu Stronghold temple as much as the other three kinds of local leaders.

The fourth kind of leader is the ritual specialist, who controls knowledge of the practice local tradition. The majority of the ritual specialists in Zhu Stronghold are spirit mediums. Spirit mediums control the means to communicate with the local deity, and they are the voice to announce decisions made by the local deity. The secret power that they possess can undermine the other kinds of leaders, even if they cannot rule the community without other leaders. Most ritual specialists are illiterate and poor, and come from a lower social class in the community. Ritual specialists do not form a coherent entity. They compete with each other and no one can claim to control the group. The other three kinds of leaders have an ambivalent attitude toward this group. A large part of the story of the revival movement in Zhu Stronghold is about the control over ritual specialists by the local elite and patriarchs, which I elaborate in the section on the spirit medium.

B) Two Guidelines

Two guidelines can be identified for the development of the revival movement in Zhu Stronghold since the 1970s. These two guidelines, which I induce from informants' practices and their interpretation of their practices, demonstrate the high level of community solidarity, and deal with the uncertainty of the market economy. Under these two guidelines, the revival movement develops into ritual practices emphasizing the coexistence of community coherence and subgroup competition. This part discusses the two guidelines, which have been clearly articulated since the beginning of the revival movement.

Guideline 1: Demonstration of Community Solidarity

When asked about the goal of ritual, informants of Zhu Stronghold pointed to the importance of demonstrating a high level of communal solidarity through ritual. This point is best summarized by my conversation with a leader of the Zhu Stronghold temple, who answered questions of why Zhu members are so enthusiastic in deity-related rituals. The temple leader said,

The development of Zhu Stronghold shows the magic power of the local deity. Our deity is more efficacious than those of neighboring communities, and this is why we are wealthier. On the request of the local deity, we revived deity-related activities much earlier than the other communities, and this in return brought us more economic opportunities and made the wealth of Zhu Stronghold... We as humans cannot know and control the magic powers. But our collective action as a community affects the local deity. The more cohesive we are, the more power the deity possesses... For example, we spent so much money on a pilgrimage, and there are so many tasks involved in making a pilgrimage possible. What do you think we are doing? We are demonstrating our solidarity to the local deity. Through demonstrating our solidarity, the local deity is also empowered and more capable of blessing us.

This articulation points to solidarity *demonstrated* by the ritual work. It must be emphasized that what is seen here is that solidarity is not seen as the product of ritual. Instead, solidarity is the motive and drive of ritual practices. Given this situation, how to demonstrate solidarity? According to my informants, there are two ways. The first is to revive traditional practices earlier than other neighborhood communities. The second is to conduct an as expensive

and complex ritual as possible. The first action is what led to the initial revival movement in 1973. Among neighborhood communities, Zhu Stronghold was the first community to revive the community wide procession—the Lantern procession—in the 1970s. When the Lantern procession was first revived, it required strong leadership and coherence of the community to make it possible, especially because of the political risk. Although the route and order of the procession was claimed to be identical to the Republican era practice, it was not easy to facilitate the smooth running of a procession involving more than ten thousand people and twenty-three villages. Therefore, the act of holding the Lantern procession is a demonstration of solidarity.

After the revival of the six regular annual community-wide rituals in the 1970s, the revival movement entered the second stage in the 1980s of making ritual as expensive and complex as possible. Under this method, the most difficult and complicated ritual—pilgrimage—is revived. A pilgrimage, which is held once every few years by request of the local deity, exposes a community's capability of fundraising, inner community coordination, ritual arrangement, and extra-community communication. In the reform era, the community held four pilgrimages: 1990, 1995, 1998 and 2006.

Guideline 2: Dealing with the Uncertainty of the Market Economy

The other important guideline of the revival movement is to respond to new economic opportunities through traditional practices. Since the early 1970s, there was an understanding that individuals can only survive and prosper with a strong community in the face of uncertainty under the market economy. A strong community provides a variety of resources, such as political leverage, economic capital, and human capital, to help individuals with economic opportunities. This understanding has been reproduced through communal ritual since the beginning of the

revival movement, and it is reinforced as the community becomes wealthier and wealthier. In what follows, I provide examples to show how the concern of economic well-being links to traditional practices.

I start from examine the root that led to the announcement of the local deity for open revival of deity worship in 1973. Recalling the situation in the turn of 1970, informants commented that they sensed an opportunity of change for their lives. One of my informants said, “The political atmosphere was mitigated, especially after 1971. In the slack season, we engaged in illegal trade for locally produced seafood. We carried these products to a nearby town and sold it there. This was not just us. Villagers in nearby areas were all engaged in this kind of small trade.” There was a booming of the underground economy in the early 1970s. However, most informants cannot explain the rational behind the change of the national economy or politics. It was a living experience based on trial-and-err. One of my informants commented,

Life was tough in the collectivization period. Zhu Stronghold had little good land to farm. We were all very poor. We took every chance to improve our life. Illegal trade existed in the collectivization period. When you got caught, the police confiscated everything. You not only lost cargo, but also your transporting tools. A handcart or a bicycle was a huge fortune at the time... In the beginning of the 1970s, the success rate for illegal trade increased. Few police were on the road. I don't know why this was the case, but I knew that if I succeed two times out of three times, then I was making some money. If I was only caught one time out of five times, I was making a good fortune.

In speaking about the early 1970s, locals expressed a sense of opportunity coupled with a sense of uncertainty. Individuals had been trying to make sense of it and make the best use of the opportunity. The 1973 revival activity, therefore, was not a sudden, unexpected event, but rather an attempt to make the use of the new opportunities through collective action. Political risk was high in the revival movement, and economic risk was not any lower. Constructing the omnificent local deity and a strong community were ways that built confidence for members in dealing with uncertainty. When informants talked about the early economic success of Zhu Stronghold, they made the link between economic success and the construction of a strong community. One

informant commented,

Before 2000, we were the wealthiest rural community in the county to which we belonged. The reason for this was because we revived public ritual practices much earlier than the rest of communities. Being able to revive ritual practices at the time when all the other communities were afraid of the political risk showed the high level of solidarity of our community. This high level of solidarity helped us to go through the difficult time... Thus, our economy success was not just a blessing from the local deity, but was also a result of being a strong community.

The importance of having a strong community and how a strong community served as the base for economic venture repeatedly appeared in my conversation with Zhu members. I did not find this kind of self-consciousness and clear articulation of a strong community in the other two cases. The economic situation is one of the main community issues that the local deity is responsible for, and which traditional practices deal with. In what follows, I will illustrate this point through the example of the public opinion on the ritual decision of the coming year in 2009.

In the eleventh lunar month of 2008, the year when South China was hit by a financial crisis, the issue that I overheard villagers talking about most was the economic performance of Zhu members that year and how it would be in the next year. People were pessimistic about the national and international economy. By the time of the twelfth lunar month of 2008, villagers anticipated the local deity would likely announce a pilgrimage for the coming year. To my question on the logic behind the speculation, an informant replied:

Businessmen are not making as much money as they were a year or two ago... People are losing their confidence and this is when we need a pilgrimage. A pilgrimage costs a great amount of money, and it is a task that cannot be accomplished without high solidarity within the community... We believe that in the economic downturn, we need to spend more money on religious practices. The more we spend on religious activities, the more we earn back from our business... With the economic downturn, we thus think that it might be appropriate to call for a pilgrimage in 2009.

This quote shows the sequence to deal with public issues through traditional practices. First, an evaluation of a common issue of public concern was circulated in the community. The

concern in the year of 2008 was that businessmen were losing money. Then, after evaluating the public issue, community members proposed a ritual solution. In 2008, community members requested a pilgrimage. Third, the reason for the ritual solution was to strengthen solidarity and create sentiment of shared fate to cop with the difficulty.

These two guidelines together form a strong belief in community strength to cope with uncertainty in the transition period. In addition, community strength needs to be demonstrated and enhanced through extravagant and magnificent ritual practices. The development of the revival movement has followed these guidelines since the 1970s.

As I pointed out these two guidelines had already formed since the beginning of the revival movement, one might ask the origin of these understandings of community. The first guideline is continuity from the republican period, while the second guideline is more likely to be an adaptation in the reform era. Zhu Stronghold was involved in armed flights with neighborhood communities for control over natural resources since the eighteenth century. The local deity was used as the symbol of the community and the temple procession was used to declare the territory and to demonstrate the community strength. Although these practices were stopped in the Maoist period, the collective identity and the community structure did not fundamentally change. So does the guideline link traditional practices with the demonstration of solidarity.

As for the second guideline, the link between community strength and the economic situation, there was some continuity from the past—however, what was practiced in the republican period was not exact the same. Some subgroups of Zhu Stronghold were businessmen that conducted trade in the late imperial period to the republican era. For these subgroups, their

deities were closely connected to their business decision. The efficacy of a local deity of subgroups was judged by its capacity to bless the fortune and prosperity of the subgroup. I did not collect any example in the republican era showing that the Zhu Stronghold temple activities, especially pilgrimage, was responsive and responsible for the economic well-being of the whole community, as is the case now. The emphasis on the extravagant expenditure also seemed to be a new phenomenon in the reform era, as my informants suggested. In the republican era, according to my informants, solidarity was most closely linked with the number of people attending deity related activities, rather than the money spent. The linking of the strength of the community and the local economy is a new phenomenon in the reform era. This is a result of the members of Zhu Stronghold sharing the same economic opportunities in the reform era. In contrast, in the republican era, people were restricted by natural resource of the village in which they resided.

C) Coexistence of Community Coherence and Subgroup Competition

The above showed that under the guidelines of demonstrating community solidarity and responsiveness to economic situations, the revival movement is moving toward more complicated and expensive ritual practices. To make such ritual possible, the community has to have strong leadership and the ability mobilizing human labor and money. Zhu Stronghold's effective approach is to encourage subgroup competition for leadership of the Zhu Stronghold temple. Together with the emphasis on solidarity, ritual practices show coexistence of community coherence and subgroup competition.

Below I discuss two sets of community norms that facilitate subgroup competition: that of villages, and that of leaders. Among villages, the strongest villages, defined by the number of members and wealth of the village, dominate the Zhu Stronghold temple council, while the weak

villages do not have any representative in the Zhu Stronghold temple council. To be the strong villages controlling the temple council, the villages have to take on more obligations over the success of traditional practices, such as contributing more money and providing more human labor.

There is a clear division of labor among the four leadership groups—the political elite, the ritual specialists, the patriarchs, and the businessmen. The political elite is in charge of external community communication, including with the local government and neighborhood villages. The patriarch of the strongest descent group of a village represents their village in the community leadership. He is the one who executes the preparation of the ritual event in the village, such as collecting money from villagers, encouraging participation in the ritual event, communicating with the ritual specialists for sacrifices in the name of the village. The ritual specialist controls the know-how of local tradition. They arrange the religious aspects of traditional practices, including how to use spells to protect the troupe, how to hold the statues of the local deity on the pilgrimage, the special tools and costumes participants should hold and wear, and what to offer on the alter. Businessmen are not involved in the administrative process; instead, they are responsible for financially supported extravagant rituals.

The balance among the four social groups and the clear division of labor do not come without a struggle. There was a time that the political elite, the ritual specialists, and the patriarchs struggled to dominate the Zhu Stronghold temple council by excluding the other groups from the leadership. The complex ritual practices, however, kept any of these groups from claiming domination. In the end, they recognized each other as all irreplaceable for the ritual practices. In addition, in the course of the power struggle, each social group made their

task further irreplaceable and more important to define the strength of the community, which resulted in more and more complicated ritual practices. In what follows, I show how this worked.

Because of the political risk, the political elite, especially retired and current party cadres were ambivalent toward traditional practices in the 1970s and 1980s. They did not hinder ritual; neither did they actively take part in ritual. Nonetheless with the growth of ritual practices, the local elite used the 1995 pilgrimage as a platform to assert their irreplaceable role in ritual practices. In order to legitimate their own participation, they criticized the previous event and defined tasks for themselves, which was the external communication. One retired party cadre, who joined the 1995 pilgrimage, discussed how a struggle over local politics stands behind the organization of ritual practices:

After the first pilgrimage in 1990, we (retired and current local cadres) became less and less satisfied with how the leader of Zhu Stronghold temple handled the community affairs. People who dominated the Zhu Stronghold temple were mainly ritual specialists and vulgar patriarchs who lacked negotiation skills. They failed to convince the neighboring villages to receive the procession properly. A proper reception includes having non-Zhu surname villages on the pilgrimage route form a group to receive the procession at the entrance of the village, to offer a red envelop to the local deity of Zhu Stronghold, and to perform opera to honor the local deity of Zhu Stronghold. Villagers in the neighboring villages commented on these failures, and undermined the reputation of Zhu Stronghold...In 1995, when the local deity called for another pilgrimage, a number of retired party cadres, including myself and party cadres at the time, agreed that we could not stay silent anymore...This was why we ended up stepped in by leading the task in external communication.

Ritual is seen as a space to contest local politics among four leadership groups and each group defined the goal of the ritual differently: they saw it as a way to emphasize their own contribution. Ritual specialists are interested in showing the magic power of the local deity. Retired party cadres focus on maintaining the reputation of Zhu Stronghold (in comparison to other neighborhood communities) as a strong community through secular methods, such as the number of people who participated in the pilgrimage, and the difficulty of the ritual. The patriarchs are concerned with the maintenance of the communal and lineage order, and maintenance of the status for their village and descent group. Businessmen are interested in

extravagant ritual forms to show off their wealth. In brief, the responsibility for each social group is not assigned arbitrarily by a higher authority, but rather each group creates it.

Although there are many stories about the competition among these four groups, what needs to be stressed is that competition among the groups does not lead to break down of the community. Instead, it further strengthens the community as each group realizes that they cannot do without the others. Interdependence among these social groups is enhanced in the development of the revival movement as well, and all the stated goals of each social group become inevitable for ritual practices in Zhu Stronghold.

The situation that encourages subgroup competition works well in the community where the strength of subgroups varies, and the specialty of each group is distinctive and irreplaceable. There are three preconditions for this approach to work without resulting in factions and a breakdown of the community: an open structure for mobility, no economic subordination among subgroups, and external adversary. The first precondition—an open structure for mobility—means that subgroups can envision the possibility to move up the ladder. With clear community norms for subgroup competition, members of Zhu Stronghold believe that they can gradually move forward with the collective effort of village members, such as working hard to increase the wealth of villagers and contributing to traditional practices. From the past history, including the republican period and the reform era, there are examples where villages in the middle move forward with the collective efforts of the village members.

The second precondition is that differentiation among subgroups is not determined by the control of economic resources that can cause group suppression, such as land ownership. In the republican period, there were small landlords in each village, and tenants were mostly from the same village. No one family controlled a mass amount of land. Neither did any social group

control a great amount of land resulting in subordination of the other social groups. Needless to say, in the reform era, the main economic opportunities are doing business outside the local area. There is clear hierarchy among villages, in terms of the wealth of the village. However, there is no economic suppression among villages.

The third condition is that there is external adversary unifying the community. As I pointed out earlier, Zhu Stronghold was in violent competition for natural resources, especially control over ports and water in the late imperial China and the republican era. Traditional practices were used to organize members of Zhu Stronghold to fight against adversary in communities. In the reform era, although there is no longer much to fight over, the past memory continues. Members of Zhu Stronghold are consciously in competition with neighborhood communities over who revives the procession first, who spends most money for a deity-related activity, and who can host the most complicated ritual.

The existence of an external adversary gives competition two facets: one external and the other internal. For example, in the Lantern process, the competition for fireworks and firecrackers has two layers: a competition among Zhu Stronghold and other communities, and a competition among the villages of Zhu Stronghold. This is how community coherence and subgroup competition coexist. In what follows, I will further explore how the coexistence of community coherence and subgroup competition is arranged in ritual practices.

D) Arrangements that Produce Solidarity

To further analyzing how the coexistence of community coherence and subgroup competition is realized in ritual practice, I identify three interrelated, yet analytically separable sets of ritual arrangements: interdependence among social groups, a ritual order reflecting power

disposition among social groups, and space for conflicts. This part discusses these three sets of ritual arrangement respectively.

Interdependence among Social Groups

The first arrangement is interdependence among social groups. This includes social groups of different social status, social groups of different villages, and descent groups in a village. The interdependence is arranged with two facets: the symbolic facet and the facet of collective mobilization. The symbolic facet is to symbolically represent the group as unified. Take the Lantern procession for example. According to local customs, each married male has to hold a lantern to represent the household he started. Linking households in a village and villages of the entire Zhu Stronghold together represents the endless offspring and prosperity of the lineage. In this demonstration, the task—to represent the whole lineage—can only be accomplished with every male member's participation, this symbolizes the interdependence among villages and among members of each village.

As for the facet of collective mobilization, ritual practices need every social group to take responsible for its tasks. For example, as I already mentioned, a pilgrimage needs all four groups of leaders to take on specific tasks. The political elite negotiates with neighborhood communities to ensure the route of the pilgrimage in the nearby region, and the proper receiving ritual from community temples of neighborhood communities. The ritual specialist arranges the ritual procedure, while the patriarch mobilizes villagers to take part in the pilgrimage and maintain order in the activity. Businessmen donate money to support the pilgrimage. The above list shows that the pilgrimage cannot be held without the contribution from all four social groups.

A Ritual Order Reflecting Power Disposition

The opposite side of interdependence is power disposition. The second arrangement is a ritual order reflecting power disposition among social groups. The display of power disposition also has two facets: a symbolic facet and the facet of collective mobilization. Order in procession is a symbolic display of power disposition among villages. Power disposition among villages is a combination among a few factors: wealth, the number of male members, political capital possessed by members who serve in the government. In the marketization period, the first criterion, wealth, outweighs the other two criteria. Although order in the procession is harder to change, hierarchy among villages can be symbolically illustrated through extravagant ritual, such as the length of the line of lanterns that represent the amount of male members in each village, and money spent on fireworks and firecrackers that represent the wealth of the village.

As for the facet of collective mobilization, power differentiation is displayed through different obligations and responsibilities toward ritual practices. For example, wealthier villages have to contribute more money to ritual practices and provide more human labor to participate in the ritual. In addition, among different social groups of leaders, it is arranged through task division in preparation for, and carrying out, the ritual event. Groups of different social status, as listed above, have a specific role and responsibility to make the ritual succeed.

Space for Conflicts

The third arrangement is the possibility to interrupt or transgress the existing order. The second set of ritual arrangements present the community as a highly stratified and ordered. However, the importance of the coexistence of coherence and competition is to provide room to interrupt the established structure, so that those at the bottom can envision a possibility for

change, and those on the top have to work hard to maintain their status. In Zhu Stronghold, ritualization of conflict is the main mechanism to channel discontent and accommodate change. In what follows, I use the incident in the Lantern procession of 2009 to illustrate how conflict is ritualized.

The other facet of the stable power differentiation in ritual is the fact that once in a while, a weaker village could try to challenge the hierarchy by changing the order of a procession. This kind of action, as observed in Zhu Stronghold, is not exceptional or abnormal. Instead, I argue it is tolerated and becomes part of the ritual. The illustration of conflicts among villages through ritual practices costs less than other means, such as an armed flight, as once happened between two villages of Zhu Stronghold in the middle of the nineteenth century, and resulted in three deaths. All attempts to challenge the order of procession since the revival of the procession have failed. The settlement of conflicts in the ritual demonstrates the strength of the community and the power structure is reinforced afterward. However, I argue it is also important for weaker social groups to have a way of challenging the existing hierarchy. This possibility motivates Zhu people to work harder and considers them as equal participants.

Since the revival of the Lantern procession in the early 1970s, the route and order of the procession was based on that in the Republican period. The Plateau descent group was the second of the procession, but it was the first group that lit fireworks and firecrackers. Grey village was the first one of the procession and the last one to light fireworks, meaning that they passed by Zhu Stronghold temple twice and only lit fireworks the second time when they passed Zhu Stronghold temple. In 2009, Grey village violated this order by lighting fireworks the first time it passed by the Zhu Stronghold temple. “Villagers have been discontent with the order of the procession, and complain about the time needed to spend on the procession,” the village head

of Grey village—Laizu—said the day after the incident. He continued, “Villagers of The Plateau descent group left after they lit fireworks. It is unfair that they only spend one hour in the procession, while my villagers have to spend six hours.” As for the charge that it was Laizu’s plan, he said, “There was no plan. I do not know who ordered to lighting of the fireworks. I did not attend the procession. I was in Zhu Stronghold temple to make preparations for the procession for the next two days. I think it was just an accident.” Laizu was a representative of the Council and a ritual specialist. He was in charge of ritual arrangements for activities of the Zhu Stronghold temple from 1975 to 1995, and again from 2006 to the present.

This incident was seen as a challenge to existing power disposition in Zhu Stronghold. The Plateau descent group was furious, and they threatened to beat Laizu to death. They saw this act as a challenge to the community order and the status of the Plateau descent group. The Plateau descent group is the most cohesive descent group of Zhu Stronghold, and is one of the strongest descent groups. “Being the first one to light the fireworks symbolizes our status in the community. We are the number one,” one villager of the Plateau descent group said. He continued, “The incident was a humiliation for our group, and it was unforgivable.” Right after the incident, an emergency meeting was held at the home of the president of the Council, Shicheng. Representatives of the Council and patriarchs of strong descent groups showed up for this meeting. Finally, the next day morning, before the start of the deity procession, an agreement was reached based on the understanding that the deity procession of the sixteenth and seventeenth day of the first lunar month affected the well-being, safety and prosperity of Zhu stronghold in the new year. Any violence that might occur in these two days would bring not only bad luck, but also shame to Zhu stronghold as a whole. Leaders of the Plateau descent group agreed to put aside this issue until after the procession. This incident was finally settled

when Laizu's youngest son died in a car accident a few days after the Lantern procession. Rumors circulated that it was a punishment from the local deity. Members of the Plateau descent group agreed that this was a more severe punishment than any violence against Laizu. The community order returned to what it was, and local people saw this event as a failed challenge to the community order.

Conflict only happens in limited ways when people take action in the realm of the ritual event. Changing the route of procession, changing the order of the troupe, and changing the order of lighting fireworks are the actions of conflict. When conflict happens in the realm of ritual event, a time to honor the deity, certain behaviors are strictly restricted as a common understanding, such as armed fight and killing. Another common understanding is that the ritual event cannot be interrupted. These rules and common understandings gain time for local leaders to settle the conflict, prevent the event from becoming more serious, and help cool down parties involved. In the incident of the 2009 Lantern procession, after the two-day deity procession, the immediate threat for violence against Laizu was mitigated, although members of the Plateau descent group were still upset. If it had not been for the death of Laizu's son, the settlement could have been an open apology from the side of Grey village to the Plateau descent group in the form of a banquet.

For the community, this was an attempt from a weaker, yet strengthening village to assert its rising power in the community. Grey village was counted as one of the bottom villages in the Republican era with poor performance in the economic field. In the past three decades, however, a number of villagers gradually succeeded in doing business. Although none of these businessmen were among the top businessmen in Zhu Stronghold, the wealth of the village rose to the middle rank. In addition, Laizu, the village head, has been involved in ritual activities in

Zhu Stronghold, and since 2006, he has established his status in the Council as irreplaceable with his knowledge and familiarity with ritual practices and his personal connections with ritual specialists, especially spirit mediums. Although no evidence has shown that Laizu plotted the incident and no one from Grey village admitted the incident was planned, this incident channeled the discontent accumulating in the village over the years.

This section has pointed out two principles guiding traditional practices in Zhu Stronghold since the beginning of the revival movement in the early 1970s. These two principles demonstrate the high level of community solidarity and means for dealing with the uncertainty of the market economy. Under these two guidelines a particular group dynamic is constructed in traditional practices—the coexistence of community coherence and subgroup competition. On the one hand, traditional practices aim to demonstrate the group solidarity through complicated and extravagant ritual practices. On the other hand, the community encourages competition for leadership and status in ritual order among different groups of leaders, among twenty-three villages and among descent groups of a village. The case of Zhu Stronghold shows that conflict and competition are not incompatible with group unity. This coexistence ensures the success of Zhu Stronghold in building community strength.

[II] The Local Deity and the Spirit Medium

The above section discusses the social process in ritual practices, and emphasizes the secular aspect of community mobilization. This section turns to the other side of the community mobilization—the sacred force, in the name of the local deity. These two sides are interrelated

and inseparable in villagers' minds. One of the above informants stated, " We are demonstrating our solidarity to the local deity. Through demonstrating our solidarity, the local deity is also empowered and is more capable of blessing us." The conscious construction of solidarity through traditional practices cannot be mistaken as a pure secular action. Instead, the collective effort to construct community strength is based on sacred force.

Zhu Stronghold has a system of spirit possession representing the local deity and controlling the secret power. Sophisticated systems of spirit possession like the one in Zhu Stronghold exist throughout rural China. The system of spirit possession in Zhu Stronghold is claimed to be a continuation from late imperial China. The uncommon development of the Zhu Stronghold spirit medium is the fact that it did not get destroyed nor interrupted in the collectivization period. Spirit mediums were still active at this time, although their performance moved to private spaces and responded to private issues, such as sickness and the well-being of individuals. Not only were local cadres aware of the activity of the spirit mediums, but some also participated in these activities. Xie, a party secretary from the 1950s to 1976, for example, was a spirit medium beginning in the 1940s, and he had never stopped serving the local deity until he passed away in 2007. None of the spirit mediums had faced political persecution. There were particular social, cultural and political arrangements that made this possible. This is out of scope of this thesis, however, and will be discussed in a separate paper.

This section will address two main questions regarding the spirit mediumship: how it works? And how does the community control the group of spirit mediums? Before answering these questions, I introduce the basic setting of spirit mediumship by looking into the task of the spirit medium and who they are.

A) Who is the spirit medium?

The spirit medium is the representative of the local deity. Each deity picks his own spirit medium, and has only one spirit medium. The person that is picked by a deity will experience a sickness until he agrees to serve as the spirit medium. The spirit medium picked by a deity is able to perform the appropriate rituals in the trance without much training or learning. Most spirit mediums are from a lower social class and have little education. It is said that the local deity can more easily occupy the body of this kind of person because he or she is less contaminated by a literate culture. Unless this spirit medium misbehaves and is deprived of the gift, he serves the deity until he dies. Spirit mediums cannot take any material reward from the local people, and the punishment for violation of this rule is death. They are responsible for their own living, but they cannot freely use their time or move. They need to stay in the village and be on call at all times for the use of the local deity. Most spirit mediums remain poor or become further impoverished after serving the deity.¹

The task of spirit mediums is two fold. The first is of community nature. The spirit medium communicates the local deity's orders and comments on the community affairs, such as how to practice a community ritual, when to hold a pilgrimage, and the prediction of the fortune of the community. There are regular possession sessions that the spirit medium announces to the local deity's order, such as the occasion of greeting the return of the local deity on the fourth day of the first lunar month. In addition, local leaders can call an emergency sessions when there are urgent issues that need advise from the local deity. The above two kinds of sessions are held in the temple and everyone can observe. The second task of the spirit medium is private sessions

¹ There are private spirit mediums that charge money for people to ask questions. People seek private spirit mediums to ask questions that they do not want other community members to know, such as private family issues and business competition.

serving local people. People call a spirit medium in trance when they need advice from the local deity. It can be held in a community temple or in private home. The most common questions range from health and medication of ill people, to the prediction for an investment and the luck of the household for the coming year.

The group of spirit mediums forms a self-monitoring group, although the group is not coherent. The group is structured by seniority but has no leader. The new comer has to be approved by the group. When a person claims to be possessed by the deity, it is always questioned if he was possessed by a deity or by a wild ghost. After watching the new comer in trance, senior spirit mediums can tell if the new comer is truly possessed by the local deity, and if so which deity it is. Each deity has his specific gestures and way of talking. It is through these gestures and way of talking that the judgment is made. The first few instances of the new comer's possession need to be verified based on the correctness of the prediction. If senior spirit mediums still have doubts, they will ask the local deity who they themselves represent.²

Spirit mediums form a special group that controls secret power. This power can benefit or damage Zhu Stronghold as a community, and the secret part of the religious knowledge is transmitted within the group. Junior spirit mediums are socialized into the group by hanging out with senior spirit mediums and learning the way they handle secret power in their leisure time. There is no one coherent group of spirit mediums, however. By the time I did my research, there were two main groups of spirit mediums and some other mediums that were peripheral to both groups. As for the question of the division between these two main groups, one spirit medium said,

² In Zhu Stronghold, people believe that community deities must be represented by male spirit mediums. A mid-age woman claimed that she was possessed by a local deity, and a spirit medium warned her that her only son's life would be in danger if she did not desist. In contrast, private spirit mediums can be women. A number of female private spirit mediums in the area are said to be efficacious.

In our spare time, spirit mediums usually hang out with other spirit mediums. We talk about everything, and there are things that are specifically shared only among spirit mediums. This is why we need to socialize together. There are about two dozen spirit mediums in Zhu Stronghold. We hang out with those who we like more. Some people just have a hard time getting along well... It is just a personal choice, nothing about faction. These two groups are certainly not adversaries... Spirit mediums from both groups work together when the community needs us. A couple of senior spirit mediums go between these two main groups. We know each other very well even we do not hang out with members of the other group often.

I did not sense factions between the two main groups of spirit mediums. In my observation, they worked, thought, and talked in a similar way. And I found no evidence of conflicts of interests in these two groups. The only thing that can be identified is residential affinity. A group is with most mediums living in the north side of Zhu Stronghold, and the other group is with most mediums living in the south side of Zhu Stronghold. Mediums from the same group cooperate in performing spirit possession more than the others who do not belong to the same group. In addition, these two groups of spirit mediums ally with different groups of secular leaders, basically leaders of their own villages and descent groups.

This division of the social group of spirit mediums is a good thing for the local government from the other secular leaders' point of view. In this way, the power of spirit mediums is divided because they are not a coherent group with a clear leadership. If a leader's authority is challenged by one spirit medium, he could use a spirit medium from the other group. This is a common method that the secular leader of Zhu Stronghold uses to check and balance the power of spirit mediums. I will discuss the mechanism to monitor spirit mediums in greater detail shortly. In what follows, I turn to the effectiveness of spirit possession, and how and why it works.

B) The effectiveness of spirit medium

When asked why they believe in the efficacy of the local deity, Zhu members all told me in almost identical terms that the local deity predicted the future and made orders to preserve and

maintain the vitality of the community. In addition, they also stressed that the local community would not have developed and members of Zhu members would not have been economically successful without the blessing from the local deity. When I further pressed them on why they believed so, most people told me that they had witnessed the efficacy of the local deity through spirit possession sessions.

The community of Zhu Stronghold is based on shared emotion and experience of the local deity through the spirit possession session. In contrast to the theory on shared emotion, which emphasizes the psychical presence in ritual events, I observe that shared experience of the local deity through spirit mediumship does not require the psychical presence as a condition. Villagers reported that they experienced the local deity in a similar way through a variety of spirit possession sessions. Contrary to Durkheim's study, however, they did not actually take part in the same ritual. To further understand how shared experience is produced without shared psychical presence in the same spirit possession session, I analyze the shared experience through two layers: individual experiences and the public spirit possession session.

Individual experience of the spirit mediumship

In Zhu Stronghold, every family has at least one spirit medium that they regularly seek for advice. This ranges from curing sickness of a family member to major life decisions, such as choice of the future daughter-in-law, career choice, and investment. Through private spirit possession sessions, individuals establish a close and intimate relation with the local deity. In addition, the participation of the possession session can be indirect by appointing a family member, usually parents, to call for a private spirit possession session while the person is away

from home. Informants believed that the local deity is omniscient in knowing everything about their life and investments no matter where they are.

The spirit possession session is no less an important occasion than the ritual event in constructing shared experience. This method is particularly important when people are away from home for most of the year. It is not uncommon for young men who just started a business to not come home for more than two years in row. The imagined community of Zhu Stronghold is a virtual community including all Zhu members no matter where they are and what they do. “Our deity stays at home, but he knows the market better than those of us who do business,” one of my informant commented.

In addition to psychological effect, advice given by the local deity is essential in formulating an understanding of the relationship between individuality and the collective. Personal advice is given that stresses the connection between communal norms and individual well-being. This kind of advices defines particular understanding of individuality. An individual cannot live without the collective is the message repeatedly emphasized in deity advices. In addition, advice further defines one’s social role and responsibility. For example, Marshal Huang, the famous local deity who is said to bless the extraordinary success of businessmen of the tire repair business, charged nothing from his believers. Instead, in exchange for his advice and as a way to accumulate one’s good karma, Marshal Huang instructed his believers to give money back to the locality by making donations to other local deities. He gave specific instructions to his believers of which particular deity they should donate their money to each time, and sometimes even the amount of money they should donate. By not asking anything for himself, Marshal Huang defined the act of supporting deity-related activities as one’s responsibility to the local community, and he defined involvement in the community as one’s

obligation as a member of the community. With the example and definition set by Marshal Huang, the link between donating money to deity-related activities and economic success cannot be interpreted simply as a utilitarian one. It is recognition of an individual limitation and the need for a strong community to support an individual. Ritual is a collective effort to build a strong community, as I have showed in the previous section.

This method also encourages individuals to take responsibility for their own well-being. The deity asks for individual contributions to the community before he answers one's request. In this way, the failure of the deity to answer an individual request is usually attributed to the failure of the individual to fulfill his communal responsibility. One's fate ends up in one's hand, as he has to work hard enough to fulfill his communal responsibility at the deity's request.

The Public Spirit Possession Session

Although my informants emphasized the efficacy of the local deity, after I stayed in the community long enough, I realized that no order is made randomly. As I will show below, the orders given by the local deity always addresses community issues that have been discussed by different social groups. Issues include changes of the political atmosphere, uncertainty about the future, changes in the local and national economy, new economic opportunities and disruption of the communal order. Furthermore, orders given by the local deity never contradict the mainstream opinion on the issue concerned. The sense of effectiveness is produced by responding to public concerns through announcements and orders made in the public spirit possession session.

How the public spirit possession session works is the focus of this part. I further divide the public spirit possession session into two stages: the stage of the formation of public opinion

before the session, and the stage of the possession session. The first stage is a social process that different social groups engage in producing consensus and common understanding over public concerns. The second stage is to produce a sense of effectiveness that demonstrates the magic power of the local deity and to consolidate consensus over public issues. In what follows, I use the occasion of greeting the return of the local deity on the fourth day of the first lunar month as the example to illustrate two stages of the public spirit possession session.

Stage 1: the Formation of Public Ppinion

The speculation of the possible announcement on the occasion of greeting the return of the local deity, the most important annual public spirit possession session, facilitates the formation of public opinion. On that event, the important decision of communal affairs for the coming year is announced. With this ritual cycle, the intense discussion of public issues and speculation on the possible announcement starts two months before the event. Social groups of leaders not only pay close attention to opinions of ordinary villagers, but also engage in shaping and forming the public opinion. Furthermore, the primary public concern in the community is the well being of the community in the new market economy. The content of the public opinion is an attempt to cope with the uncertainty of the market economy through ritual.

Evaluations of the issues facing the community and speculation on the possible announcement commonly vary between different social groups, as they have different concerns and different priorities. The weight of the importance of opinions in different groups also differs. Informants of spirit mediums and other secular leaders emphasized the heavier weight of the opinion of their social groups in shaping the up-coming announcement. For example, the announcement of 2009 might be a disappointment for my informants who were common

villagers, because their social groups speculated about a pilgrimage to cope with the economic downtime. Nonetheless, the announcement was not a surprise for local leaders, especially the political elite. On different occasions, different informants from the political elite expressed their disagreement that a pilgrimage would be held in the coming year.

Although the annual announcement is presented through a spirit possession session, I observed intensive networks of information and opinion exchange among four dominating social groups. Right before the announcement, spirit mediums were busy visiting the political elite and the patriarch of the same village and descent group to learn the opinion of the group of the political elite and of the patriarch. Spirit mediums also spent more time hanging out with each other to exchange information they each collected from their own social network. The intense discussion and speculation on the possible announcement in the coming year ceremony serves as an important platform for local people not only to express their concerns and opinions, but also as activities that arouse strong emotional energy and a sense of solidarity, by viewing their fate tied with the fate of the community.

Stage 2: the Public Spirit Possession Session

The sense of effectiveness is not about the deity responding to the local situation according the mainstream opinion, if there is one. Instead, it is a feeling that the local deity is concerned about the local situation and guarantees that the community will be fine no matter what issue is at stake. Let me continue with the announcement in the ceremony to greet the local deity's return to the community in 2009. Despite the popular speculation for a pilgrimage, in the ceremony the local deity did not mention anything about a pilgrimage. Instead, the deity said, "The coming year will be tough, and members of Zhu Stronghold have to stick together and help

each other get through it.” Although this was not exactly what most people expected, the announcement did address to concerns and offer a guideline to deal with the issue.

The spirit possession stage can also be understood as a stage to make a collective decision. At this point, one might wonder, would it have made any difference for the development of Zhu Stronghold if the community had not used spirit possession as a way to make decisions on communal issues? I think so. This process after all is not a transparent, democratic one, and the effect of this stage is to make the local deity omniscient and produce a sense of the formidability of the local deity. This psychological effect from a spirit possession sessions was effective in dealing with uncertainty in a non-democratic political system.

C) Checks and Balances

After discussing the effectiveness of the spirit medium possession in reproducing community solidarity, this part turns to examine the mechanisms that act as checks and balances on the power of spirit mediums. The mechanism of checks and balances is very crucial to maintain the order of spirit mediums. Without checks and balances, spirit mediums with unconstrained power can not only overturn the other secular leaders in the name of the local deity, but can also create chaos in the community, as everyone can claim to be a spirit medium and make announcement in the name of the local deity.³

Zhu Stronghold has three mechanisms to limit the power of spirit mediums: the asynchronous cross-examination, the synchronous cross-examination, and the task division among spirit mediums. These three mechanisms were part of the local practices of spirit possession and were introduced to me by my informants as proof of the efficacy of the local

³ See Weller (1994) for a detailed discussion on the effectiveness of the spirit mediumship in collective mobilization and the difficulty in controlling the spirit mediumship.

deity. After careful examination, I realize that they are mechanisms to control the magic power of spirit mediums. In what follows, I discuss these three mechanisms, starting from the most commonly used, the asynchronous cross-examination.

The Asynchronous Cross-examination

The asynchronous cross-examination is a method to constrain the power of a single spirit medium. When a secular leader doubts the order of the local deity, he can call for an emergency spirit possession session from another spirit medium that he trusts to see if the answer is the same. If the answer is not the same, the original one can be dismissed.

Note that in this approach the spirit medium who is dismissed does not lose his credibility. In addition, in local people's eyes, dismissing an order by another local deity does not hurt the authority of that local deity in general. Instead, the dismissal of the original order just means that there are different voices of local deities. To the question about the efficacy of the local deity if it speaks in different voices, Laizu answered,

There are sixty or more deities of different names worshipped in temples in Zhu Stronghold... Without doubt all of these local deities are efficacious. But some deities are more powerful than the others in their capacity to foresee things. In addition, local deities might have different views on a communal issue. This is just like humans having different personalities. Some deities are more aggressive and willing to take more risk, while others are more conservative... When they do have a uniform position on a communal issue, we know their position must be right. We thus wait until they have a unanimous decision.

This understanding of the efficacy of the local deity represents the basic understanding of Zhu Stronghold as a community. That is, this is a community of cooperation, not only among twenty-three villages, among different social groups of leadership, and among villagers, but also among local deities and spirit mediums. Zhu Stronghold temple has two to three spirit mediums at a time, and each of village temple has one medium. All the spirit mediums are part of the secret power of Zhu Stronghold. Zhu Stronghold temple is administratively higher than village

temples; spirit mediums of Zhu Stronghold temple are not considered in any way more powerful than the rest. Under this structure, no one spirit medium could claim to dominate the community.

In addition to constraints on the power of a single spirit medium, the asynchronous cross-examination is also a method to guarantee that voices of different villages and descent groups can be heard. Different voices of local deities sometimes can be interpreted as different opinions from different social groups over a common issue. In this kind of scenario, dismissing the order allows more time for community members to form a view on the issue of the concerned. In no way does it challenge or undermine the authority of the local deity, as I will discuss below. For a controversial event, it might take years for a unanimous opinion to form, and in the course of these years, a couple of orders might have been given and dismissed. This is an important process of ritual, as the first order gives people confidence, and the second order acknowledges general concerns with the first order. An example from the first request for a pilgrimage demonstrates this point.

The first request for a pilgrimage was made by a local deity worshipped in Zhu Stronghold temple in the mid-1980s, and was turned down by a leader of the Zhu Stronghold temple, Laizu. Laizu said that he witnessed the request, and he told the deity that he needed time to think about it. He thought that the political risk of holding a pilgrimage was still too high and the community was not economically ready for a pilgrimage. He went to ask the spirit medium of the Plateau descent group, and the spirit medium said that the time had not come. Laizu went back and relayed to the deity that they needed to wait. The deity agreed.

In this story, a careful reader might ask if Laizu's going to ask the spirit medium of the Plateau descent group meant anything. It does mean something. In Laizu's own words, he said, "it was because the deity of the Plateau descent group was very efficacious and if he also agreed,

it must be a right decision.” Yet, if we look into the lineage structure, we will come to another interpretation. The Plateau descent group was the strongest and most coherent descent group at the time. The efficacy of a descent group deity reflects the power position of the descent group in the whole lineage. In addition, in my interpretation, by asking the spirit medium of this particular group, Laizu intended to see if the group supported the order. Group members usually backup the local deity of the group, even when group members do not unanimously agree with what the local deity announces.

The link between the efficacy of a group deity and the power of the group, and the link between the voice of a group deity and the opinion of the group is not my own speculation. In a conversation with a spirit medium I commented that a lot of people told me the deity of the Plateau descent group was very efficacious and decisions on important communal issues, if not announced by this deity, had to be double checked by him. This spirit medium commented,

The deity of the Plateau descent group is a small deity [meaning, it is not an important god in the Chinese pantheon], but the voice of the Plateau descent group is very loud. The group is very tyrannical. The status of this group was established in the Republican era, when one of the group members was a middle rank governor of the other province. The group since then has a lot to say over public issues and they use their deity to make the announcement... I cannot deny that the Plateau descent group is the most coherent descent group in Zhu Stronghold, and this is why they can continue stressing the effectiveness of the decisions by their deity.

I found that strong descent groups have deities that people rate as more efficacious, and that their spirit mediums are more active than those of weaker groups. Even so, the cross-examination mechanism still provides room for weaker groups to voice their opinions.

The Synchronous Cross-examination

The synchronous cross-examination is a means to get a unanimous decision from a number of local deities. When there is doubt over an important issue, the Zhu Stronghold temple council arranges a spirit possession session of different deities at the same time and only adapts

the decision if it is unanimous. This method is rarely used today. It was used more often in the 1980s and 1990s when a number of villagers claimed to be a newly possessed spirit medium. It was used to expel some new mediums. One senior spirit medium said,

At that time, almost every week there was a villager who claimed to be possessed by a local deity. Some were very persistent and stubborn, even after we told them that they were not possessed by a local deity, but by a ghost. To deal with these persistent persons, we called a synchronous cross-examination session. When the new medium gave an answer that was different from the rest of us, he lost his credibility, as the session was a public performance and everyone was welcome to watch. Afterward, even if he still insisted, no villagers would believe in his words and the person had quite.

From this point on, the important position for the established spirit mediums to maintain the order among communal spirit mediums can be observed. As pointed out earlier, spirit mediums do not form a coherent group, and there are self-monitoring mechanisms to control the group. Synchronous cross-examination is one of them.

The Task Division among Spirit Mediums

The division of tasks was first introduced by my informants as a demonstration of the magnificence of their deities. It was said that when there was an important ritual event, such as a pilgrimage, a number of deities spontaneously took charge of different aspects of the ritual. Their were corresponding spirit mediums announced and the arrangement separately. These mediums did not talk to each other beforehand, but the arrangements made by different deities fit together as a whole plan for the ritual. The mystical aspect of the task division was unveiled when I got to know the group of spirit mediums better. A particular local deity had a convention he used to do for a particular ritual. This knowledge was not a secret among spirit mediums, and one learned it through socializing with senior spirit mediums. The task division is a method to achieve some degree of inner coherence among spirit mediums. They have to cooperate with each other, and only through cooperation is their magic power granted and renewed. In addition, task division

reaffirms the idea that all local deities of Zhu Stronghold add up to the whole of Zhu Stronghold. No one deity and no one spirit medium can claim to monopolize the community. This idea constrains the power of single spirit medium and emphasizes cooperation. This is an important idea that shapes the concept of the relationship between individuals and the collective. I return to this point in the next section.

This section looked at the system of spirit possession in Zhu Stronghold. The success of Zhu Stronghold especially at the beginning of the revival movement in the 1970s has to thank the intact system of spirit possession preserved throughout the Maoist period. Individuals learn and experience the community through their personal relations with a local deity of their choice (usually the deity of one's natal village). At the collective level, the practice of spirit possession generates shared emotions among community members, and is also an important mechanism to produce group consensus toward community affairs. In addition, the practice of spirit possession also contributes to dynamic process of social interaction that encourages unity and competition, as discussed in the previous section. Spirit possession, together with the ritual practices discussed in the previous section, form a coherent and consistent understanding of the ideal community. It is to this last part that I now turn.

[III] The Collective Ideal of Community

In Zhu Stronghold, the collective ideal of community, commemorative rites, and symbols are consistent, and developed jointly in the reform era. The above discussion on ritual practices and the spirit mediumship already covered the central ideas in the collective ideal of community

and symbols. This section gives an overview of the collective ideal of community and symbols, as they are part of the major argument and the base for comparison with other two cases. In what follows, I briefly list the key concept of symbol and the central ideas of the collective ideal of community.

A) The Symbol of Community

This part examines how the local deity symbolizes Zhu Stronghold. Conversations with my informants over the local deity show two images of the local deity: the omnipotent deity and contesting deities. When my informants talked about the spirit possession session in general terms, they all said that the local deity of Zhu Stronghold was efficacious and omnipotent, in almost identical terms. The spirit possession session was presented as a homogeneous process where people of Zhu Stronghold only accept and follow the deity's orders. When my informants started telling stories of the spirit possession session, that of refuted orders, expelled spirit mediums, and different degrees of magic power of local deities, the image of one omnipotent deity was replaced by a number of deities that might contradict themselves, have different personalities, and compete for the domination of the locality. For my informants all these aspects of the local deity did not undermine their vision of the omnipotent local deity that they first presented to me.

In the beginning, it was odd that the contesting image of the local deities did not undermine the homogenous version of the omnipotent deity. After having a deeper understanding of the community, I realized that these two images of the local deity are the dual side of the community that local people experience. On the one hand, community members imagine a coherent community represented by the omnipotent deity. The local deity in local

usage is a general term that includes all deities worshipped in the territory of Zhu Stronghold, which amounts to at least sixty deities. No one deity can monopolize Zhu Stronghold, and Zhu Stronghold is the summation of all of them. On the other hand, a power struggle among different social groups is the experience of the community life, and the contesting image of the local deities reiterates this experience. Each deity has its own name, has its own place to be worshipped, is represented by a particular spirit medium, and has different magic power.

In addition to the duality of community, the symbol of the local deity gives weaker groups an opportunity to be heard and to transgress the existing order. The rise of the Plateau descent group in the Republican period is a good example. The Plateau descent group was formed in the late nineteenth century and it did not come to power until the 1930s. The dominant power of the Plateau descent group in the local politics is mainly portrayed through the magic power of the group deity, which was said to be worshipped by the group since 1888. Since the 1930s, important communal issues had to be double checked with the group deity of the Plateau descent group, and the group deity was included in the communal ritual. The struggle over secular domination was little mentioned in today's recount to the rise of the Plateau descent group. The transgression of the communal ritual was better accepted in the symbol of the local deity, as humans had little power to intervene and predict mysterious power.

B) The Collective Ideal of Community

This part outlines the collective ideal of community in Zhu Stronghold. I first divide the collective ideal of community into two categories: symbolic relations and social relations. Symbolic relations cover how one relates to the community, including what the community

means to individuals and one's responsibility to the community. Social relations refer to how one relates to the others in the community.

I start from outlining two ideas on what the community means to individuals: the virtue community of morality and the pre-existence of the community. The first idea is that Zhu Stronghold is not only a community with actual territorial boundaries, but also a virtuous community of morality. This virtuous community includes all Zhu members no matter where they are or what they do in their life. No matter what one does outside the community, everyone in the community has to obey the same rule. "Our deity stays at home, but he monitors our behavior no matter where we go," one of my informant commented.

The community of morality, however, is particular and exclusive, and the moral rule does not apply equally and universally to outsiders. Although there is no evidence to show that the local deity encourages or approves amoral behaviors of members outside the community, the local deity does not say a word about these behaviors. A small businessman in his late fifties once talked about the early experiences of Zhu businessmen, especially those with low social ranking.

There were not very glorious stories of the beginnings of Zhu businessmen. Back in the 1980s, some of us were poor and wandering on the street of industrial cities. They ended up robbing passengers on the street, and this was the first step of their accumulation for capital. With some money, they went and bought counterfeit products, such as watches, and sold them on the street. They changed their selling location everyday so customers could not come back and hold them to be responsible for their products. After a while, when they accumulated enough money, they rented a small shop in a mall and started a real business. For example, they sold real watches at a fair price... This is the story of my generation...

What struck me most when I learned this story was not the content but the neutral voice of this informant. There was no apology, and he was not ashamed of telling this story. It was just a story about how things worked in the 1980s, and he thought that I should know it. The story shows that Zhu members were not concerned with transgressing the law, especially operating in a gray area.

The comment on Zhu businessmen by Shicheng, the president of Zhu Stronghold temple Council and a retired elementary school teacher, who has never engaged in doing business outside the community, further demonstrates the exclusive nature of this virtuous community of morality.

Zhu members could be very brutal and uncivilized when they did business outside the community. Over the years, I heard stories about the misbehavior of Zhu members outside the community. When I met these people, however, no matter in the community, on the conflict-solving meeting, or on the fundraising trip to cities where Zhu businessmen cluster, they respect me, and treat me very well... This is one characteristic of Zhu businessmen. They always remember to obey community norms when they are in the community.

Shichen's comment might over exaggerate the level of obedience of Zhu members to the community rules, but it does illustrate the particularity of morality in Zhu Stronghold.

The second idea on what the community means to individuals is the pre-existence of the community. The community pre-exists before any individual in the community. One cannot live without the community. An individual has limitations, and can only prosper with the support of a strong community and the protection from the efficacious local deity.

As for one's obligation to the community, the idea is that one is obligated to build community strength and one has to make contributions according to his social status and capacity. One's contribution to the community will come back and affect one's fate and social status in the community. Therefore, one's fate and prosperity is in one's hand, even though the community has the obligation to protect its members.

As for one's relations to the other community members, there are three ideas. The first idea is that social relations are based on power disposition. The person with higher social status is entitled to more power and privilege in the community. The second principle is the interdependence among every community member. Although the community encourages power differentiation and has a clear hierarchy of social status, the community is only intact when every

social group and individual, no matter how weak or poor, is included. The powerful and wealthier persons and groups have more responsibility toward the community and toward the weak groups and poor persons. Being in the group can in itself be a contribution that these weak groups and poor persons make. The weak groups and poor persons might contribute more in the future as they grow stronger. This last point brings out the third idea: social status is not unchangeable. One should work for his family and the social groups that he belongs to.

[IV] The Honor System

The perfect match among the collective ideal of community, commemorative rites, and symbols, which I just illustrated above, has developed into a system that structures one's responsibility, obligation, role and status in the community. This system covers economic, political, social and religious aspects. I call this the honor system, for the community order is structured around reputation. People compete with each other for higher social status by engaging in communal affairs. Zhu businessmen's behavior and business model is underpinned by the motive for a better reputation by making donations to community affairs, especially deity-related activities. What one has done for the community is translated into reputation, and one's social status is ranked according to the amount of momentary contribution he makes to the community. In return, one's social status defines responsibility, obligation, and role to the community and his following villagers.

The honor system formed when the first few businessmen of Zhu Stronghold were involved in deity-related activities through monetary contribution in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The formation of the honor system is related to the spirit mediums. The advice given by the local deity requested these businessmen to make monetary contribution to deity-related

activities. Gradually, the honor system has developed into an independent, sophisticated system that centers on the business class. This section will first discuss practices and logics of donation to temple activities, the foundation of the honor system. Next, I will turn to the business class, their involvement in communal affairs, and the current honor system.

A) Donation of Temple Activities

To understand the ranking of social status in Zhu Stronghold, one only needs to go to the community temple and look at the list of donations. From the top to the bottom, names are arranged according to the amount of money one donated to the temple, from the most to the least. The social status of community members and the ranking of the wealth among Zhu businessmen correspond to this list. Comparing lists of donation from the 1980s to the present for various deity related activities, the ranking of donations has been consistent in the way that none makes a large one-time contribution. People move forward and backward gradually in their business performance. Building on one's reputation is a long-term investment that requires constant and consistent effort. It is this kind of consistency that makes the social structure of Zhu Stronghold stable and predicable. In contrast, in the other two communities of this study, people make a large one-time contribution. In these scenarios, a donation is a reflection of personal belief, and a show-off of personal wealth in some cases. Social status is not as closely determined by the amount of the donation one contributes. The amount of money one donates to the community temple can vary from year to year without consistency and predictability. In what follows, I use the list of donations of the Pure Mountain temple, the new temple that was dedicated to Marshal Huang in 1997 to demonstrate the operational aspect of the donation.

The expenditure of the new Pure Mountain temple exceeded one million RMB (in a village of 2000 population). The patriarch, Bao, who managed the construction project of the Pure Mountain temple explained to me how one knows how much he needs to donate:

First of all, as leaders of the construction project we needed to budget how much the project needs. We also had an idea knowing how much the common household can afford at the time. The common household was expected to donate somewhere between one thousand RMB and five hundred RMB. Subtracting the estimated project expenditure and the amount of money we expected from the common household, we then knew the expected contribution from the wealthier persons of the village. After that, I first went to talk to Tamei (the wealthiest businessman of the village) and tell him how much we need from the rich. He very quickly promised to give 220,000—about one-third of the money I told him. After talking to him, I went to talk to his younger brother, Tanong (the second wealthiest businessmen of the village). Tanong asked me how much his older brother, Tamei, donated. I told him 220,000. He then said he would donate 200,000. This is always how things work here. The sibling order is important. Tanong would never dare to donate more money than Tamei.

I donated seventy thousand RMB. My four sons, who were in the tire repair business paid for it. This set the bar for the other businessmen. It was about ten to twenty thousand RMB per businessman, which I thought was a reasonable amount given the good fortune they had at the time.

As for the problem of offending the other by donating money more than one's social statuses, Bao explained,

This problem is usually taken care of by the patriarch who is in charge of fund raising. He should tell the person not to do so and he should tell the person the appropriate amount of money he can contribute. This issue can be very sensitive when it comes to lineage politics. Usually people from strong descent groups more easily feel offended than people from weaker descent groups. As a leader, I will go and ask people from strong descent groups first.

In the honor system, there are social and economic consequences for individual not acting accordingly. As Bao put it,

Villagers would gossip if one paid less than he was expected. Villagers would speculate that that person is not doing well in his investment. You do not want people to speculate, especially when you need to take out a loan and invite your fellow businessmen to have a share in your business. Therefore, we sometimes even say that you need to donate more when you are losing money. It is not only to ask for blessing from the deity, but also to convince your fellow villagers to continue loaning you money, which you would need for the next year.

Social and economic consequences explain individual strategic adherent to the honor system.

Nonetheless, the most formidable consequence of not following the honor system is punishment from the local deity. Stories of death or serious injury for violators show the other side of the

honor system, the opposite side of individual strategic use of the honor system. This expresses the pre-existence of the community before the individual and the sacredness of the community.

The Pre-existence of the Community

The pre-existence of the community is the base of the honor system. Reputation only matters in the community. No matter how great a reputation one accrues, it means nothing if the community collapses. This point has been noticed by Zhu members, especially by Zhu businessmen. This is why Zhu members devote considerable effort in building strength and solidarity in a community-wide effort. In addition, this is the very reason that enables Zhu members to compete in the same business and still be a community.

Looking at the stele in the Pure Mountain temple, Shu, a middle-age businessman of tire repair business, explained his business relations with the names on the stele. There were people who took advantage of him because he came from the weakest branch of Downhill village, the Five-son branch. He did not hesitate to express his resentment toward these people. He continued with stories of conflicts between the Seven-son branch and the Eight-son branch over the tire repair business. Listening to his stories and hearing of his resentment toward his fellow villagers, I asked him how, if they hated each other so much, could they construct the Pure Mountain temple together as a community. Shu was shocked by this question, for it never occurred to him. After pausing for a moment, he said,

After all, we are a community... No matter how much we fight with each other, we, as Zhu members, never forget that we are a community. When it comes to things that demonstrate our community, we are more than willing to put aside our resentment toward each other and present our community as a strong one.

The honor system has individual and the collective sides. The donation stele is the best illustration of this dualism. Building a temple together and having their names inscribed together

in stone reminded Downhill villagers that they are a community. Nonetheless, names inscribed in an order that reflects social status reminded them of each others' social position and reputation. Everyone is both an independent individual that is responsible for his own achievement, and a member of the community that is responsible for the success of the community. As an individual, one competes to be ranked as high as possible. As a member of a community, it is one's duty to promote the rank of Zhu Stronghold in neighboring communities. Resentments and old adversaries are not forgotten or forgiven. Resentment motivates an individual to work hard to be as rich as he can. Meanwhile, the pre-existence of the community before the individual mitigates the resentment when it comes to community affairs.

This honor system applies to everyone in Zhu Stronghold. The logic of the honor system, weighing more on economic achievement than the others, promotes a particular life path of Zhu members. More than seventy percent of the local people between the ages of twenty and forty have an education equivalent to high school or below. They started to work between the age of fifteen and eighteen, and got married around twenty. They worked at their relatives' shops or companies and tried to start up their own business upon collecting enough money for the start-up. "Everyone's ultimate goal is to be the boss," a number of different Zhu members repeatedly said.

The honor system has developed from a ranking system of donations for temple activities to a system of social status that determines the life path of every Zhu member and structures communal activities, whether it is related to deity worship or not. It works by actualizing the collective ideal of the community that I discussed in the last section. The center of the honor system is the businessmen, and the top businessmen emerge as a particular class of local leaders. In what follows, I turn to the business class and the current honor system.

b. The Business Class

The business class refers to the group of businessmen who are leaders of the rest of businessmen, and who lead the local development. This is a self-identified group that is made explicit in practice through extravagant rituals of eating, drinking, and gift exchange. On the dinner table, they exchange business information and gossip about local politics, and they talk about initiation of public projects and temple affairs of Zhu Stronghold. In recent years, all the public project ideas originated at the dinner table, and the business class is new emergent leader of Zhu Stronghold.

How can one be included in the business class? This is a social group that one can start to participate by inviting other established Zhu businessmen for drinks and dinner. In return, they would invite this person next time when they host a gathering. However, the money one can afford determines one's popularity in this group. In local standards, the host must spend at least one to two thousand RMB per guest in a gathering. A few businessmen suggested to me that a minimum amount of ten million RMB (of net worth) is the threshold to be able to afford the expenditure. About three hundred Zhu members have assets more than ten million RMB, and a Zhu member having total assets of hundred million RMB ranked himself somewhere between the fifty and sixty richest in Zhu Stronghold. The business class is not a uniform group and there are sub-grouping in these businessmen. The grouping transcends the descent group and village boundary. Toward the core of the group, wealth is the most important criterion.

The leadership of the business class started from their involvement in public good provision projects. Fundraising of these projects relies on the same operational logic as fundraising for temple activities. One project leader explained how he raised funds,

I first estimated the budget for the project and then called a fundraising meeting, inviting wealthy Zhu members. Before the meeting, I treated two businessmen for dinner. During the dinner, I talked to them

about the fundraising meeting to which they were invited. We agreed on the amount of money that they would contribute, and on the fundraising meeting when I asked people to voluntarily donate money for the project, these two businessmen were the first two persons who shout out the money that they would donate. This method is used in all public projects in Zhu Stronghold. The two businessmen must be persons who rank in the middle of all businessmen. They serve as standard for the rest to determine how much they are expected to donate... Everything has an order in Zhu Stronghold. It is never a question of whether the rich want to participate in the public project. But, it is a question of how to act according to your social status. As a project leader, you have to help set up standards for members.

Their involvement in public good provision projects started in the mid-1980s, and started from building local elementary schools. Not long after, the business class was involved in local development projects, and since then local development has become the most important task the business class assigned to themselves. Unlike most rich in China who rush to leave their rural hometown and move to the city permanently, Zhu members return to invest after earning their initial economic capital elsewhere. A township official commented that compared to neighboring communities,

Zhu businessmen invested to develop local industry. The local area lacked the condition for industry. There were little flat lands, and most lands were small hills. Zhu businessmen invested in flattening the land and reclaiming land from sea. In the past twenty years, they gained more than three thousand acres.

Although the project was of a business nature, local people understood it as a social welfare project for the community. These projects were completed through stock sharing. Every member was eligible to attend, while businessmen were expected to invest. The project of land reclamation from sea in 1987 was high risk because of the technological backwardness at the time, and the major shareholders were in the tire repair business. Later on, with more mature technology and experiences in developmental projects, it was deemed less risky and about one fifth of the household joined. The new industrial zone in the territory of Zhu Stronghold is set in these lands.

The business class manages the local community as both a charity for local people and a company for profit. Community members are eligible to become shareholders by buying shares

and have yearly returns after the project is making money. In addition, every community member, no matter if he is the shareholder of the project or not, can use the service at a price far lower than the market value. For example, an ongoing project is to develop a mountain area into a giant cemetery that can accommodate one thousand graves. Community members can buy in at a low price, while outsiders are charged at the market rate, which is about five to ten times more than what local people pay. In addition, a new project circulating among the business class is to build a nursing home to take care of aging community members at a low price and to charge outsiders the market price.

The business class is significantly different from leaders of temple activities, the patriarch and the spirit medium. Party cadres of younger generations do participate in the activity of the business class, and most of them also self-identify as businessmen. Note that although businessmen have close relation with the spirit medium, they do not participate in temple activities. Their main contribution is financial support for temple activities. Therefore, as they become more and more important in leading community affairs through public good provision and local development projects, the honor system is adjusted accordingly.

The main adjustment is the loss of primacy of the spirit medium in the honor system. The spirit mediumship is becoming less important in helping to decide community affairs. It is also no longer visible in fundraising process. As I pointed out earlier, at the initial stage, through the spirit medium, the local deity directly requested individual businessmen to make donations to temple activity, and also suggested the amount of money they should donate. Currently, the spirit mediumship and the local deity no longer part take in the fundraising process, especially public projects led by the business class. Neither does the business class ask the local deity about the decision for any public project. Instead, the fundraising, as I showed above, works under the

logics of social status, and the public project is designed according to the vision of the community by the business class.

Although I just pointed out that the spirit mediumship is losing its primacy in determining public projects and public affairs irrelevant to temple activity, the collective is not losing its primacy. The symbol of the local deity and the idea of the pre-existence of the community are still at the center of maintaining the honor system. The collective ideal of the community is by and large the same as what I outline in the last section, although local people no longer need the frequent involvement of the local deity through the spirit possession session to provide confidence in their secular activities. I argue that this is because the honor system in itself can produce and reproduce their collective identity and confidence. Businessmen, therefore, find more freedom in responding and adjusting to rapid changing economic situations by relying less on the spirit medium.

Conclusion

The case of Zhu Stronghold demonstrates the effectiveness and utility of traditional practices in the new market economy. This case shows that the utility of local tradition is based on cultural logics and ideas that cannot be easily formed or overturned. Cultural logics and ideas of the community are realized through ritual practices. Based on local cultural logics and ideas, the key goal of ritual practices in Zhu Stronghold is to demonstrate community solidarity and particular social processes. Ritual realizes this goal. The coexistence of community unity and subgroup competition is at the center of the social process, and it is what gives community members vitality in responding to new economic opportunities.

The perfect match between traditional practices and business patterns in the reform era Zhu Stronghold raises the question of what is required for a local tradition to be effective. Can Zhu Stronghold serve as the model to explain failure of other cases? I will come back to this question in the concluding chapter. Here I would like to end this chapter by summarizing three main characteristics of Zhu Stronghold that distinguish it from the other two cases: the integration between the social and cultural processes of traditional practices, the built-in solidarity in the social process of traditional practices, and the coexistence of group unity and subgroup competition.

The social and cultural processes of traditional practices develop hand in hand. As this chapter shows, the collective ideal of community, commemorative rites, and symbols are consistent and coherent. Furthermore, the social process of traditional practices is an integrated part of the social structure. In particular, the honor system developed out of traditional practices structures social relations and forms the base for successful business patterns in Zhu Stronghold.

In the case of Zhu Stronghold, solidarity is produced and reproduced through conscious construction by community members. Solidarity is built into the social process of ritual practices, particularly through complex and extravagant practices that require full collective mobilization in the community. Solidarity is not a psychological state resulting in a ritual that has nothing to do with secular life. The social process contributing to group solidarity extends outside the ritual event, and includes the formation of consensus of community affairs, as well as the preparation of the ritual event (such as raising the funds and arranging routes of a pilgrimage).

The case of Zhu Stronghold also shows the coexistence of community unity and subgroup competition. The chapter shows the effectiveness of this kind of group dynamic in constructing a strong community, and its strong utility in the economic domain. Using lineage

networks for business results in intensive inner conflicts as group members cluster and compete in the same business. With such intensive inner conflicts, the group is very like to face the threat dissolution. However, Zhu Stronghold has never faced this kind of crisis in the reform era. I argue that three factors result in the vitality and stability of the community: first, the coexistence of community unity and subgroup competition is promoted and internalized with sets of cultural logics; second, group tension is balanced and channeled through arrangement in ritual practices; third, the honor system formalizes this particular kind of group dynamic in daily life.

Within the single case of Zhu Stronghold, the above three characteristics—the integration between the social process and cultural process of traditional practices, the built-in solidarity in the social process of traditional practices, and the coexistence of group unity and subgroup competition—explains the success of Zhu Stronghold. The other two cases lack these three characteristics and are less successful in term of their community strength and wealth of community members. I will revisit these three characteristics in the concluding chapter and discuss if they are the necessary conditions for a strong community or for a community to successfully adapt to the market economy.

Chapter Four: West Mountain—A New Community in the Making

This chapter tells a story about a community reviving and modifying an old commemorative rite to form a new community in the face of new challenges in the reform era. Historically, West Mountain was a fragmented region without unified identity. Starting from the decollectivization in 1983, within thirty years, a new collective identity, including villagers of six administrative units, was well established. In addition, traditional practices, namely deity worship and ancestral worship, were the base to maintain social order in the community. For out-migrant workers, the majority of the community today, local tradition provides a hometown identity that has symbolic meanings for their daily struggle outside the local community. Hometown identity, represented by the local deity and the common ancestor, had little effect in preventing locals from breaking with the community. Decisions to move in and out of the local community are based on a rational calculation of economic interests and opportunities in the new market economy.

The case of West Mountain is an example of local tradition having no utility in the economic sphere. Economic decisions are based on rational calculation; local tradition provides no specific instruction on economic behavior. In addition, lineage networks are of little use in economic ventures. Other than locating a job at factories, there is little collaboration among relatives. Furthermore, traditional organizations, such as the lineage organization and the temple council, have nothing to do with economic activities.

To understand the limitation of cultural utility—the main inquiry of this study—this chapter examines the social and cultural processes of the religious revival in the West Mountain area. It argues that the limitation of the newly formed community has two main causes: the

migratory force of the new market economy, hollowing out the community; and the collective ideal of community that contrasts lineage identity against collective identity thus weakening the community strength.

The first cause of the limitation—the migratory force of the new market economy—is common in rural communities. Market forces have been driving people out of the villages to the cities in order to look for work. The result is a hollowing out of the village populations, and the transformation of these villages from places of residence to symbolic hometowns. Others have argued that this results in the dissolution of rural communities, for villagers are no longer confined and live regularly in their natal villages (i.e. Chen 2009; Yan 2009).

The second cause of limitation is a problematic ideal of community. In West Mountain, the collective ideal of community criticizes group differentiation and treats it as incompatible with the collective identity. This framework makes community integration harder, for group differentiation is undeniable and impossible to eliminate in the short run. In addition, this framework also leaves the community symbols—the community deity Lord Grace—open to interpretation, and results in little connection between the symbol and community order.

In the case of West Mountain, I argue that it is the combination between the market economy and a problematic ideal of community that leads to weak community solidarity and limited cultural utility. I argue that the market economy alone does not necessarily lead to the decline of community strength. This claim is supported by the case of Zhu Stronghold, as Zhu Stronghold is able to make the best use of the market economy and maintains community strength and prospers collectively in the reform era.

In explaining the limitation of community strength, I do not mean to deny the contribution of the new collective ideal of community, which is based on the spirit of

egalitarianism. This new collective ideal of community is taken to heart among the younger generation, namely people who are born after 1960, who experience their early adulthood in the market economy. It also helps the younger generation to shift their identity from lineage to hometown, and prioritize friendship over blood ties. In addition, this new collective ideal of community was realized in West Mountain after 2005, when no more than one-third of registered residents lived in the local community. Thus, I claim a new egalitarian community was established in West Mountain.

This chapter is organized into five sections exploring the story of the transition of the local community through the revival of traditional practices. These five sections are arranged chronologically, while they also intersect with analytical categories. The first section discusses how villagers of the Lu lineage of West Mountain used traditional practices to deal with the legacy of the fragmented and stratified groupings of the Lu lineage in the 1980s. This section is also the first stage of the revival movements that focused on lineage. The second section turns to a discussion of the transition to the construction of the West Mountain identity through a revival of a temple procession in 1993. The revival of the Procession in 1993 marked the start of the second stage of revival movements that centered on a new collective identity based on deity worship. The third section and fourth section discuss two separate processes—social and cultural—in the second stage of the revival movement from 1993 to the present. The third section examines the effect of the modified temple procession and the newly constructed collective ideal of community on community unification. The fourth section evaluates the effect of the newly constructed ideal of community on the local culture. The fifth section turns to the present and shows what kind of community West Mountain is becoming now after thirty years of community building.

[I] From Fragmented Groups to a Multi-Village Ritual Alliance

The revival movement in West Mountain started from ancestral worship and expanded to include deity worship. This section focuses on villages of the Lu surname and shows that the revival movement started as a bottom-up request of peasants and patriarchs to revive the local customs of the republican era based on ancestral worship. Not long after, there was an attempt by the local cadre to build a new ritual alliance that unified fragmented groupings of Lu surname. These new ritual alliances attempted to deal with the local past as a highly stratified and contesting region.

Although they had remarkable success in building new alliances, this section also shows that villages of the Lu surname were never unified as a community through ancestral worship. The closest one was the local deity temple—the Temple of Benevolence—which was successfully established as a temple of the Lu lineage. The story does not stop here. The Temple was further developed into a community-wide temple of West Mountain, which is discussed in the next section.

This section unfolds chronologically and demonstrates the process of building a unified community. Part A outlines the basic lineage structure and the composition of the community before the reform era. Part B focuses on the revival of ancestral worship of the villages of the Lu surname, and demonstrates the construction of a new ritual alliance that goes beyond the confines of genealogical order. Part C turns to the construction project of the Temple of Benevolence and shows how villages of the Lu surname mobilized together to complete the project. Although the construction project was a success, the Lu lineage did not become a unified community, for the committee of the reconstruction project failed to transform into a regular organization that managed community-wide religious practices.

A) The Lu Lineage before the Reform Era

Lineage groups in West Mountain exemplify a cluster of single surname villages that developed according to lineage logics. The genealogy order is clear and straightforward among groups of local people. Every natural village is a lineage branch, and the relationship among villages is determined by genealogical order.¹ This part outlines the basic lineage structure of the Lu lineage, and introduces the major modifications after the establishment of the PRC—namely, a new layer added to the administrative unit for inter-village alliance.

According to genealogical records, the founding father of the Lu lineage migrated to West Mountain, in the late thirteenth century. Before the Lu family settled in the area, people of six other surnames lived there. By the turn of the nineteenth 19th century, the Lu lineage became the dominant lineage in the local area. The Lu lineage controlled the best arable land along Gold River. Because of the limited flat land, each settlement could only sustain a limited population. With population growth, people moved to nearby undeveloped areas, which later developed into a new village. By the first half of the 20th century, the Lu lineage developed into more than fifty natural villages—the smallest one had only one household with less than ten people, and the largest one had about three hundred people.

Village stratification corresponded to the lineage branch. The Lu lineage was divided into two major branches, the Peace branch and the Steel branch. Banyan village, located at the center of Gold River, and the wealthiest village, and other Lu villages located in the east and south side of Banyan village belong to the Steel branch. The Eastside administrative unit, adjacent to

¹ For example, one of the sons of the first ancestor settled in A village. Later on, after three generations, because of population growth, a male of the fifth generation moved to B village and started a new branch. A few generations later, a male migrated from B village to C village and started a new branch. The genealogical order among these three villages, in local's term, is that B village is a son village of A village, and C village is a son village of B village. Therefore, B village and C village are closer genealogically than A village and B village, or than A village and C village.

Banyan village in the east, and the other Lu villages residing in the west and north side of the Eastside administrative unit belong to the Peace branch. Most families of the Steel branch owned land, while families of the Peace branch were tenants of the Steel branch or paper makers who resided close to the mountain that grew bamboo.

As a highly stratified community, the Peace branch and the Steel branch were in constant conflict, and there was no unified lineage council for the entire Lu lineage. The Peace branch and the Steel branch did not hold joint rituals. They both worshipped the founding father of the Lu lineage at the grave, but they worshipped him separately on different days. Within the Peace branch and the Steel branch, although each branch worshipped the founding-fathers of each branch together, no branch council was formed. What did exist were the village councils, and the multi-village council (the largest one involving four villages). For example, the successful overseas Chinese of Banyan village organized a village council that managed village affairs that was restricted to Banyan village. In other words, although blood ties were the logic of social interaction, the Lu lineage was not an integrated community.

With the implementation of the agricultural collectivization in the 1950s, land was redistributed to close-by villages. The amount of land per-person owned was about the same after the redistribution, although the quality of the land differed. For example, Banyan village lost more than sixty percent of their land, although the village still occupied the best land of West Mountain.

The new administrative unit created a new type of social interaction. The commune (equivalent to the township government) distributed resources and responsibilities in the unit brigade (equivalent to the administrative unit). Within a brigade, resources and responsibilities were further distributed to each production team. Villages of a territorial affinity formed a

brigade. The administrative unit expanded the scope of village interaction and coordination. In addition, villages belonging to different brigades had little chance of interaction with each other, regardless of the agnatic affinity.

Kinship identity at the village level was maintained and strengthened in the new political system. The basic unit of the new political system was the production team. The production team was formed on the basis of the village, unless a village was too small to form a production team. To compete for economic and political resources, the village with more production teams formed a stronger alliance, which had a greater advantage. Worship of a common ancestor of a village was the ground for the alliance.

Ancestral worship at the grave was the basic form of commemorative rites in the collectivization period. Each household worshipped their ancestor of three generations with other households who shared the same ancestor. Beyond three generations, worship was considered illegal so the grave was visited secretly. The production team leader had the obligation to organize worship at the graves of their common ancestors. He sent two to three male members to clean graves and provide sacrifices at graves in the first lunar month. It took two days for a production team to worship all their major common graves. No ancestral worship above the village level was practiced.

B) Reviving Ancestral Worship

As the previous part pointed out, ancestral worship is the base for group alliance in West Mountain. Therefore, it is not surprising that the revival movement in West Mountain started from the practice of public rituals at graves. The scale started from ancestral worship within a village and then extended to inter-village ancestral worship. Ancestral worship within a village

was practiced largely as what it was in the republican era, while some practices of inter-village ancestral worship are a new creation in the reform era to adjust to new social organization and political arrangement. The production team leader was the leader at the initial stage, and *lisheng*² (Confucian ritual specialists, or masters of rites) instructed the ritual process, for they kept the ritual book passed down for generations that recorded ritual procedure, ranging from private ritual (such as wedding and funerals) to public ritual (such as temple festivals and procession). Later on, party cadres (retired or not) got involved in the revival movement and emphasized new alliances based on new political landscapes. In sum, the revival of ancestral worship in the 1980s and 1990s not only revived the local custom and alliances in the pre-PRC period, but also formed new alliances that broke through the genealogical confinement.

This part discusses the process to revive ancestral worship. It takes Puddle village of the Eastside administrative unit as the primary example. The revival of ancestral worship in Puddle village began in 1984 when the household contract responsibility system was implemented. As pointed out in the previous section, in the collectivization period, the production team leader had the obligation to organize worship at the graves of common ancestors. In 1983, as one of the three production leaders of Puddle village at the time recalled, three of the production leaders discussed and agreed that there was little political risk to publicly reviving ancestral worship of the common ancestor of the village. By the end of 1983, they began to consult elders, and they called a meeting at the beginning of 1984 to announce the revival of ancestral worship as the local custom in the republican period. The production team leader recalled that villagers looked forward to reviving their local custom. There was no objection on this decision. In fact, some

² *Lisheng* are ritual specialists guiding the rites of weddings, funerals, sacrifices and other ceremonies. Their main task is to “stand along and call out the rites of rising, kneeling, and kowtowing when sacrifices are offered in saintly temples and halls of early worthies” (Liu 2013:48). In my cases, only West Mountain continues the tradition of *lisheng* in ritual practices, and they played an important role in the early revival movement.

descent groups had already revived grave sweeping since the turn of the 1980s.

In 1984, grave-sweeping activity was revived under the instruction of *lishen*. According to local tradition as practiced in the Republican period, grave sweeping was held between the sixteenth day of the first lunar month and the fifteenth day of the second lunar month. After the Chinese New Year, the elders arranged dates for grave sweeping activity. The activity started from the closest ancestor to the founding father of Puddle village, and would visit one generation each day, meaning two or three graves if the male ancestor had two wives. For each grave, all households that had a share took turns in hosting the ritual. The host household needed to prepare sacrifices and hold a banquet for all attendants after the ritual. One male member of each household from the rest of the households had to attend the ritual and join the banquet. On average, each household visited ten to fifteenth ancestral graves.

Starting from 1984, grave sweeping activity ended with a ritual whereby all households of Puddle village gathered at the village ancestral hall to offer sacrifice to all ancestors of the village. A *lisheng* told me that this was a newly added ritual in the reform era to deal with the destruction of some graves in the late 1950s as a result of a political campaign to move graves on arable land to the mountains. Some graves were left without any caretaker and ended up being demolished. In local understanding, the spirit of deceased ancestors resides in the grave and the ancestral hall. Each village has an ancestral hall. Some graves were destroyed or forgotten about, and the final ritual of the grave sweeping activity was to ensure that every ancestor of the village was properly worshipped and given sacrifice. Although some elders recalled that the concluding ritual had existed in the republican era, they all agreed with the *lisheng* on the rationale for this concluding ritual.

Around 1986 or 1987, villagers of Puddle village revived the annual parade of the village

ancestral hall, which was took place annually on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month. The revival was initiated by a *lisheng* who pointed out this custom in the ritual book, and seconded by the elder who remembered participating this ritual in the republican period. Male villagers offered sacrifice and incense in the village ancestral hall and did the dragon and tiger dance. They marched to the ancestral hall of Big House village, the village from which the founding father of Puddle village migrated, to offer incense. Afterwards, they marched to West Mountain market, performed dragon and tiger dances on the street, and marched back to the village ancestral hall.

Informants of Puddle village are proud of being the first village in West Mountain that revived the annual parade of the village ancestral hall. Before 1949, only a few strong villages practiced the annual parade of the village ancestral hall. This was an act to demonstrate the strength of the village, and the parade of the dragon and tiger dance required male members to make it possible. Reviving the parade in the reform era had the same connotation as in the republican era. When no other village revived the parade, it established Puddle village as a strong village.

In addition to ancestral worship within the village, villagers of Puddle village joined other villages with closer blood ties in reviving inter-village ancestral worship to what it had been in the republican era. Starting from the early 1980s, they joined with two other villages to worship the common ancestor of the twelfth generation at the grave, and to worship the ancestor of the eighth generation with three other villages. These inter-village ancestral worships were initiated by patriarchs and *lisheng*, and initially were practiced by patriarchs and *lisheng*. These were not activities of the whole village. A couple of years after reviving the public ancestral worship at the village level, inter-village ancestral worship became an activity of the entire village, and

every household had to send a male member to attend the ritual.

In my discussion so far, all the activities revived were local customs that can be traced back to the republican period. Yet in the late 1980s, a new ritual alliance was formed: seven villages of the Eastside administrative unit. There was no precedent for this collaboration, and the retired party cadres initiated this new collaboration. The new ritual alliance was a result of new social organization and political arrangement, and also served as a mechanism to reinforce the collaboration. Being in the same administrative unit, these seven villages shared the same opportunities. Public projects, such as building roads and setting streetlights, rely on governmental subsidy in the unit of the administrative unit. Zhongshao, one of the four retired party cadres who made the new alliance possible, explained,

The upper-side village group and the downside village group make up the Eastside administrative unit. Historically speaking, these two groups were hostile to each other and fought over natural resources. This problem continued during the collectivization period... The hostility between these two groups made my job harder as the brigade leader [equivalent to the party secretary of an administrative unit]...

In the reform era, the structure for resource distribution was different. In the collectivization period, everyone was poor and the locality had little chance to gain any subsidy from the upper level of the government. In contrast, in the reform era, the county and township government had extra money to subsidize local development. The subsidy was distributed based on the impression of the higher-level government having administrative units. In general, the higher-level government was in favor of units that showed more solidarity, as the government believed that stronger units would make better use of the subsidy...

Venerating ancestors is our local custom and virtue. I thought that worshipping a common ancestor together was a good way to deal with past hostility, and established our administrative unit as a solidified one. I retired in 1984, and this gave me a good position to advocate forming a new ritual alliance of seven villages of the Eastside administrative unit. I knew patriarchs of each village very well from my past job, but I no longer needed to deal with the actual politics as the incumbent. There were three other retired party cadres who agreed with me, and two of us came from the upper-side village group. The other two were from the downside village group. We together talked to patriarchs of each village and persuaded them to support the plan. They then talked to their own decent group members and realized the plan.

A new ritual alliance of the Eastside administrative unit was then formed, which broke the genealogical confinement. The upper-side village group shares the same ancestor of the eighth generation, and the downside village group shares the same ancestor of the eighth generation as well. Ancestors of the eighth generation of these two groups are brothers. A few

other villages share the same ancestor of the eighth generation with the upper-side village group and the downside village group. However, the new ritual alliance of the Eastside administrative unit excludes these other villages of different administrative units.

The new ritual alliance started with joint worship of the common ancestor of the seventh generation, the founding father of the Peace branch. The grave of the common ancestor of the seventh generation was referred to as the grave for offspring, meaning that the *fengshui* of the grave blessed its descendants with male offspring. In the collectivization period, households with newborn males went to the grave in the first month of the lunar calendar to offer incense to thank the ancestors for giving them male offspring. The joint ritual revival of the late 1980s was organized by households with males born in the previous year. One male from each household was obligated to participate in the ritual. After offering sacrifice, participants joined a banquet at the grave.

In 1992, seven villages of the Eastside administrative unit started to collaborate on the annual ritual of worshipping the founding father of the Lu lineage in West Mountain. Each village has a vice-president of the event to collect funds (10 RMB per household) and to prepare sacrifice. Seven villages take turns in selecting the president (*zongli*) from each village (one village per year). The president has to coordinate seven villages. The president and vice-presidents are chosen by patriarchs of each village. There is no open election for the position. Taking the opportunity to involve the younger generation in village and lineage affairs, elders consciously and unanimously decide to choose young people between the age of twenty and forty to serve as the presidents and vice-presidents.

The ritual alliance of the Eastside administrative unit succeeds in building the collective identity of the Eastside administrative unit, and overcoming the history of hostility between the

upper-side and downside village groups. In addition, ancestral worship of the ritual alliance is a mechanism to socialize young men into the community, especially at the time when most of them are absent from the community on the regular base.

With the majority of adults earning a living outside the community and only coming back on important ritual occasions and Chinese New Year, the authority of the patriarch is declining. The decline of the authority of the patriarch has two main causes. The first one is that the patriarch no longer involves much in individuals' daily life when they don't live in the locality. Although the patriarch still has authority over descent group affairs, family issues and religious matters, individuals can easily ignore the patriarch once they have a long-term absence from the local community. For example, one of my informants who left the local community in 1996 at the age of 21 claimed that he basically had little interaction with the patriarch of his own descent group since then, and he knew no patriarch of other descent groups of the same village.

The second reason of the decline of the authority of the patriarch is that the patriarch controls few resources to contribute to public good provisions. In the new market economy, older generations find themselves have no skill to navigate with market logics and have no means to collect sufficient economic resources to for public goods. This undermines their leadership, and therefore, the authority of a patriarch is restricted to one's immediate descent group. The party secretary of the administrative unit and the village head, through requesting special funds from the local government, are the person who control resources for public good provisions, such as building roads and local schools.

With the decline of the authority of the patriarch, the party secretary of the administrative unit and the village head fill in the position in maintaining social and religious orders. The major authority of the party secretary and the village head come from the political power they hold

through their posts. In addition, since the 1980s, they are aware of the moral authority gained from leading ritual practices. They thus smoothly step in and take the major charge in monitoring community ritual practices. Choosing the president and vice-presidents of the annual ritual for worshipping the founding father of the Lu lineage and ensuring the ritual to be carried on smoothly become part of their regular tasks.

When I spoke to the party secretary and the village head of the Eastside administrative unit individually, they both expressed that community-wide rituals help maintain the ground of social and moral order, and this is why they support and have to ensure continuity of traditional practice. In addition, an unspoken benefit of leading traditional practices, as I observe, is to enhance the political leader's moral authority, which helps to increase their political authority in maintaining local order. For example, the village head of the Eastside administrative unit commented that villagers turn to him to deal with family and private disputes, such as the problem of abandoning aging parents. These private disputes in the past were usually presented to the patriarch instead of the party secretary or the village head. Although the village head has little formal power to deal with private disputes, this occasion shows the shift of the moral authority from patriarch to formal political leaders.

The ritual alliance of the Eastside village administration is a successful new ritual alliance involving the most villages in the reform era. Yet in 2007, a collective ritual of the whole Lu lineage was held at the graveyard of the founding father of the Lu lineage. This was the first time in the local history that Lu members gathered together to worship the founding father of the Lu lineage at the same time. Before 2007, villages of the Lu lineage worshipped the founding father of the Lu lineage separately. The new collaboration was initiated by a wealthy businessman in Macao whose family came from West Mountain and proposed to organize the

worship of the founding father as an event of the whole Lu lineage. He gave an endowment to support the expenditure of the annual worship. Starting from that year, the time to the worship of the founding father of the Lu lineage was unified. However, the organization did not change. For example, villagers of the Eastside administrative unit organized themselves in the same way they did in 1992.

I argue that members of the Lu lineage do not form a unified ritual unit. The Lu lineage is still not a unified lineage. Other than worshipping the founding father on the same day, there is no further collaboration among all villages of the Lu surname. In addition, besides this ritual, there is no corresponding lineage association with sanctioning power. The fragmented feature of the Lu lineage continues in the reform era.

C) Construction of the Temple of Benevolence

Having discussed the revival of ancestral worship, I now turn to the restoration of the Temple of Benevolence (hereafter, the Temple). As seen in the last part, the Lu lineage did not form a unified ritual community that practices ancestral ritual together. Nor does the Lu lineage have a central lineage organization to deal with lineage affairs. This part shows that the local deity was once used to construct the lineage identity of the Lu lineage in the 1980s. Although the construction was not fully successful, as I will show in this part, it is at least more successful than ancestral worship. In what follows, I start from introducing deity worship in West Mountain.

In West Mountain, the territorial cult was revived later than ancestral worship. Each village has a village deity. The temple of the village deity is small (less than one square meter) and the deity has no statue. The name of the deity is written on a board, and people worship the

board. Local people burn incense on the first and the fifteenth day of each lunar month. There is no collaborated organization around the village temple. Some villages performed opera on the fifteenth day of the eighth lunar month, starting from the end of the 1980s. Collecting funds for the opera performance is the only collective activity surrounding the village temple.

Among three community-wide temples in West Mountain in the Republican era, the Temple of Benevolence is the only one that has been restored as a community temple.³ The restoration of the Temple of Benevolence in the 1980s, however, involved only villagers of the Lu surname. At the time, members of the Lu lineage identified the temple as the temple of the Lu lineage.

The Temple of Benevolence was a temple for multi-surname groups, and the Lu lineage dominated the temple in the republican period. Very few documents are left on the temple history in the late imperial China.⁴ What we do know is that the temple was built in the fourteenth century, approximately one century after the founding father of the Lu lineage migrated to West Mountain. When the Lu family settled in West Mountain, six other lineages lived in the area before Lu family. We do not know who built the temple and what deity was worship in the temple at that time. In the republican era, the Temple of Benevolence was the center for cross-lineage politics. The Lu lineage controlled the temple, as well as the annual procession, called the Eighth Day and Fourth Month Procession. The Lu lineage represented the two major deities of the temple. Two other surnames, Chen and Zhang, represented the other two

³ One of the other two temples was reconstructed in the 1990s. The funding was primarily from a businessman from Guangdong province, and the temple became a Buddhist temple run by monks. Some villagers worshipped in that temple. But, no community-wide ritual was involved.

⁴ The only written document I saw was a board displaying in the Temple of Benevolence. The board records a brief history of the Temple of Benevolence and the origin of deity worshipping in the Temple. The temple committee told me the information on the board was copied from a historical document that has been preserved from the late Qing. I asked for the original historical document with the assistance of the elders, but no one knew where it was.

side deities. The other surname groups residing in West Mountain did not participate in the Procession.

In the collectivization period, the Temple of Benevolence was destroyed. Throughout the collectivization period and the early period of the reform period, locals continued to go to the old temple place to burn incense on the eighth day of the fourth lunar month, the date of the Procession. The major deity of the Temple of Benevolence, Lord Grace, was said to be efficacious in blessing crops to grow properly each year, and in blessing believers to be safe when they traveled outside the community. Farmers and travelers were the main believers of the Temple.

The construction project started in 1985 and was finished in 1987. The project was initiated by an old woman named Hu, who was born in 1916 and claimed to be possessed by Lord Grace between 1985 and 1987. Hu was ninety-three when I met her in the field; she was a healthy and clear-minded woman. She recalled,

I was seventy-one when I was possessed by Lord Grace in 1985. I had no experience in being possessed before that. I was an underground member of the communist party in 1930s and 1940s. I did not believe in the local deity, and I rarely participated in superstitious activities...

The first time I became possessed was in the middle of the night. I was asleep before I was possessed. I ran out of my third floor room to the courtyard of the *tulou* where I lived with my family and ten other families. I was yelling when I was running, and most people living in the same *tulou* were awakened by me. When I was standing in the courtyard, I heard Lord Grace talking to me. He said that for the past thirty years he has not had a house to live and is miserable. He wanted me to initiate the reconstruction project. I told him that I am old, poor and illiterate. I am afraid that I do not have the capability to lead the project. Lord Grace told me not to worry about the money. He said, 'don't you have relatives living in Indonesia? Write them a letter tomorrow and the funding will come.'

Hu explained to me that with witness of her family members and neighbors living in the same *tulou*,⁵ they believed that she was possessed by Lord Grace. She said that every time she was

⁵ *Tulou* (literally means the earth building) was a unique local dwelling of Yongding county, to which West Mountain belongs. *Tulou* is a large, enclosed and fortified earth building three to five stories high, and it housed up to eighty families. With the requirement of collaboration, households built a *tulou* together, regardless of the descent group.

possessed, Lord Grace told her something about her family members or neighbors that she did not know. And these things were proved to be correct when confirmed with the relevant person. For example, the first time she was possessed, Lord Grace told her that her oldest son had been bothered by a chronic ailment for ten years. Her oldest son confirmed that he had hemorrhoids, which he was ashamed to tell anyone.

The story about the construction project is surrounded by the magic power of Lord Grace. Through the possession of Hu, Lord Grace arranged all aspects of the construction project, from choosing the committee members for the project to cleaning up the old temple site. Lord Grace named four people--patriarchs in their sixties and seventies--and asked Hu to organize the construction committee with them. The construction committee was formed based on these four persons. The site of the Temple was given back to the construction committee without much effort. The legend about the return of the site is told in the following way: the head of the family living on the old temple site dreamed of a boa lying on the pillar, which locals understood as an omen. After he woke up, he went to ask a spirit medium for the meaning of the dream. He was told that Lord Grace was coming to ask for his place back. He got scared and moved away.

The construction project of the Temple of Benevolence was led by the Lu lineage. The Lu lineage emphasized their special relation with Lord Grace, and excluded the other surname groups. Although emphasizing the special relation with Lord Grace was consistent with the past history, the construction of the Temple of Benevolence as the temple of the Lu lineage reflected the stage of community integration. At the time, what was needed was to integrate the Lu lineage. The integration with the other surname groups did not come a bit later, which will be covered in the next section.

On the third day, after Hu was first possessed, the four named persons, Hu, and other

seven people who were invited by the four named persons, together held their first meeting to discuss the restoration project. These twelve persons formed the construction committee council, and they all came from the Lu family (either Lu male members or spouses of Lu). The mobilization of the construction project was focused on and limited to Lu members. The funding of the project was mainly from overseas Lu members. After the first possession by the Lord Grace and the first meeting of the construction project, Hu wrote to her mother-in-law in Indonesia to ask for donation. Her mother-in-law was enthusiastic about the project and initiated a fundraiser within her friends, who were also from the local area. She collected 7,200 RMB. This fund started the restoration project. Later on, other Lu members with overseas connections also wrote to their relatives to ask for the support for the project. Eighty percent of the funding of the project came from overseas Chinese.

At the time, there was still political risk in getting involved in religious activities. The construction committee council came up with the idea of linking the Temple of Benevolence with the Five-One-Three Revolt, an event in the lore of the Chinese Communist Party. The Five-One-Three Revolt was one of the earliest successful communist revolts. It happened at the capital of the county where West Mountain town was located in 1928. The leaders of that revolt had a meeting to plan for the revolt at the Temple of Benevolence. The construction committee council thought that if the temple became an officially recognized memorial site of the revolt, they could rebuild the temple in the name of commemorating the revolt. The council brought this idea to a Lu member who served as a general in the Communist army. The Lu general filed the application to the provincial government. In the name of memorizing the Five-One-Three Revolt, the council reclaimed the land of the Temple of the Benevolence from the township government. The construction project of the Temple of Benevolence was accomplished without much

intervention from the local government. The approval of the memorial site of the Five-One-Three Revolt was received in 1992, much later than the completion of the construction project in 1987.

After the construction of the Temple of Benevolence in 1987, Lu villagers had an interest in reviving the Procession. Other than Hu, who withdrew from participating in the revival movement after the completion of the Temple of the Benevolence, the rest of the committee of the construction project planned on reviving the Procession. The negotiation process on the Procession was beyond the capacity of these committee members, however, which led to the opening up of space for retired local cadres to take part in the revival movement. I will turn to the revival of the Procession in the next section.

This part shows that the Temple was reconstructed as the temple of the Lu lineage. The construction project brought a sense of belonging among villages of the Lu surname, and it mobilized villages of the Lu surname in a way that the ancestral worship could not achieve. However, the committee of the construction project lacked a strong authority to transform itself into a regular committee. This problem can be illustrated through the list of the committee members. Other than Hu, the rest of the committee of the construction project were patriarchs of descent groups. They were well respected in their villages, but none of them had much influence outside their villages—they lacked community-wide authority and connections with other villages. Given this situation, how did the committee of the construction project succeed in reconstructing the Temple in the first place?

The elements required for a successful construction project and a regular temple committee are different. For the former, the main factor is funding for the construction project, while the key elements for the later is community-wide authority and political and social

connections to link all sub-groups. Although the committee of the reconstruction project lacked the authority and connection, it did have enough ground for raising funds for the construction project. As I pointed out earlier, the reconstruction project relied mainly from the donation of overseas Chinese. It was not an internally funded project. The committee members of the reconstruction project, including Hu, were from strong villages that have a great amount of its members migrating to south-Asia in the republican period. These overseas Chinese were economically better off than their relatives back in the hometown, and most of them were enthusiastic in deity worship. In addition, the magic power of Lord Grace demonstrated through Hu further persuaded overseas Chinese to make the contribution. In sum, the demonstration of the magic power through Hu and overseas Chinese are the key elements to the success of the construction project. Yet, these two elements were insufficient to the continuing development of the Temple into a community-wide temple. The next section discusses what makes a community-wide temple possible. Toward the end of this part, I have a few more words on the role played by magic force and overseas Chinese in the revival movement.

These two elements—the magic force and overseas Chinese—are the common elements that can be found in the early stage of the revival movement in Fujian.⁶ Most communities have stories about the magic force of the local deity or the common ancestor (although the presentation varies, ranging from spirit possession to dreams or natural omen). When there was higher risk for political prosecution to traditional and religious practices, stories of the magic force were particularly important in giving villagers confidence in their practices. In contrast, financial contribution from overseas Chinese gave local communities resources to revive traditional practices when local people were too poor to afford any expenditure. In particular,

⁶ For examples on overseas financial aid on the revival movement see Kuah (2006) and Kuah-Pearce (2006).

Fujian is a famous province of overseas Chinese since the 19th century, and the revival movement in Fujian province at the early stage in the reform era largely relied on overseas contributions. In addition, in the beginning of the reform era, the state had tried to attract overseas investment, and traditional activities were tolerated in the name of overseas Chinese. Overseas contributions also offered political protection to the local community for their traditional practices.

These two elements became less important and less useful as the revival movement involved less political risk and shifts from reconstruction project (which requires more money) to community building (which requires authority and connection). In what follows, I turn to discuss the transition to community building in West Mountain era.

[II] Community Building: Reviving the Eighth Day and Fourth Month Procession

This section discusses the revival of the eighth day and fourth month procession of the Temple of the Benevolence in 1993. This section shows that with the involvement of the party cadre, the Procession allying six administrative units (with a population of nine thousand people in the year of 2009) was successfully revived. In addition, the collective ideal of community was defined by the party cadre in order to override the old model of stratification in the republican era. This new collective ideal of community with corresponding new arrangements of the Procession set the general direction of community building to the present.

This section has two parts. Part A outlines the old model of stratification that becomes the contrasting model for the new collective model, and part B focuses on the revival of the Procession in 1993 and presents the new collective ideal of community.

A) The Old Model: A Highly Stratified Region

As pointed out earlier, unequal land ownership led to the fragmentation of the Lu lineage and stratification among the ten surnames of West Mountain. Stratification was reflected not only in economic well-being and land ownership, but also in ritual. This part summarizes the collective ideal of stratification and ritual arrangement realizing the collective ideal in the republican era. Note that this was not the collective ideal of stratification of local people in the republican era. Instead, it is what current villagers of West Mountain think the collective ideal of stratification was in the republican era. The importance of this part is not to represent the reality in the republican era. Instead, this old model of stratification serves as the oppositional ideal for the local people when they try to build a new, equalitarian community. We need this old model to understand why the new model was constructed as it is.

Although the origin of the Procession is untraceable, the Procession was a means of social control in the republican era. The Lu lineage controlled the Temple and forced weaker groups to join the Procession symbolizing subordination. Different deities represented different social status. Lord Grace as the main deity of the Temple was carried by the wealthier branch of the Lu lineage, the Steel branch. The Peace branch, as tenants of the Steel branch, carried the first lady, symbolizing the second in the order. The Chen surname carried Junior prince, and the Lin surname carried patriarch Buddha (only one of the two patriarch Buddhas took part in the Procession). A Lin villager commented, “Our ancestors were forced to join the Procession by the Lu lineage. Our ancestors were tenants of the Lu lineage, and could not refuse to attend the Procession. Before 1949, Lin villagers seldom worshipped in the Temple of the Benevolence. The temple was a temple of the Lu lineage.” There are different versions on the groups who carried Junior Prince and Patriarch Buddha. It is hard to falsify different versions. However, the

key message is the same: other surnames joining the procession were forced by the Lu lineage and the story told by the elders of other surnames shows resentment toward the control of the Lu lineage.

Stories told by groups that did not participate in the procession in the republican period show resentment toward the control of the Procession and the Temple of Benevolence by the Lu lineage. A Su villager said, “Our ancestors settled in West Mountain much later than most other surname groups. When we settled here, the Lu lineage asked us to carry the earthly god in the Procession. Our ancestors thought that by asking us to carry a trivial deity the Lu lineage insulted us. Our ancestors therefore refused to join the Procession.” The rest of the surnames of the central West Mountain area that did not join the procession shared this story to explain why their ancestors did not join the Procession.

In contrast, stories told by Lu members ignored the suppression part, although they did point out the Lu lineage was better off economically than the rest of the surnames. Informants also commented that Lord Grace was a deity of the Lu surname and he was in favor of the Lu surname in blessing their fortune, safety, and health. Among the Lu lineage, there was stratification as well. I repeatedly heard stories about how the first lady protected villages of the Peach branch in a collective flight between the Peach branch and the Steel branch.

In sum, the old model of stratification, told by different surname groups and villages, is similar in emphasis of power and wealth differentiation among surname groups. The model has no such sense of community among different surname groups. Conflicts and hostility among surname groups are taken for granted and are further naturalized as the composition of social order. Symbols (the five deities, namely) in the Procession reiterates this model of stratification, and the hierarchy of the deities worshipped in the Temple of Benevolence present the hierarchy

of surname groups. This understanding of the old model became the base for the emergence of the new collective model.

B) The New Collective Ideal of Community

This part examines the revival of the Procession in 1993, which started the formation of a new community. As I discussed in the last section, the committee of the reconstruction project of the Temple of Benevolence (1985-1987) lacked the community authority and political connection to revive the Procession which involves not only all villages of the Lu surname, but also villages of the non-Lu surnames. Retired local cadres, with abundant political connections with party cadres of other administrative units and having been known at least by villagers of an administrative unit, were the best candidates to step in to make the Procession possible. While retired party cadres had political and social capital to revive the Procession, they had different agenda and concerns on community building, compared to the other local leaders. They set the Procession in a new direction. This section shows the collective ideal of community building and the arrangement of the Procession set up by party cadres. In what follows, I first ask why local party cadres were involved in the Procession at the first place.

I argue that the local cadre helped revive the Procession because they saw it as a political move to express the solidarity of people of West Mountain and to represent West Mountain as an independent, unified region. This argument is based on that fact that the timing for reviving the Procession coincided with the request to separate West Mountain from the Steep-mountain town. The central West Mountain area belonged to the Steep-mountain town since the collectivization period. The township government was a two-hour walk from the central West Mountain. It was inconvenient for local people and local cadres to communicate with the township government. In

addition, local cadres also complained that the township government favored closer villages and they thought the local area would gain more resources if they established a separate town. The movement to establish an independent township government started in the late 1980s and mainly involved party cadres. West Mountain town was formed in 1992.

Although none of my informants directly connected the movement for an independent township government with the revival of the Procession, party cadres involved in both movements talked about the goal of the two movements in the same way—to establish solidarity among villagers of West Mountain. The township governor of the Steep-mountain town from the late 1980s to the early 1990s, a Lu member, said, “In the course of seeking independence, villagers of West Mountain showed solidarity and determination.” Yet, when I talked to ordinary villagers about the movement for an independent township government, none of them recalled the movement at all. “We have benefited from a separate township government. But, to talk about the movement back then, it mostly only involved party cadres. We had nothing to do with it, and neither did we have anything to contribute to it,” one of my informants commented. It is very likely that party cadres used local people’s zeal for the revival of the Procession as their evidence of the solidarity of people of the central West Mountain in their fight for the independent town.

Every party cadre who was involved in the revival of the Procession in 1993 commented that their motivation was to construction West Mountain as a unified community. With the goal of constructing community solidarity in mind, the local cadre was less interested in reviving the Procession to what it was in the pre-1949 period. They were aware that the stratification of the Procession contradicted the official idea. Egalitarianism, instead, became the main spirit they saw as an appropriate demonstration in the Procession.

Following this guideline, three consensuses were achieved among leaders of the Temple of the Benevolence, influential patriarchs, and retired party cadres. Foremost, the original stratification of the Procession had to be demolished by removing the surname as a marker of group distinction, and instead using the administrative unit. Second, every group took turns carrying four deities. Third, in holding the Procession, a procession council was formed with equal representation from each group and surname. These three consensuses speak to the old model that I lay out in the previous part.

In addition to egalitarianism, the local cadre also emphasized democracy as the key element in holding the Procession. After achieving three consensuses in 1992, local people were invited to meetings to negotiate with the participation and organization. Historically, five administrative units were involved in the Procession. Three units out of these five had only some surnames participating. In the consensuses, the basic unit to attend the procession was the administrative unit. In other words, an administrative unit had to unanimously agree to join the Procession or it did not join at all. Meetings were held within each administrative unit to determine if the unit joined the procession or not. At the beginning, there were disputes within surname groups that did not participate in the Procession in the pre-1949 period. The local cadre later on convinced them that it would not do any harm for them to participate in the Procession. In addition, the locality would be peaceful with their participation in the Procession. In the end, every household in the five administrative units agreed to participate in the procession. The other five administrative units which did not participate in the Procession before 1949 were all far away from the central West Mountain. One of these five administrative units had only Lu members. Being a Lu surname, villagers of this administrative unit expressed strong enthusiasm for joining the Procession. With support from other Lu members of the central West Mountain

area, this administrative unit was included in the Procession while the other four villages were excluded from the Procession.

The Arrangement of the Procession

After having unanimously agreement to join the Procession from the six administrative units, local leaders gathered together to arrange the practice of the Procession. Most part of the arrangement of the Procession corresponds to party cadres' ideal of community building: egalitarianism, with the exception of the premier (*zongli*) and the vice-premier (*fu zongli*). In general, the arrangement of the Procession de-emphasizes surname groups and provides equal access for every group.

The organization of the Procession was rearranged as follows: the premier was chosen from the group carrying the statue of Lord Grace; he took charge of organizing the Procession and collaborating all four groups. In addition, two vice-premiers were chosen in each group for the execution of the Procession at the administrative level. These nine persons, an accountant, a treasurer, and ten clerical staff appointed by the premier formed the Procession Council. The term of the council is a year, beginning on the eleventh day of the fourth lunar month to the same day of the next year. The six administration units are divided into four groups, according to population and geographical location (two groups have two administrative units each, and two groups have one administrative unit each). Each group takes turns in carrying different deities.

In addition, the route of the procession was rearranged. In total, there are ten altars to worship the deity. Two of these were newly added to accommodate groups that did not take part in the pre 1949-practice. The rest of the eight altars were set up in accordance with the pre-1949 practice. In the pre-1949 practice, the deity stayed overnight at the other community temple.

Since that community temple was destroyed, the deity stays overnight at two altars. The route is arranged as a circle surrounding the Temple of the Benevolence, which differs from the pre-1949 practice. The route of the pre-1949 practice was not arranged in a circular order. Rather, previously some places were passed by two times or more, and the total length of the route was much longer than the circle arrangement. No one has an explanation for the logic behind the route of the pre-1949 practice. I did observe, however, that the route of the procession in Zhu Stronghold is very similar to the route of the pre-1949 practice of West Mountain. Informants of Zhu Stronghold explained that the route is arranged according to *bagua* (literally eight symbols, or eight trigrams used in Taoist cosmology to represent the fundamental principles of reality). I suspect that the route of the pre-1949 practice was arranged according to a similar logic or some other Taoist logics, even though the religious and sacred aspect of the Procession was mostly abolished in the reform era.

The major thing preserved from the Republican era is the selection of the premier and the vice-premier. The selection is based on the will of Lord Grace. On the eleventh day of the fourth lunar month—the day after the end of the procession—people who are interested in competing for the premier and the vice-premier of the coming year’s procession gather in the Temple of Benevolence to throw divination blocks in front of the statue of Lord Grace. The person who throws positive divination blocks three successive times is said to be chosen by Lord Grace. If two or more persons throw three successive positive divination blocks, they go on to the second run to see who can throw three successive positive divination blocks first. This was the old method used in the republican era, and is important to show the presence of Lord Grace. As my informants said, there was no dispute on maintaining this procedure at the planning meeting. For atheist party cadres, although this method has an element of superstition, it does not violate the

rule of egalitarianism, as it entitled every villager to compete for the premier and the vice-premier. In addition, they could not find any better way.

The Collective Ideal of Community Building

When I did my fieldwork in 2008 and 2009, I found a consistent and coherent ideal of community building among villagers of West Mountain. The narrative of informants is almost the same as what party cadres told me as their guiding ideas for the Procession—egalitarianism and democracy. In addition, most informants who attended meetings to negotiate if their administrative units would take part in the Procession in 1992 can recite the three consensuses of the local leader on the Procession. Furthermore, every year the slogan for the Procession reiterates the central ideas of community—egalitarianism, solidary and harmony. My informants often speak of belonging and sense of solidarity as the ideal shared emotion of community.

I argue that a new set of collective ideals about community building has been established, whereby the community is based on equal social status among ten surname groups. This is seen in the consistency among the narratives of the village from both local villagers and the party cadres. They speak about how group distinction based on surname hurts community solidarity and should be avoided. They communicate that the ideal of the community is that everyone is equal and harmoniously lives together. Note that this version of ideal community building does not mention subgroups', individual responsibility, or obligation toward the community.

The Procession of West Mountain is one of the most magnificent processions in the county, for it successfully mobilizes villagers of the six administrative units of the central West Mountain area. When the Procession began in 1993 it formed a new local community, although at the time it is doubtful that these villages had a collective identity. The migration force of the

market economy over the subsequent fifteen years, however, helped form a collective identity so that by 2008 these six administrative units have formed a collective identity. The next section looks in detail at to social processes of community building from 1993 to the present.

[III] Social Processes of Community Building and Contestation

The previous section demonstrated that with the help from party cadres the Procession was successfully revived. It showed that party cadres gained the power to define the collective ideal of community building and rearranged most part of the ritual arrangement according to their ideal of community. The egalitarianism among surname groups implemented by the party cadres was not what patriarchs and other local leaders of the Lu surname had in mind, however. Although they were welcome to expand the Procession to the whole central West Mountain area, they wanted to preserve the superior status of the Lu surname. In the negotiation process to revive the Procession, these Lu people did not oppose to the new arrangement, for they knew the Procession would not be revived without the help of party cadres. In addition, they agreed that the collective ideal of the community proposed by the party cadres was ideologically correct. This did not mean that they became true believers and practitioners of the new collective ideal of the community. Rather, they continued bringing surname politics and emphasizing the superiority of the Lu surname over the other surnames. Community building in West Mountain was a struggle between the collective and lineage identity.

The list of the premiers of the Procession (table 4.1) and the president of the temple committee council, as well as the changing qualifications and responsibilities of these positions over the past years, provides a lens to look at the struggle between the collective and lineage

identity in West Mountain. This data reveals an interesting trend toward community building. In the beginning, surname politics overrode the ideal of egalitarianism, and the Lu lineage still claimed their superiority over the rest surnames. The premier of early years was an influential community-wide leader that took on responsibility in building community strength through construction projects of the Temple and other construction projects, such as roads over which the Procession passed. In contrast, in recent years, there is little trace of surname politics in the Procession and the selection of the premier. The premier position passed to wealthy businessmen with little community influence, but who could afford to spend money for the Procession. Other than leading the Procession and managing the temple, the Procession council and the temple committee were no longer involved in communal affairs. In short, one sees a community moving forward to realize egalitarianism in the Procession, while the Procession lost its inner vitality to provide substantial utility to the community.

[Table 4.1] The List of the Premiers of the Procession

Year	Last Name	Age at the time	Absentee	Occupation
1993	Mr. Lu	Mid 50s	N	The party secretary of one of the administrative unit
1994	Mr. Lu	Late 50s	N	Local doctor and a patriarch
1995	Mr. Lu	Early 50s	N	A small shop owner and a retired local cadre
1996	Mr. Lu	Early 60s	N	A retailer of fertilizer and retired cadre on the state payroll
1997	Mr. Lu	Early 60s	N	A car repair worker, a patriarch and a representative of the construction committee council of the Temple in the 80s
1998	Mr. Lu	Mid 40s	N	The head of gamblers
1999	Mr. Lu	Mid 50s	N	Car repair businessmen, and a patriarch
2000	Mr. Lu	Early 40s	Y	A factory owner in Xiamen and his father is the village head. He father was in charge of the Procession
2001	Mr. Lu	Mid 40s	Y	A factory owner in Xiamen and his father is a retired cadre on the state payroll. His father was in charge of the Procession.
2002	Mr. Lu	Late 40s	Y	A steel factory owner in Guangdong. His father was in charge of the Procession.
2004	Mr. Lu	Mid 40s	Y	A factory owner in Xiamen and his father was the village head. His father was in charge of the Procession.
2005	Mr Zhang	Mid 40s	Y	A factory owner in Shenzhen (who father was a ordinary farmer)
2006	Mr. Lu	Early 50s	N	The head of a construction team, and a patriarch
2007	Mr. Lu	Late 40s	Y	A businessman doing business outside the local community
2008	Mr. Chen	Mid 40s	N	A factory owner in the local

2009	Mr. Lin	Early 40s	Y	A factory owner in Xiamen
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The most immediate explanation of the transition is the new market economy that displaced most working adults to nearby industrial cities for low skilled jobs. This is the explanation given by my informants, and it is also a commonly employed perspective for China specialists in explaining the consequence of the market economy on remote rural regions.

But the causal relation is too simple and denies local communities agency in making efforts to engage with the market force. All three cases of my study show that the revival movement is a collective effort to deal with new challenges in the reform era. Each community has specific issues it faces, and has its particular cultural legacy and historical past that confines or enables the community to respond to challenges in culturally logical ways. For West Mountain, fragmented and contesting grouping was the key issue that community members were dealing with in the 80s and 90s. But toward the end of the 1990s, the community was still unable to complete the transition toward a coherent and cohesive community.

When an economic transition began in the decollectivization period, traditional practices were not employed to respond to the economic transition. At the turn of 2000, the community experienced a sudden out-migration trend and it was too late for the collective to respond to market forces. Furthermore, as I pointed out above, the collective had not yet accomplished the transition to a coherent and cohesive community. The key question is why West Mountain could not form a cohesive community at this time.

To answer this question, this section is organized into two parts. Part A discusses the transition of the community by examining the list of the premiers of the Procession and the president of the temple committee. This part follows the narrative of the community transformation due to out-migration at the turn of 2000. Community members' enthusiasm in

local politics, especially surname politics, suddenly declined, as people left the community. Part B addresses the question why West Mountain failed to develop a coherent and cohesive community by the turn to 2000. By reexamining the struggle between the collective and lineage identity, this part argues that framing the collective identity and the lineage identity as an either-or choice limits community development that can provide community members with more support in the face of a market economy. As for what kind of community West Mountain become after the turn of 2000, I will continue the discussion in the fifth section on out-migrant workers.

A) Surname Politics and the Transition

This part examines the transition of local surname politics. First, I examine the list of the premiers of the Procession and the president of the temple committee council to show a general trend toward the decline of surname politics. Second, I examine changes of the qualifications and responsibilities of the Premier, and find the decline of the traditional authority and the decline of the involvement of the Procession council in community affairs.

The list of the premiers records that the premier, before 2004 are all of Lu surname and the premiers of 2005, 2008 and 2009 were of Zhang, Chen and Lin respectively. In addition, the first to the third president of the Temple Committee Council are all of the Lu surname. The fourth president, serving from 2005 to 2008, and continuing to the fifth president from 2008-2011 is of the Su surname. He commented on the change of the surname politics:

At the beginning of the revival movement, the Lu surname still thought that they must control the Temple and the Procession. In 1999, when it was my village's term to serve the premier of the Procession, I was interested in competing for the premier. However, other Lu members in the same group prevented me from doing so. They said that only Lu members could serve as the premier. Although there was an attempt to advocate egalitarianism among surname groups for joining the Procession, in the early years, Lu members were still in control of the Procession and the Temple. In the end, I did not have the chance to compete for the premier.

After the 2000s, however, more and more villagers resided outside the community, and fewer and fewer people are interested in managing the temple affairs and community affairs... One cannot get any wealthier by competing within the community. The competition moves outside the community... Since then, local politics changed. The tension among surname groups decreased. By the mid-2000s, competent persons moved out the community and no one wanted to serve as the president of the Temple. The locality was left with few persons competent and healthy to manage temple affairs. This was why I was nominated in 2005.

I am busy in helping my son's business in Xiamen. I do not want to continue serving as the president of the Temple Committee Council. However, no one else is willing to take over the position. I have to serve one more turn. But this will be the last term that I serve. I am definitely going to step down from the position after this term.

The significance of the Procession for local people is changing. The Procession was a reflection of lineage politics and the power structure before 2005. With more than two-thirds of local people residing outside the community since the turn of 2000, the Procession carries less substantial weight on the power struggle of local people. It has become a symbol of local identity, especially for out-migrant workers in reclaiming their connection with the local community. For this group of the people, surname politics is unimportant, compared to the shared experience of participants in the Procession. The past hostility among surname groups is fading away from younger generations' memory.

Furthermore, a closer reexamination of the list of the premiers of the Procession from 1993 to 2009 reveals changes in the qualification and responsibility of the premier. The premiers from 1993 to 1999 were local elites and influential figures of the central West Mountain. Their leadership skills and broad social networks were crucial factors that contributed to the success of the Procession. The premier of this period was expected not only to hold the Procession but also to manage temple affairs. In the one-year tenure, they served the temple as a full-time job requiring full attention. None of them donated a significant amount of the money in their turn. Speaking to the qualifications of the premier in the early years, the premier of 1995 said,

In the early years when the Procession was revived, the premier had to fill to three qualifications. The first was that the person had some economic strength, so that local people need not worry about the corruption of the person. The premier was not expected to make a big donation, however. The second was that the person had to be a charismatic leader that could mobilize villagers of all six administrative units. The third

was that he must have experience in dealing with community affairs. Therefore, the ideal age was between fifty and seventy. Younger persons might not have enough experiences in dealing with community affairs, while older persons lacked the energy to handle all trivial and complicated affairs.

The position of the premier from 1993 to 1999 was understood as a community service, whereby one was obligated to give back to the community. Although the magic power of Lord Grace appeared in the conversation, the premier of that time did not see it as the primary reason of motivation.

From 2000 to 2004, a new trend emerged. The premier suddenly switched from the generation in their fifties and sixties to the generation in their forties. They were successful businessmen who owned factories in the city. Their nomination was combined with their own success in business and the influence of their fathers in the local community. These premiers, as absentees of the community, did not take part in the preparation of the Procession. Instead, their fathers managed the preparation of the procession and the temple affairs. These premiers spent a great amount of money in the procession, and they believed that serving the premier would bring them fortune in their business. Xuyi, the father of the premier of 2004 and the head of his administrative unit, explained,

I was the one who managed every detail of the Procession. The only two things that my son did were to donate 20,000 RMB and to show up in the three-day procession... It was my leadership skill that made the procession... The reason it was under his name instead of mine was that he was the one who paid the bill, and he should be the nominal premier...

This example shows increasing importance of wealth for serving as the premier, although leadership skill was still required at the time.

Beginning in 2005, wealth became the most important criterion in deciding who could serve as the premier. Gaining more luck in their business became the motivation for people to compete for the premier, which led to the average age of people serving as premier dropped to early forties. Compared with the father of the person who served as premier from 2000 to 2004,

the father of the premier after 2005 was just a common villager. It was simply the wealth of the premier that put them in the position. These premiers knew nothing about community affairs or traditional practices. Take Mr. Chen, the premier of 2008 at the age of forty-one, for example. He owned a plastic factory in the local area. Speaking of his motivation to serve the premier he said,

Every former premier earned more money after they served the position. Lord Grace is efficacious in blessing his believers with fortune... I serve this position with hopes that my family members will be safe, and my business can further prosper... As for the reputation of the community, I have no wish in this regard.

When asked about what he had done in the past year for the preparation of the procession, he replied,

I know nothing about the Temple of the Benevolence and the Eighth day and the Fourth Month Procession. Neither am I interested in temple affairs... Fortunately, the premier does not need to take charge in managing the temple affairs... There is a group of elders who oversee the Procession. They have been involved in the Procession and temple affairs since the beginning of the revival movement in the reform era. They know everything. I do not need to have any prior knowledge about the Procession. I only need to do what they tell me to do. The most important obligation for me is to make a big donation to make sure that the procession is practiced in a magnificent way.

In the three-day procession, Mr. Chen looked nervous and disoriented. There were always elders standing behind him to instruct him what to do, ranging from when to light incense and when to give red envelopes to ritual specialists, or when to lead the troupes to move to the next altar. The detailed schedule of the procession was arranged by the elders, and the prior-communication among villages involving in the Procession was done among the elders of these villages.

With the decline of surname politics, another form of conflict emerged in the practice of the Procession. That is, an increasing tension between the elders, prioritizing the maintenance of local traditions and the local order, and younger generations who seek blessing for their own well-being in the market economy. This conflict became especially salient between the premier and experienced elders in recent years.

In what follows, I use an incident of 2008 to illustrate this point. Before meeting to elect the new premier, the procession of 2008 ended with a ritual to send the deity back to the temple. After the ritual, the Daoist who preformed the ritual complained that the price had never changed in the past fifteen years, and asked for 400 RMB, which was a big increase from 150 RMB in the past years. The premier of 2008 took out his wallet and gave him the exact amount he asked for without making any attempt to bargain with him. However, this transaction irritated the elders who oversaw the ritual. They said to the Daoist's face that he was too greedy. This occasion turned into a twenty-minute flight. Mr. Chen stood aside silently and looked embarrassed. At the end, the Daoist still left with four hundred RMB. The incident did not end there, however. The next day a temporary meeting was held among the elders who served in the temple committee council. The elder who initiated this meeting explained to me,

In this past three-day procession there were many violations of the local custom... The people who serve as the premier nowadays are too young. They do not understand the local custom and neither do they care... Something needs to be done to correct this problem. The incident happened yesterday is not just about 400 RMB. It was about the community rule, and we have to stick to it. 400 RMB and 150 RMB make no big difference for Mr. Chen. However, by paying more, he broke the community rule and undermined the authority of the elders... It was not a place for Mr. Chen to be generous... This kind of incident has happened often in recent years... I called this meeting to deal with this kind of situation. Although we are on the list of consultants for the Procession Council, the premier still has the final say over most of the decisions. I want to make a formal rule to require the premier to appoint two advisors from the elders, and he has to make every decision with these two people, no matter how trivial.

From the changes in the qualifications and responsibilities of the premier, I conclude that when surname groups no longer take the Procession and the Temple as a space for power struggle, the local tradition loses its authority over people's social and religious life. This further leads to the decline of the community order. Therefore, the issue of the decline of the community order is rooted much deeper than forcing the premier to follow local custom. Without major changes in the mechanism producing traditional authority, it matters little for the community order whether or not the elder can enforce the community rule on the Procession. The next part

examines what went wrong for West Mountain to lose its traditional authority, asking if the market force can take full responsibility?

B) Conflict between the Collective and Lineage Identity

Even my informants told me that the force of the market economy is responsible for the decline of community strength and traditional authority. This part reevaluates this claim, and urges that blaming the market force for the dissolution of traditional communities only deprives us of opportunity to have a deeper understanding on the base of community building. We need to carefully look into micro-processes of the transition.

West Mountain cannot be treated as a complete failure in the face of the market economy. After the turn of 2000, two-thirds of villagers regularly live and work in major cities in south China. In addition, people who are better off economically choose to leave the country and become citizens in major cities in south China. The local community cannot restrict its residents from leaving, nor does it have the means to encourage them to stay—not even the ancestor as a symbol has any effect in keeping descendants from permanently leaving the hometown. Despite this situation, the local community still functions effectively; the local cadres enforce state policy, and seeking state subsidies for construction projects, such as building roads and leading traditional practices, such as ancestral worship and deity worship. Furthermore, the local community provides hometown identity for out-migrant workers in their daily struggle in the city. The main issue is not that the local community has dissolved in the market transition; rather, the issue is why cannot the local community provide more help for its villagers and maintain the strength of traditional authority.

I argue that what restricts West Mountain from dealing with the inherent issue of the community is their framework making collective identity and lineage identity as an either-or choice. This issue speaks to the community base. A strong community does not need to be conflict-free, and the community can certainly have sub-groupings. The secret of a strong community, however, is to maintain coherence and sub-group differentiation at the same time. As in the case of Zhu Stronghold, I demonstrate that this is what makes Zhu Stronghold succeed. Yet people in West Mountain do not see the possibility for the coexistence of group coherence and sub-group differentiation. The rest of this part discusses why this is the case.

To address the issue of group dynamics, I firstly discuss the persisting and changing social structure in West Mountain. The wealthier groups of the Republican era were still wealthier than the rest in the 80s and 90s for two reasons. First, they had better land, so that even though land was redistributed in the 1950s, and the wealthier groups no longer held more land than the rest, better land gave them the advantage to develop economic agriculture (such as planting tobacco), and brought in more money in the 1980s after de-collectivization. Second, many people of these wealthier groups migrated to Southeast Asia in the republican era, and these overseas Chinese were much better off than villagers in West Mountain. Overseas Chinese were able to send back more remittance than they could have done in the Maoist period.

Villagers with wealthy overseas Chinese were financially better off than the rest.

The difference in wealth in the 1980s did not lead to inequality, as in the republican period. First of all, the wealth difference of the 80s and 90s was much smaller compared to that of the republican era. In addition, the wealthier groups did not control the means to subordinate the poor. Even though they occupied better land, they did not own more land to the extent to be able to lease it out and made living solely on rent. Furthermore, families with particularly better-

off overseas relatives mostly chose to leave the countryside and move to the city through the financial support of overseas relatives in the 1990s.

In the 80s and 90s, the villages of West Mountain were stratified by the material base of subordination no longer existed. What constituted the different power of subgroups was the size of each group. Groups with more members considered themselves stronger groups and requested more control over community affairs and local politics. Although the number of members in each surname group increased dramatically in the 70s and 80s, the order of the amount of members in the ten-surname group did not change. The Lu lineage was still the lineage with the majority population. In addition, the strong villages of the Lu surname of the Republican era maintained their status up to the reform era.

Group differentiation in West Mountain remains at the forefront of community relations. Group and surname politics motivated and drove the reconstruction of the Temple of Benevolence and the revival of the Procession, as I have discussed in the previous sections. Group differentiation is a social process, where traditional practices serve as the site for group and surname politics. But, in West Mountain, group differentiation has a tarnished past.

In West Mountain, traditional practices based on group and surname politics continue to be associated with the domination of the landlord class. In the reform era, group differentiation is conflated with the past memory of class suppression, and group differentiation is a sin that has to be eradicated. The local leader and local people could not imagine another way to deal with the past memory of surname politics, but it set the collective identity and surname identity as either-or category. This treatment with group differentiation was particularly formalized in local people's conceptual framework at the beginning of the revival of the Procession through the collective ideal of community proposed by the local cadre.

It is impossible to eliminate group differentiation, especially in the case of West Mountain, where the population of the Lu lineage significantly out-numbers that of other groups of the non-Lu surnames. As I have showed earlier, the Procession and the Temple committee continued being controlled by the Lu lineage up to 2004. Most informants of the non-Lu surnames above sixty still commented that the Temple of Benevolence is the temple of the Lu lineage. They saw a continuation of surname politics and group suppression from the republican period to the reform era. They neglected the fact that in daily life, the Lu lineage no longer controlled their access to economic means. The nature of group differentiation in the reform is very different from that of the republican era; however, the elders of the non-Lu surnames did not seem to recognize this fact. This blindness is led by the collective ideal of community proposed by the party cadre that suggests any kind of group differentiation is wrong.

The whole energy at the early stage of the revival movement was channeled to deal with surname politics. As a result, West Mountain lost its chance to develop traditional practices to support its members in the market transition. In interviews, none of the local leaders who participated in the Procession and the Temple in the 90s mentioned any concerns of the market transition. Thus, it is not surprising to observe a sudden change of dynamics of local politics after 2000, when the market of low-skilled jobs was more open than ever. In the next section, I discuss the cultural processes of community building and then turn to what kind of community West Mountain has become since the turn of 2000.

[IV] Cultural Processes of Community Building

The last section focused on the social process and discussed how the issue of surname politics limited community building in West Mountain. This section turns to the cultural process. As showed in the second section, when reviving the Procession in 1993, the party cadre defined the collective ideal of community building and arranged the Procession to corresponding to the collective ideal of community. There is one important cultural aspect they left open, however: the symbol, Lord Grace. No matter how secular the new arrangement of the Procession, holding the statue of Lord Grace in the Procession makes Lord Grace symbolize the collective. What does Lord Grace represent? Does Lord Grace have supernatural power? Is Lord Grace in favor of the Lu lineage as members believe? Or can Lord Grace impartially bless every surname group of West Mountain? And, foremost, what is commemorated in the Procession, Lord Grace or something else?

These questions are left open to personal interpretation. The party cadre and the temple committee made no attempt to define the symbol. The party cadre did not want to call local people superstitious, and the temple committee (of whom the majority is of Lu surname) wanted distance from the old model of stratification. The symbol of the old model of stratification was thus left ambiguous. What I end up observing is a wide open, free interpretation of Lord Grace with little correspondence to community order.

I argue the basic message of the community deity has a strong connotation with the ideal of community, and this has consequence in shaping community building. In West Mountain, the only coherent message about Lord Grace is that Lord Grace is responsive toward his believers and he blesses the sincere believers with wealth. The recent version says that the more one offers

to Lord Grace, the more blessing he can earn from Lord Grace. In this message, individual utilitarian is the key message, and Lord Grace has an ambivalent connotation with the community as a whole. This problem with the symbol originates from the past sin of the symbol, further restricts the symbol to support the collective aspect of community. To demonstrate the problem of the symbol, in what follows I closely examine narratives of the history of the Procession and the symbol of Lord Grace.

A) Two Competing Narratives of the History of the Procession

From very early on in my fieldwork, I noticed that there were different versions of the history of the Procession, which led individuals to believe in a different object that was assumed to be commemorated in the Procession. This part first discusses different versions of the history of the Procession, and the next part turns to the commemorated object. I summarize two competing, contradictory narratives in the history of the Procession: the narrative of stratification and the narrative of the communist revolt. The first version comes from memories of the elders, while the second version is a new creation of the past twenty-years that circulates among younger generations. In what follows, I provide examples of these two narratives.

In the narrative of stratification, the Procession is understood as a means for wealthy Lu members to control the locality. Lord Grace is a family deity of the Lu lineage. People were divided according to their surname groups and each surname group carried different deities that reflected the power structure of the community. Lu members remembering this narrative stress the superior status of the Lu lineage in West Mountain. For people of other surname groups, this narrative comes with a resentment toward the Lu lineage. People whose memory of the Procession falls in this version are elders above sixty-year-old.

The narrative of the communist revolt is a new creation starting from 1985, when the elders linked the Five-One-Three Communist Revolt with the Temple of the Benevolence to avoid the risk of political persecution. In this version, leaders of the Revolt gathered at the Temple to plot the revolt. There was no connection between the Revolt and the Procession in the initial version. The narrative of the history of the Procession and the Revolt kept developing. By 2008, one of my informants in his late thirties, articulated the history of the Procession as follows:

A day before the Five-one-three Communist Revolt, which happened in 1928, the leaders gathered in the Temple of Benevolence to plot the revolt. In the meeting, they offered incense to Lord Grace and asked for blessing... The Revolt succeed and local people believed that it must have been due to the blessing from Lord Grace... It was one of the earliest successful revolts and it was important for the communist party at the time. After the revolt, the local people held a procession to thank Lord Grace... The revolt happened on May thirteenth, which was the eighth day of the fourth lunar month...

The narrative of the communist revolt of the Procession is a new creation based on the official history of the Five-One-Three Communist Revolt. As the first successful communist revolt in Fujian province, the Five-One-Three Revolt is taught in school and even elementary school age kids know about this revolt. This version of the history of the Procession, therefore, makes sense for people who are educated under the communist regime. Furthermore, local people use their knowledge about the Revolt and add it to the history of the Procession.

The elders are aware of the narrative of the communist revolt, and since the beginning of my fieldwork, they told me to ignore this version because it was false. For example, May 13, 1928 was not the eighth day of the fourth lunar month of the year. In addition, the Procession began long before the Revolt in 1928. The elders, however, have no intention of dealing with the false narrative. On a number of occasions, elders were present when I spoke to young people, who gave me the narrative of the communist revolt. The elders did not make any comment or say

anything in the face to these young people. When these young people left, however, they did emphasize to me that the narrative of the communist revolt were false

It is important to note that the above two narratives are a summary from a number of stories that collected from informants. There is no standard version of either narrative, although the narratives of stratification are more similar than the communist revolt version. The major variation of the narrative of stratification is about the surname groups that carry the patriarch Buddha and Junior Prince. The narrative of the communist revolt is less standardized. Within the variation of this narrative, two points are often mentioned, the first being that the Revolt was successful because of the magic power of Lord Grace. The second one that the Procession was to commemorate the Revolt.

More often, informants cannot provide a full account of the history of the Procession, and even when they try, the narrative of the communist revolt is mixed with the stratification one. For example, one informant replied to my inquiry of the history of the Procession in the following way:

Well, I am not sure about the history of the Procession. I know very little about the history... I think the Procession has something to do with the Five-One-Three Revolt. Well... as to the link between the Procession and the Revolt, I am not sure... You have to talk to the elder managing the Temple. I really don't know... I am sorry that I am of very little help to you.

I received many such responses from people, especially those under fifty. The other example, given by a Lu farmer in his early fifties, is a mixture of the two versions.

The Procession started after the success of the Five-One-Three revolt. Villagers held the Procession in the name of commemorating the Revolt. This was only a disguise from political persecution. The true attempt was to pay respect to Lord Grace, and to ask a blessing from Lord Grace... Lu members dominated the Procession, and the group was divided into four according to the power and wealth of each group...

Although the elders are aware of the narrative of the communist revolt and say that is a false history, they do not attempt to correct it. This attitude comes from the guilt that they have

toward the stratification narrative. As discussed earlier, at the beginning of the revival of the Procession, the local cadre aimed to correct the stratification legacy. The message that the elders emphasized at the initial stage of the revival of the Procession led the younger generations to believe the link between the communist revolt and the Procession.

B) What is commemorated in the Procession, Lord Grace or the Five-One-Three Communist Revolt?

One might argue that the correct history of the Procession is not important. After all, it is common that local people remember little of the history of the group to which they belong, that they remember the past incorrectly, or they believe in a false history. The emphasis here is not the correct version of the past history, rather I argue that what is commemorated symbolizes the collective and impacts community building. This is why we need to take a closer look at what each version of the history of the Procession stands for.

There are two types of answers on what is commemorated in the Procession: Lord Grace, and the communist revolt. When the commemorated object is Lord Grace, the collective links with the magic power as a sacred entity. The fate of individual members is determined by the collective, represented by Lord Grace, and individuals pray for fortune for themselves and the collective. In contrast, when the commemorated object is the communist revolt, the collective links with the communist state, and the collective exists only because of the state.⁷ In addition, the commemoration (referring to the Procession) has no magic power and cannot determine the fate of the collective and individual. The collective is a secure entity that individuals can choose to take part in it or not.

⁷ Note that some people explained the success of the revolt as the result of the deity's power. I attribute this kind of interpretation to the first answer. What was commemorated in this kind of answer was Lord Grace, not the communist revolt.

These two objects of commemoration are not an either-or choice. A few informants thought that the Procession commemorates both Lord Grace and the communist revolt. In this understanding, the collective has both faces: a sacred entity with magic forces and a secular entity emphasizing individual choices. The magic force in this perspective is more likely to be conceived in individualist perspective with little concern over the community order.

In sum, Lord Grace in local people's narrative has little association with the community order. Lord Grace as a representation of the collective is mostly understood from an individual utilitarian perspective, which in the past was to bless the growth of crops, and now is the wealth of individual business. Solidarity, an important guideline for the local cadre to arrange the Procession, has very little room in the symbol of Lord Grace. The symbol does not carry the equivalent meaning as the collective ideal of community. This discrepancy undermines the effect of the Procession on community building.

In saying that Lord Grace fails to carry the meaning of solidarity does not mean that the Procession is a complete failure. Solidarity can be generated through mobilizing people together to accomplish a collective task. In this regard, the Procession has successfully generated a sense of solidarity and community on younger generations. It is only that the secular version of the collective generates less a sense of morality, which is an important element contributing to the maintenance of community order and solidarity.

[V] A Hometown of Out-migrant Workers

West Mountain is a community with a collective identity. The lineage identity has declined, and the importance of blood ties has narrowed to include only one's direct relatives and

their families. Friendship based on affection and shared hometown identity has replaced the importance of the lineage identity. Friendship from youth, such as playmates and classmates in elementary and high school, are particularly important in providing material and emotional support to deal with difficulties and hardship in the city.

Community members, especially young out-migrant workers, enthusiastically take part in the Procession, and they consider it the most important occasion to celebrate and strengthen their hometown identity. The young generations do not associate the Procession with surname and group politics, and neither do they remember much about the past history of class suppression. They compete for the position of the premier and vice-premier of the Procession to receive good fortune to survive in the market economy.

This seemingly sudden transition to an egalitarian community has undergone a longer transition than what is told by the surface story: that is, the rapid transition of the qualifications and responsibilities of the premier. The transition to an egalitarian community was accomplished by market forces turning the local community into a hometown of out-migrant workers at the turn of 2000.

In contrast to the intensive surname politics at the community level, in the economic sphere, blood ties had not the determining factor for work relations and collaboration since the beginning of the collectivization period. In the 1980s, peasants and construction workers were the most prevalent outside community. All informants related that at the time the five to ten people who formed a work team usually came from the same village and were friends or relatives who could work together harmoniously. The blood ties did not determine the working relationship. In other words, within a social network (which usually is a village), people chose to work with people who they could more easily get along with, rather than their relation by blood.

Personal networks are the only resource that villagers have from the local community, and it has limited utility. The exchange among villagers of West Mountain is limited to information for job allocation in low skill industry, but not new business opportunities or economy capital. Villagers of West Mountain never develops intensive networks for private loans, as do villagers in Zhu Stronghold. The comparison of business models of West Mountain and Zhu Stronghold will be further elaborated in the concluding chapter.

Decollectivization created generational differences between people who grew up before or in the collectivization period, and people who grew up in the reform era, i.e. those born after 1960. These two groups have very different experience with the market and the community. For younger generations, their ideas have been shaped by the market, and they do not carry memories about the community (namely surname politics). In contrast, people, who arrived in their early adulthood before or in the collectivization period, still experience the community through the past memory.

The sudden decline of surname politics after 2005 has to do with the transition of the leadership from the older generations to the younger generations. When West Mountain became a hometown of out-migrant workers at the turn of 2000, older generations discovered that they did not know what to do with a community with such an out-migration flow, and they did not master the skill to navigate with market logics. Therefore, there was a gradual transition of the local leadership, which can be observed from the list of the premier of the Procession as shown above and also the change of the party secretary and the head of the administrative unit. This transition also happened in the family. Informants of older generations commented that the family economy had to rely on the younger generation, and old folks were outdated, and cannot compete in the market economy. The authority in the family, thus, shifted to younger

generations.⁸ With the younger generation stepping into the position of leadership, the surname politics lost its prevalence, because the younger generation did not care.

Today, because most young people live regularly outside the community, they do not need to fight over resources or power within the community. Instead, what they care about is their hometown identity. No matter how symbolic the local identity, or how little it is related to daily economic struggle, it is the base for young people to know who they are, and it is what they fight over.

West Mountain is a community that functions effectively with the local cadre and the head of the administrative unit governing political, social and religious order. The basic infrastructure, such as roads, street lights, and running water, was implemented in the past ten years with a governmental subsidy that the head of the administrative unit won from the township and county governments. In addition, the local cadre and the head of the administrative unit step in to replace the authority of patriarchs to deal with social and religious affairs and they have the responsibility to make sure that the Procession will be held every year according to local custom. The current local political leaders are middle-age businessmen who move back to the local community after spending ten or twenty years outside.

The local community provides important safety net for out-migrant workers. The local community relieves the burden to take care of the aging parents, and out-migrant workers leave young kids with their parents in their hometown. Furthermore, in an economic downturn, they can always turn to the local community to sustain themselves. With land that no one works on, returned migrant workers can easily borrow land without rent, where they can plant persimmon or tobacco plant, which requires little capital. The land a middle-age couple can work is about

⁸ This is a common phenomena observed in the reform era. See similar findings from Yang (2003).

fifteen acres, which, on average, can earn 20,000 RMB a year. (The expense for a person living in the local community is about 3000 RMB per year.) With a little capital, villagers can raise pigs or chickens that can bring in as much as 200,000 RMB a year depending on the size of the farm. In addition to agriculture, most young men living in the community drive coal trucks.

As for why the local community of West Mountain does not provide substantial cultural advantages for its members working outside the community, as the case of Zhu Stronghold, I would like to reiterate what I have said in the chapter on Zhu Stronghold about the use of traditional practices for economic venture here. To develop cultural repertoires for a business venture requires a sophisticated arrangement to link traditional practices with economic behaviors and also corresponding collective ideal of community to form a strong, solidifying community with floating boundaries. This kind of cultural arrangement cannot be developed overnight, and neither can it be developed simply out of rational calculation, as I show in the case of Zhu Stronghold. West Mountain revived traditional practices to deal with community issues irrelevant to economics.

Currently, the major task of the local community of West Mountain is to deal with people migrating out and back to the community. A villager not doing well in the market economy might move his family back when he fails in investment or to reduce living costs. Most people migrate to the city in their early adulthood or even younger, and most of them come back to the community for a few years before they take another adventure to the city again. The experience of Xinglong, the head of the Eastside administrative unit, illustrates the in-and-out process of the local people; it also illustrates the effectiveness of the local community in accommodating and benefiting from the returned villagers.

I was born in 1964. In 1990, at the age of 26, I went to the capital of the district government for West Mountain. I started a small business to sell daily groceries... I moved to Kunming, the capital of Yunnan

province to do business in 1999... I have earned some money in the past years doing business elsewhere. In 1999, I lost 387,000 RMB because of a failed investment with a friend of mine...

It was not that easy to save money in big cities. I started to consider moving back to Puddle village... After 2000, the local government encouraged the development of professional farms. I moved my family back to the village in 2004. The investment to start up a big farm is not small. I put in 200,000 RMB and raised 200 pigs. The revenue I earn per year is about 200,000 RMB... I have a son 22 years old and a daughter who is 20. My son and daughter both worked in factories in Guangdong before we moved back. They live with us now. They also work in the pig farm... It took four of us to take care of pigs in the farm.

Xinglong was elected to serve as the head of the Eastside administrative unit in 2006. When I asked how he got elected he explained,

When I first came back to the village in 2004, I did not know anyone under 35. Being outside for fourteen years, other than coming back for Chinese New Year, I did not participate in village affairs. I seldom came back to participate in the Procession... I did pay the head fee for my family every year.

The only community activity that I participated in before I moved back in 2004 was to serve as the president of the annual grave visiting for the founding father of Lu lineage in 1992. It was the first year that seven villages of the Eastside administrative unit held the activity... I made some money at the time doing business in the city. The elders of Puddle village recommended me to serve as the president. They thought that I was an honest person and I had some money...

Although I had been away from the community for such a long time, when I moved back in 2004 the elders still remembered me. Serving as the president of the grave visiting activity of the founding father of Lu lineage helped. Some elders of other villages did not remember me at first. When I mentioned to them that I was the president in 1992, they remembered. They remembered me as an honest person and they knew my parents were kind... In 2006, I served as the president of the same activity again...

Later in 2006, when I decided to run for the head of the administrative unit, I visited the elders of a number of villages... Although at the time, many villagers, especially young people, did not know me. The elders persuaded their relatives and villagers to vote for me... I competed with the original head of the Eastside administrative unit. He had been in the position for nine years. He did little for villagers... In the end, I got nine hundred votes and he got four hundred and eighty votes...

The above case of Xinglong demonstrates that West Mountain does not provide any cultural resources other than symbolic identity of a hometown for its villagers to navigate through the market economy outside the community. The cultural mechanism works in maintaining the basic social order of members living in the community and assimilating returned members back to the community. The decision to move in and out of the local community is based on a rational calculation in the new market economy. The cultural mechanism to maintain the social order is the commemoratives rite, including ancestral worship and the Procession. In

brief, symbols of the ancestor and the local deity do not prevent locals from breaking with the community, and have little effect in bring local people back to the community. However, social and cultural processes producing these symbols are still effective in maintaining basic community order and producing local identity.

Conclusion

This chapter speaks to four general issues of this dissertation: the path of cultural adaptation, the intersection between the market force and community strength, and the group dynamic of conflict and unity. I here briefly summarize the case of West Mountain in light of these three general issues.

For the path of cultural adaptation, my general position is that revival movements are used to respond to new challenges in the reform era. Based on the community past, and the relation with the new market economy, each community chooses different community issues on which to focus, resulting in diverse paths of cultural adaptation. West Mountain exemplifies a local community using revival movements to consolidate fragmented groupings. In this process, the economic transition is left out of the concern of revival movements.

For the second issue of the intersection between market forces and the community strength, my general position is that a local community does not deem to lose community strength and traditional authority in the face of the market economy. Instead, there are more complex micro-processes happening in each community, and both structure and cultural elements need to be taken into account. In the case of West Mountain, the decline of the community strength around 2000 needs to be explained by both structural and cultural forces. The structural force that leads to a sudden demographic change can only partially account for

decline of the community strength. In this chapter, I also showed the problem in the collective ideal of community that weakens community strength.

For the issue of group dynamics on unity and conflict, I take a position to stress the importance to accept and incorporate both kinds of group dynamics in ritual practices. I argue that a community can only be strong when it is able to maintain group coherence and sub-group differentiation at the same time. West Mountain represents an opposite case of this argument, as people in West Mountain do not accept the possibility for the coexistence of these two kinds of group dynamics.

The concluding chapter will further discuss and elaborate my position on these three issues, which are based on the three cases. I will also compare the three cases and engage existing theories on these issues.

Chapter Five: Du Village—A New Traditional Village

This chapter exemplifies a community building collective identity through the image of a traditional village of the republican era. The image of a traditional village is constructed through revival movements creating distinctive traditional space and ritual cycles. The image of a traditional village provides a distinction from modern life, but it does not alienate villagers from modern life. Local tradition becomes local pride. Only community members can take part, while migrant workers living in the village are excluded.

This chapter illustrates that what is practiced and claimed to be local tradition is a new synthesis accumulating from different stages of revival movements over the past thirty years. The new synthesis includes bi-annual ancestral worship revived in the 80s, practices of deity worship standardized between the 1994 and 2003, and beginning in the mid-2000, new responsibilities of community management of the Oversea Chinese Council (OCC) of Du village (equivalent to the lineage organization), such as organizing patrols to safeguard the community and coordinating with the Cape Crab government to deal with disputes over land ownership. The new synthesis is not instructed by coherent cultural logics, but is a result of external factors, namely, the state and community issues. The state defines what is allowed in the cultural sphere and provides resources for traditional practices. Du villagers work under available cultural resources and reformulate traditional practices to deal with community issues emerging in the reform era. Old cultural elements are inscribed with new meanings, and new cultural elements are invented to deal with new situations.

The new set of local traditions has three major symbols, which make up the temporal imagination of the community: the shared past represented by a common ancestor, the present

order instructed by the local deity Baosheng, and the future guarded by the magic power of the Youyinggong (YYG, another local deity). These three symbols also work together to guide different dimensions of community life: a social hierarchy based on seniority, a village identity defined by the jurisdiction of Baosheng, and the individualistic economic model promoting by the YYG.

Unlike the cases of Zhu Stronghold and West Mountain, which reflect mass participation and collective mobilization, the traditional practices of Du village involve no mass participation or collective mobilization. According to the local convention, only old people are responsible for traditional practices. Young people at most make voluntarily donation to community temples, without any community norm on the amount of the donation. Traditional practices reach individuals through everyday interaction and work at the level of cognition.

By not involving mass participation and collective mobilization, the cultural process of constructing collective identity is disassociated from the social process of creating patterns of social interaction. The consequences are unclear rule on group alliance and flexible individual group affiliation. These consequences further lead to power struggles, factions and corruption of the OCC. In this sense, the cultural and social processes of revival movements of Du village are very different from those of Zhu Stronghold and West Mountain, where the cultural process and social process of revival movements developed together.

The case of Du village demonstrates a distinct cultural synthesis in an urbanized village, where villagers reside in the village with migrant workers. Du villagers benefit from the transition to a market economy through various state policies (such as the creation of a special industrial zone) and the closeness to the Xiamen city (later becoming part of the city). The demographic and economic conditions of Du village distinguish Du village from the cases of

West Mountain and Zhu Stronghold, where the majority of adult villagers work and reside outside the village. As a consequence, Du villagers do not fight against neither their economic conditions, nor the cultural sphere laid out and defined by the state. They work with it. Revival movements and current practices are all culturally logical, but it is practicality that guides the development of the new local tradition rather than adherence to cultural ideology. Du villagers are freer to strategically employ and synthesize different cultural elements that might not be logically compatible, namely, the mixed use of practices of ancestral worship and deity worship.

This chapter is organized into five sections. The first section outlines three key social and economic changes in the collectivization period that laid the foundation of revival movements in the reform era. The second section focuses on the development of the synthesis of traditional practices in Du village. According to the content of revival movements and state intervention, revival movements can be divided into three stages. This section examines the goals and content of revival movements in these three stages. The third section examines the synthesis in present day practices. In specific, this section asks how this set of new local traditions work together. The fourth section investigates the development and transformation of the leadership in the OCC to demonstrate the consequence of an unstable structure of social relations. In addressing the question of how new local traditions shape communal and individual life, the fifth section summarizes three impacts: flexible group affiliation, low social mobilization, and a cultural framework distinguishing traditional practices from modern life.

[I] Background

This section describes three key social and economic changes in the collectivization period that laid the foundation of community life and revival movements in the reform era. The first change was in the hierarchical lineage structure, which was broken down under new political arrangements, and the social structure was gradually transformed into horizontal alliances among descent groups. The second change was the implementation of political units to promote village identity. Third, the state more closely controlled Du village by providing economic benefits and opportunities that most other rural communities could not have—Du villagers were offered opportunities to become state workers, which brought more income and subsidy than peasants. As a result, Du villagers were more docile to the state than peasants, as workers could lose their job if they violated the state policy.

These three social and economic situations continued into the reform era. First, the horizontal alliance among descent groups became the pattern of social relations. Second, the identity of the agnatic group between the whole lineage and the descent group (i.e. the branch identity and the sub-branch identity) lost its significance, and village identity was further consolidated. Third, the state continued to provide new economic opportunities to encourage the household as the economic unit and to discourage collaboration among relatives.

Revival movements discussed in the rest of this chapter have been developed under these three social economic situations. Through revival movements, Du villagers do not attempt to change or fight against these basic situations set by the state since the collectivization period. Instead, villagers adapt and employ cultural resources to work under these given conditions to deal with community issues and pursue individual interests. In what follows, I discuss the three basic socio-economic situations of Du village respectively.

A) The Breakdown of the Lineage Structure and the Horizontal Alliance

In the collectivization period, the social structure of Du village was transformed from a hierarchical genealogical order to a horizontal descent group alliance. The the genealogical order was more stable and rigid. The lineage was structured through multi-layered grouping: the descent group, sub-branch, main branch, and the whole lineage. In the collectivization period, because of the suppression of higher-order lineage organizations and the implementation of the production team, the hierarchical lineage structure was broken and only the descent group functioned. With the breakdown of the hierarchical genealogical order, a new form of alliance based on functional necessity and personal interests emerged. I name the new form of alliance as a horizontal alliance because the higher-order lineage attribution ceased to matter.

Under the horizontal alliance, the descent group was the basic unit for ritual collaboration, and became the base to solidify a production team. The production team was an economic and political unit, but communist ideology did not replace belief in local deities and ancestral worship. Solidarity and morality still depended on community norms of the past. The most effective way to solidify a production team was to use the traditional ritual to bridge descent groups. For example, the fourth production team of Du village was known as the most solid team of the brigade. Its former team leader contributed to their alliance with descent groups. Back in the 60s the team leader formalized the rule that all households of the production team would help each other in life rituals. Leaders of the production team were responsible for monitoring and organizing all life rituals in the team. For example, every household had to send one family member to help in each funeral. However, the production team did not replace the descent group. Each descent group had the autonomy to handle inner group affairs.

This new form of group alliance broke the conventional rule of hierarchical restriction,

meaning a descent group could only ally with other descent groups from the same sub-branch, and a sub-branch could ally with other sub-branches of the same branch. Under current group alliances, an alliance between any descent groups is possible regardless of its sub-branch or branch attribution. The new alliance is mainly out of functional consideration and fosters the exchange of human labor or political collaboration. Each descent group of the allied groups is an independent ritual unit. Compared with alliances based on genealogical orders these kinds of alliances can be changed more easily and the corresponding social structure is less stable in that the alliance could easily break down. This unstable social structure is the condition faced by revival movements.

B) The Formation of the Village Identity

The transition from the lineage identity to the village identity started in the collectivization period with the state attempt to consolidate the village boundary for political control. To understand this transition, I go back to the situation in the republican era. In the republican era, village identity was vague and the lineage identity made up group identity. The relationship among Black Mountain and Du village best illustrates the difference between lineage identity and village identity. Villagers of Black Mountain village were migrated from Du village and they belonged to either the first branch or the third branch of the Du lineage. In the republican era, they belonged to the same administrative unit. In addition, the border between these two villages was ambiguous. Villagers living at the border between Du village and Black Mountain village had a strong affiliation of the lineage branch and the sub branch without a clear village identity. An informant in his early nineties whose family resided at the border and belonged to the third branch of Black Mountain said that his family joined the ancestral worship

of the third branch of Black Mountain. They continued the practices in the 40s after they moved to the center part of Du village. His father was active in community affairs in Black Mountain but never in Du village. He commented that at the time individuals were defined by lineage branch affiliation, for there was no clear village identity based on the territory in which one resided.

In the Maoist period, the state drew a new village boundary, creating village identity. Du village became a collective unit for the distribution of resources and political power. Du village and Black Mountain village were assigned to different brigades. Du village was in competition with its other adjunct village, Wang village, to control the Cape Crab brigade. Du village was established as a solid collective unit under this new political configuration.

In the reform era, lineage identity was exchangeable with village identity. There are at least three factors why lineage identity lost its significance and cannot be restored. First, the hierarchical lineage structure broke down in the collectivization period, as pointed out above. The second factor is that in the early stage of revival movements the local state still forbade lineage activities at a level below the whole lineage, which meant that Du villagers did not have a chance to fix the problem of the broken lineage structure. The third factor is the decline of group solidarity of the descent group in the 80s and 90s. In the decollectivization period, the state eased regulated use of land, leading to families of a descent group competing with each other over land and fixed assets, such as old houses and ancestral halls. It was not uncommon for some people to pressure their own siblings and relatives to give up larger pieces of land or a bigger share of joint assets. The descent group, although still functioned as the basic unit of life rituals, began to fall apart. Less than one-third of old houses survive up to the present, while one-third of

twenty-four ancestral halls of the descent group survive. These three factors restricted the restoration of lineage identity and structure.

The transition from lineage identity to village identity was not accomplished until in the reform era, when traditional practices confirmed village identity. The process of the consolidation of the village identity through traditional practices, namely deity worship, is discussed in the next section.

C) Individualism in the Economic Sphere

Since the beginning of the reform era, economic collaboration among relatives was uncommon. The economic model of Du village is based on the individual household (a couple with unmarried children) as the economic unit. This model has its roots in the collectivization period, and is further encouraged by the state. Below, I briefly recount state involvement in local economic development from the collectivization period to the present.

In the 1950s, the nearby area of Du village was designated a special industrial zone with a number of state-owned factories. A number of Du villagers were recruited into these factories, and workers of state-owned factories were economically better off than peasants. Meanwhile, the state closely monitored workers and could threaten to fire them. Workers were typically more docile than peasants for this reason.

In the 80s, after decollectivization, peasants of Du village not only enjoyed better economic opportunity for its location close to Xiamen city, but also enjoyed private loans provided by the state. Economic incentive was a tool for the local state to implement a birth control policy. At this time, villagers of Du village were much better off than most rural communities that were not close to a big city. Farmers cultivated oysters and other seafood,

while a great number of villagers earned money by transporting goods to Xiamen city. These businesses were mostly operated through individual household, which was the model encouraged by the local government.

When the Du village was included in a special industrial zone for Taiwanese factories, villagers were benefited through compensation for land expropriation and opportunities to work in the local factories. At the time, the GDP per capital for rural residents was less than 500 RMB, while Du villagers received three thousand RMB per person in the first land compensation. In addition, in the 90s, a number of villagers worked in the local factories. Working in the local factories provided new opportunities, even if it did not lead to great wealth. After working in local factories for a while and becoming familiar with Taiwanese factory owners, some villagers started their own little workshops specializing in a labor-intensive work (such as sewing logos onto clothes). These workshop owners made better money than factory workers, and they did not need to compete with big factories. This has been the path of Du villagers from the 90s to the present.

With opportunities provided by the state, Du villagers have no incentive to take greater risks, especially since they already enjoy higher living standard than most of rural communities. Du villagers take advantage of economic opportunities provided by the state and its location, and they do not leave the village for better economic opportunities. Although none of the Du villagers are particularly wealthy, they are satisfied with living standards in Du village, which is almost the same as that of Xiamen city.

[II] Three Stages of Revival Movements

This section examines the development of revival movements in Du village. What has been revived in Du village is determined by two factors: the state and community. First, revival movements are shaped by the cultural sphere defined and permitted by the state and resources offered by the state for traditional practices. Second, revival movements are employed to deal with community issues Du villagers face. Combining these two factors, revival movements can be divided into three stages: stage one, 1982-1994, reviving ancestral worship, stage two, 1994-2003, reviving the territorial cult, and stage three, 2003 to the present, developing self governing capacity. This section discusses these three stages. For each stage, I focus on examining what is allowed in the cultural sphere, what is the pressing community issue, and what is revived.

A) Stage One, 1982-1994, Reviving Ancestral Worship

Stage one is characterized by the open revival of ancestral worship and underground activities of deity worship. The open revival of ancestral worship was a result of governmental policy, although ancestral worship did not arouse much enthusiasm among villagers. Instead, villagers were more interested in reviving deity worship to deal with individual concerns of economic uncertainty and the reconstruction of the collective identity. Deity worship developed into underground activities as the local state tried to suppress it. This part discusses the development of these two lines of the revival movement.

The Local State and the Establishment of the OCC

When the central state relaxed control over local traditional practices in the reform era, the local state saw local tradition as cultural capital that could be exchanged for economic capital through local development. The local state—in the case of Du village meaning Fujian province, Xiamen city and Xinlin district (from top to lower level)—was less alert to local tradition than the central state, and was more eager to promote economic development. Throughout the collectivization period, villagers in Fujian province received a great amount of remittance and substantial goods from overseas. This led the Fujian provincial government to see overseas Chinese as potential investors, and started to create policies to attract them.¹ For example, the Fujian provincial government organized business investigation trips for overseas Chinese to investigate business opportunities in Fujian.

Encouraged by the provincial government, the district government of Xinlin, where Du village is located, was one of the earliest district governments that made explicit moves to build connections with overseas Chinese. At the time, overseas Chinese communities doubted the stability of the political climate in the communist regime. To mitigate their suspicion of the communist regime, kinship connections were used by the local government as an effective strategy. In their business investigation trip, the local state also arranged a trip for overseas Chinese to visit their hometown. As early as 1980, with a great number of overseas Chinese businessmen in South-east Asia, Hong Kong, and Taiwan the Xinlin district government sponsored the formation of the OCC for every village with former villagers being overseas

¹ The people of Fujian province have a long history of migration to South-east Asia, which can be traced back to before the sixteen century. From the second half of the 19th century up to the establishment of the People's Republic China in 1949 was the high point of the migration period. The migration in this period was back and forth. That is, people traveled between their hometown and the new settlement. A lot of people had at least two wives—one in the hometown and the other in the new settlement. Their offspring also traveled between these two places. Offspring born in the new settlement would be sent back to the hometown to learn Chinese and get familiar with the community back home. Offspring born in the hometown would be sent abroad to learn to do business.

Chinese. The OCC became a semi-official organization that aimed to recruit overseas Chinese on the behalf of the district government, and to arouse identity from overseas Chinese by drawing from common ancestry and affection deriving from kinship ties.

Although the state was hostile to traditional and religious practices, attitudes varied from the central government to the local government. The central government was concerned with ideological control and the transformation from tradition to modernity. The local government, however, was not so concerned with ideology, but rather interested in maintaining social order. In the reform era, as economic development became the primary goal of the local government, they were willing to employ whatever strategies they could to achieve this primary goal as long as these strategies did not violate the regulations of the central state.

Following this logic, from very early on, the Fujian provincial government distinguished traditional practices into two different realms, ancestral worship and deity worship, to avoid violate the central state policy. Although both of them were categorized as feudal superstition by the central state, ancestral worship was tolerated because it could be reframed as a secular memorial of a common origin of a group. In contrast, the central government took a stronger stand against deity worship, which involved supernatural powers. Thus, the Fujian provincial government tolerated ancestral worship but was cautious on deity worship.

The Xinlin district government largely followed this dichotomy. It encouraged ancestral worship but restricted OCC from deity worship. This attitude set the general tone for the OCC of Du village in the early stage of the revival movement. The local government was only concerned with the form of local tradition—ancestral worship versus deity worship—but had no intention to change the belief of local tradition.

Since the end of the nineteenth century, a great number of Du villagers migrated to Southeast Asia and Taiwan. At least eighty percent of all households in Du village had one relative residing overseas. In addition, Du village enjoyed a privileged position over other villages, as villagers of eight other villages in the area had migrated from Du village, and all of them had a great number of former members from overseas. Overseas Du members from these eight villages would also visit the ancestral temple of Du village.

The establishment of the OCC of Du village by the district government in 1982 started a systematic, organized revival movement in Du village. The two sets of major activities of the OCC in the first ten years were the renovation of the ancestral temple (1982-1987), and the compilation of genealogy (1987-1991). The renovation of the ancestral temple and the revival of ancestral worship in the ancestral temple were the first two accomplishment of the OCC. From 1987 to 1991, compilation of a genealogy was the major task of the OCC. Overseas Chinese of the Du surname were the main donator of these projects, and a few leaders of Overseas Chinese of the Du surname guided the direction of these projects, such as the style of the ancestral temple, and the format of the genealogy.

From 1982 to 1991, when lineage activities in Du village flourished, what did these activities bring to the community? Commemorative rites at the ancestral temple left almost no impact on people's daily life. The main reason for the low impact of the revival of ancestral worship was the breakdown of the lineage structure of the republican era that corresponded to ancestral worship. When the bi-annual ancestral worship was revived in the 80s, the ritual was largely revived according to what the elders remembered about the ritual practices in the republican era. Without the support of the corresponding lineage structure, the hierarchical lineage structure, the bi-annual ancestral worship in the lineage temple was more like a

performance that involved only a small portion of Du villagers (less than ten percent of Du villagers were eligible to participate) and had nothing to do with the rest of villagers.

The neglect of the gap between the ritual practices and the reality was not out of ignorance of the representative of the OCC. It was a result of state intervention. The local state only supported revival of ancestral worship at the whole lineage layer, and did not support the revival of any layer of the branch under the whole lineage. The local state forbade the local community to organize the lineage activity according to the branch. Instead, it requested to organize the lineage activity according to the production team, which resulted in further alienating the ritual practice from the lineage structure.

The OCC worked under the state instruction and defined only the ancestral worship of the whole lineage as its task. The OCC in Du village had no intention to challenge the state regulation and policy, as the leader was chosen and screened by the local state. The OCC inquired into the district government every time they did anything new to ensure they were legal. In other words, the OCC was responsible to the local state; it had no responsibility to villagers and their requests.

Underground Activities of Deity Worship

If villagers of Du village were indifferent to lineage activities, what were they concerned with at the time? Informants all pointed to the territorial cult. Since the 1970s, there was a strong bottom-up request to revive deity worship. The enthusiasm led to the first tradition-related project, the construction of the Youying Gong temple (hereafter the YYG temple), in 1976, and later on a number of activities in the 80s.

Through the two cases of Zhu Stronghold and West Mountain, I argued that reviving traditional practices is a way that community members deal with community issues and new challenges brought by the political and economic transition in the reform era. The rest of this part focuses on the same question, what motivated villagers to revive deity worship when there was still political risk involved.

There are two factors in motivating villagers to revive deity worship in the late 70s and 80s. The first one is the individual concern with the uncertainty of the current situation and the future. The second is the concern of community identity. Although these two motivations appear simultaneously in interviews, the first one is stronger than the second at this stage. In what follows, I will explain these two concerns of community members.

Individual concern with the uncertainty of the present and future was brought to my attention when I first learned about the 1976 reconstruction of the YYG temple, which was the first deity-worship activity. This uncertainty persisted throughout all three stages of the revival movement. All my informants involved in the reconstruction of the YYG temple claimed that they rebuilt the temple because YYG is very efficacious. When I asked my informants what made them believe in the magic power of the YYG throughout the Maoist period, they recollected stories of wealthy overseas Chinese receiving blessings from the YYG in the republican period. YYG was memorized as a deity of fortune and luck. Although only some bold villagers secretly worshipped the YYG in the Maoist period, the belief in the efficacy of the YYG did not fade.

I view the reconstruction of the YYG temple as a way for villagers to react to uncertainty and new opportunities that might follow by the death of chairman Mao. My informants did not articulate it in this way, however; rather they all pointed to the critical moment of the

construction project, which was right after the death of chairman Mao. The YYG was revived to cope with the sense of uncertainty at the time, and although this construction project was collectively mobilized, none of my informants mentioned community order or collective identity as their motivation for the project. The motivation was to seek blessing from the YYG for individual households, even though it was a collective project.

Under this context, it is no wonder no community-wide organization was formed after the construction project. Nothing changed at the community level. The only difference was that after the restoration of the temple, villagers began celebrating anniversaries, and people in nearby areas came to participate in the festival. During this time, people were poor and could only offer rice cakes in sacrifice to the deities. Although the festival attracted more and more people, the celebration was limited to sacrifices provided by individual households. Organized celebration with rituals performed by Daoists and opera performance did not start until the early 1990s.

Throughout all these years of revival movements, the YYG had very little association with community order. I will further elaborate on this point in the next section. For now, I would like to turn to the other deity that was revived around the same time. That is the great emperor of Baosheng. In my informants' recounting of the revival movement of Baosheng, the individual concern of household well-being, and the concern for local traditions were both mentioned. The individual concern of household well-being persists, while Baosheng is considered the main deity to maintain community order among all the deities worshipped in the community. In what follows, I discuss the revival of Baosheng at this early stage.

Baosheng was revived first by residents residing near the temple, and it took a few years to become a community-wide activity. This long process reflected the political risk at the time. In addition, in these early years, superstitious ritual practices (i.e. any ritual conventionally

requiring a Daoist to perform) were largely neglected to further lower the political risk. With donations from a few overseas Chinese, the statue of the great emperor of Baosheng was restored in 1981 without any ritual following the installation. On the eleventh day of the first lunar month of 1982, four villagers decided to take a visit to the primordial temple of great emperor. Because they did not hold an initiation ritual for the statue, they brought back ash from incense burners of the mother temple to symbolize the revitalization of magic power. The next year (1983), six persons went on pilgrimage by bicycle. Since the activity was well known by other villagers, in 1984 villagers of Du village voluntarily joined the pilgrimage by word of mouth. People who had cars or were able to borrow cars brought their cars. For that trip, they gathered twenty cars. Since then, a trip to the mother temple of Baosheng on the eleventh day of the first lunar month became a regular community activity. However, because they did not carry the statue of Baosheng with them and no corresponding communal ritual was performed, the trip was more of a tourist trip than a religious pilgrimage.

Informants attending the pilgrimage in the late 80s said that their primary reason for joining the pilgrimage was to seek blessing from Baosheng for their household. The original temple was more efficacious than the village temple, according to my informants. In answer to my question why they went on pilgrimage together as a village and chose to go on the date set in the republican era, my informants claimed it was a good thing to follow local custom. Furthermore, they were generally interested in reviving local tradition. In these conversations, the connection between Baosheng and community order was not clearly articulated. Rather, what was fully articulated was the concept of local tradition as a shared past based on practices in the republican era.

The concern with local tradition further pushed the revival movement. In 1990, Du villagers carried a statue of Baosheng in a sedan chair and a Daoist was hired to perform proper rituals. In 1991, Du village played a Chinese opera for the first time after returning from the pilgrimage in order to thank the great emperor for safeguarding the community. Although not clearly articulated, the construction of the collective identity and the maintenance of community order stood behind the idea of local tradition. Song, one of the four persons starting the pilgrimage in 1982 and serving in the OCC since 1987, expressed it best when he explained the rationale behind reviving Baosheng:

Baosheng was the first and only temple in the territory of the residential area of Du village that was fully revived, and which prospered in the 80s. This was because Baosheng was the deity who was in charge of the community order. Baosheng safeguarded the territory of Du village and blessed the village. In comparison, the other deity temples had specialized functions where believers went for special request, such as to cure sick child...

This articulation is close to the understanding of Baosheng by ordinary villagers. That is, Baosheng is the most important deity to maintain community order. However, there are two questions about Song's statement. The first is whether what he said truly reflects what villagers thought back in the 80s, or is a reflection of today's interpretation? The second question is whether the image of Baosheng as the deity of community order is really a legacy from the republican period, or is it a new interpretation in the reform period? Both questions are hard to answer. No matter the answers, there has been a movement toward the construction of the collective identity, where the consolidation of community order is accomplished through the symbol of Baosheng. This movement was not as clear in the 80s (through my interview), yet it was clear in the next stage.

B) Stage Two, 1994-2003—Reviving the Territorial Cult

The early 90s was the turning point for revival of deity worship. This turning point resulted from the change of attitude and policy of the district and provincial governments on traditional practices. On the one hand, the local government gave up the use of ancestral worship to attract overseas investment and shifted to infrastructure construction. On the other hand, the economic development resulting from the improvement of infrastructure gave the local government more confidence in releasing control over the territorial cult. Especially when businessmen and investors were believers of deity worship (referring mainly to Taiwanese businessmen), the local state further tolerated practices of deity worship.

In addition to the change of government policy over traditional practices, the locality had more money to support the revival movement. In 1987, the Xiamen government designed a special industrial zone for Taiwanese businessmen that covered Du village and a nearby area. With the compensation for land expropriation and opportunities to work in the local factories, villagers of Du village economically benefited from the industrial zone. As Du villagers grew wealthier, they were willing to contribute more to revival movements. In addition, these Taiwanese investors and businessmen were all traditional believers. They donated to local deities, who they held would help factories in the local area. The major temple donors shifted from overseas Chinese immigrants to factory owners (mainly from Xiamen and Taiwan) and local people.

Finally, in 1994, the OCC of Du village elected a new president, Congfa, who started a ten-year project of reviving deity worship. During his term as president from 1994 to 2003, he restored ten temples, revived corresponding temple festivals, and revived pilgrimage and procession. All community rituals (temple festivals, pilgrimage, and procession) were further

regularized, standardized, and expanded. Deity worship became part of the regular responsibility of the OCC, as did bi-annual ancestral worship.

Under Congfa, the revival of deity worship had two guidelines: to restore tradition and to show off wealth through extravagant temple style. In what follows, I discuss these two guidelines respectively. At our first meeting, Congfa told me that during his term as president of the OCC, his guiding principle was to restore tradition (*fugu*). According to Congfa, the term—*fugu*—meant to practice local tradition according to what it was in the republican era. This local tradition included buildings and mnemonic objects of the local deity, and also community rituals relating to the local deity, such as temple festivals, procession and pilgrimage. The term—*fugu*—also became a slogan for Du villagers. Every time I inquired about why the OCC revived a practice or reconstructed certain temples, my informants unanimously claimed these practices and temples were part of local tradition, and that they simply acted to restore tradition.

The slogan of *fugu* cannot be taken literally. When I inquired how Congfa reconstructed deity temples and revived community rituals, another guiding principle of the revival movement showed up: the use of extravagant temple style to show off wealth. Congfa considered old buildings of the local deity too shabby, and he wanted to replace old buildings with new and extravagant styles. During his term as president, Congfa organized trips for representatives of the OCC to visit famous deity temples in south China once a year. He paid particular attention to the decoration and costs of the buildings, rather than the meanings and symbols of Chinese traditional temple compounds. Neither was he interested in how buildings were constructed with different symbols and styles according to different types of deities.

Supervising their own construction projects of the village deity temples, Congfa and other representatives made decisions based on the costs and techniques available, and they took

advice from construction workers on how to make it look grandiose and expensive. Except for two OCC representatives, Congfa and the rest of the OCC did not pay attention to the details or adhere to the traditional style of the deity temples. These two representatives often raised questions on the decisions of Congfa and the other representatives, but they were not taken seriously.

The first project under Congfa's turn was the enlargement of the YYG temple. The YYG temple was considered the most efficacious temple among all deity temples in Du village, and Congfa chose the YYG temple as the first project to reinforce this point, even though the building of the YYG temple was usable at the time, compared to most of the other deity temples which had been destroyed. "The size and decoration of a temple demonstrates its efficacy," Congfa said. "The bigger a temple, the more efficacious it is." The new temple was finished on April 8, 1995, having spent 320,000 RMB to expand to 240 square meters. The style of the newly constructed temple was based on that of the local deity, which violated the original style of the YYG—that of a ghost temple.

Interestingly, Congfa and most other representatives of the OCC did not think extravagant temple styles to show off wealth contradicted *fugu*. Not only did they not spend much effort in investigating traditional forms of local practices in the republican era, but they also were very honest in pointing out revived practices that were not grounded in past practices. The reason for this, I argue, is that these two guidelines of the revival movement spoke to different concerns of community members: the extravagant temple style expressed individual concerns with economic uncertainty, and *fugu* was associated with the construction of community identity. Next section will further discuss the coexistence of these two principles and what this coexistence means to community building.

The base for traditional practices, including the two principles of the revival movement and routinized annual ritual practices, was fully developed under Congfa. In addition, the OCC was transformed from a semi-official organization to a grass-roots organization that responded to community members instead of the local government. The OCC monopolized the culture sphere and was only in charge of community traditional practices. It was completely separate from the local government at the administrative unit and had nothing to do with the economic sphere.

C) Stage Three, 2003 to the Present: Developing Self-governing Capacity

Traditional practices exhibit great continuity from the mid-90s to the 2000s, while the responsibility of the OCC expanded in the mid-2000. Traditional practices were routinized and standardized under Congfa, and continue into stage three. The two guidelines of the revival movements continue. *Fugu* is the slogan for practicing traditional rituals and to show off wealth continues being realized in endless construction projects. The OCC operations expanded from only being in charge of traditional practices to community affairs irrelevant to traditional practices. In specific, it takes on political and social responsibilities left over by the Cape Crab government. To illustrate the expansion of the OCC to arenas other than religious practices, this part will discuss the community background of this expansion, the resigning of Congfa, and a discussion on the responsibility of the current OCC.

Community life entered a new stage at the turn of 2000, when a large number of migrant workers lived in the residential area of Du village. Before 2000, factory workers lived in dorms in the factory, and they had limited interaction with villagers in everyday life. By the turn of 2000, with a mass expansion of local factories (more factories were built and the scale of these factories were bigger), factories no longer provided dorms to workers. Instead, workers rented

rooms from local residents. Renting out rooms increased the income of local people, but conflicts and resentment between migrant workers and local people intensified. In addition, the composition of migrant workers also changed. Before 2000, migrant workers mostly came from South Fujian and they spoke the same South Fujian dialect as Du villagers. At the turn of 2000, the majority of migrant workers came from inner provinces or northern China. These workers did not speak the local dialect and had different eating and living habits. Mistrust mounted among local people and migrant workers.

The formal political institution is underequipped to deal with migrant workers. For example, only two policemen are in charge of the Cape Crab administrative unit. These two officers are responsible for all criminal cases, monitoring illegal migrant workers and all other cases relating to public security. By 2005, migrant workers outnumbered local residents by more than five fold, meaning that the two policemen were in charge of eight thousand regular residents and forty thousand migrant workers in their jurisdiction. Villagers reported many burglaries and thefts, but unless the case involved violence, the police simply ignored the reports.

Du villagers expected the OCC to step in to control community order since the turn of 2000. This request led to disputes among representatives of the OCC. The majority of representatives of the OCC were over seventy years old, and they were only interested in traditional practices and were reluctant to take a strong lead in other arenas. Representatives of this older generation thought that young people in the Cape Crab government did not respect them, and they did not want to get involved in village affairs with the Cape Crab government.

Congfa's capability as the president of OCC was challenged after a car accident on a trip to an allied ancestral temple in March 2003, which involved twenty representatives. Six of those representatives were killed, and Congfa did not handle the negotiation of the incident well.

Although the fault was on the other side, families of the deceased got very little compensation. Congfa was accused of not having the necessary skills and connections to handle issues outside the community. In August, Congfa stepped down as the president of the OCC.

The OCC has undergone a transition to younger generations. A new president at the age of fifty was elected. In addition, people in their fifties and sixties replaced those representatives who passed away from the car incident, while existing representatives in their seventies or eighties are gradually replaced with younger generations. People in their fifties and sixties are the generation of the red guards in the Cultural Revolution. In particular, successful persons of this generation were those who were active and smart, and were selected to attend socialist education. After attending socialist education, these people were assigned to be local officials or village cadres. With this background, they have better leadership and communication skills, and are more adventurous in taking risks in the new market economy. Even after retirement, they have good relations with the local government. This generation started to participate in the OCC after 2003. Thereafter, the government of the Cape Crab administrative unit and the OCC have had more interactions and coordination over village affairs. Before 2003, the OCC avoided interaction with the Cape Crab government, and there was no coordination.

The transformation of the relations between the Cape Crab government and the OCC is best demonstrated by the current deputy president of the OCC, Wuyi. Wuyi is from the red guard generation. Since serving as the deputy president in 2008, he has worked with the Cape Crab government to coordinate disputes among villagers. In specific, there were disputes over the compensation of governmental land acquisition in 2006. Because these disputes related to land distribution at the end of collectivization period, current village cadres, who are mostly in their thirties or forties, have had a hard time settling these disputes. Wuyi and three other new

representatives of his age have participated in coordination meetings, and are invited to meetings of the Cape Crab government on village affairs. Wuyi represents a new form of authority. Instead of being subservient to the Cape Crab government, Wuyi is an emerging patriarch who provides leadership and coordination skills lacking in the Cape Crab government.

The entering of the Red Guard generation into the OCC marked a turning point in the involvement of the OCC in administrative affairs, and led to an expansion of OCC authority in social and political arenas. In 2006, the OCC forbade after-funeral-banquets. This began because prior to 1990 the crowd was dismissed after the funeral, but in the 90s some wealthier families treated people who attended the funeral with extravagant banquets as a way to show off their wealth. In the 2000s, every household had pressure to hold a banquet after the funeral. Elders in the village thought that this was a bad custom and wanted to forbid it. Finally, in 2006, the OCC passed a ban of after-funeral-banquets. Since then, this rule has been enforced. With support from almost every patriarch, patriarchs of the household holding the funeral will chat with the family before the funeral and monitor that they are not preparing a banquet.

In addition to the ban of after-funeral banquets, the OCC also organized patrols to safeguard the community. In the mid-2000s, with overflowing migrant workers living in the community, cases of disputes, burglary and thefts by migrants increased rapidly. The police were incapable of dealing with every case. Du villagers proposed to organize patrols in the community every night from 8pm to 6am. In total, they gathered 150 male villagers aging from eighteen to seventy to take turns in patrolling the community. This was very effective in the first two months, but then people started slacking off. The entire mobilization was not sustained for more than half a year. But, the community order has improved since then, for it demonstrated to migrants that Du villagers were capable of organizing and safeguarding their community,

keeping migrant gangs out.

In responding to the new challenge of the community—overflowing migrant workers living in the village, the OCC has developed into a strong community organization that leads traditional practices, manages social order, and coordinates with the Cape Crab government to deal with community affairs.

Conclusion

This section documented the development of revival movements in Du village. Different practices and arrangements in the three stages developed the local practices of today. The bi-annual ancestral worship revived in the first stage, practices of deity worship standardized in the second stage, and the new responsibility and capacity of community management of the OCC developed in the stage three make up the activities and responsibilities of the OCC today. In addition, the two guidelines of traditional practices formulated under Congfa's term as the president of the OCC continue to guide traditional practices to the present day.

This section focuses on historical development in the reform era, and the next section turns to what it is today. Accumulated traditional practices become a set of new local traditions. The next section addresses the following questions: how does this set of new local traditions work together, and what kind of community order is formed through this set of new local traditions?

[III] The New Local Tradition

“This is our local tradition” was the sentence that repeatedly came out from my informants’ mouths when I talked to them about present traditional practices. With dense temples in a small residential area and frequent annual ritual practices, the statement about local tradition is very convincing. Du village seems to be a traditional village revived from the republican era.

What is understood to be local tradition is actually a new synthesis. Old symbols are attached to new meanings, and old ritual practices are modified to deal with new community issues and changes in the social structure. Moreover, new local traditions establish the distinctiveness of the village by creating traditional space and ritual cycles. This image of a traditional village in the republican era stands out as a strong oppositional image to the modern era within which members live. It is this image that is the base of the collective identity. This section examines how these symbols and practices fit together and construct Du village as an effective community with intensive traditional practices and strong traditional authority. To do so, this section starts from exploring arrangements of the new local tradition of today, and then moves to symbols and meanings of the new local tradition.

A) Present Traditional Practices

Informants claimed that the OCC was equivalent to the lineage council in the republican era, and that the OCC was in charge of the same traditional practices as the lineage association in the republican era. The current responsibility of the OCC is the following: The OCC manages the ancestral temple, seven deity temples, and three temples of earth god. It annually hosts two ancestral worships, ten temple festivals, two public worships (worship of ghosts and worship of

Heaven), three processions, and two pilgrimages. In addition, every four-years the OCC hosts another temple festival, a pilgrimage, and a procession.

It is not hard to see that the claim about being the same sets of traditional practices is not accurate. The lineage council in the republican period managed the ancestral temple, at most four deity temples, and no temple of earth god.² It annually hosted two ancestral worships, four temple festivals, two public worships, two processions, and one pilgrimages. Every four-years, it hosted another temple festivals, but no pilgrimage or procession. The comparison shows that the OCC manages three more deity temples and three more temples of earth god than the lineage council of the republican era, and the OCC hosts six more temple festivals. The other six temples existed in the republican era, but they were not run by the lineage council, neither were they community-wide temples. The OCC created two new processions and two new pilgrimages. In short, the community as a whole has more community rituals now than in the republican era, and the OCC now is in charge of more traditional practices than the lineage council of the republican era.

Temple rituals have been highly standardized so that rituals of a similar kind are practiced almost similarly with slight variation according to different deities. In addition, ritual practices are simple and do not require much collective efforts from all social groups of the community. These points can be shown through the responsibility of the OCC, and the responsibility of individual household toward ritual practices. The responsibility to prepare and host rituals is placed mostly on representatives of the OCC (around twenty persons); very few non-representatives are involved. Usually those non-representatives are sons of representatives,

² It is unclear if the lineage council in the Republican era managed temple affairs. Informants all claimed it did, but in recollecting the Republican era, I heard a number of overstatements, which were justification for today's practices rather than a historical statement of fact. Accordingly to local conventions, it is possible that there was a separate temple council managing temple affairs.

and they are in charge of heavy lifting work, such as lifting the sedan chair on the procession. The main responsibility for the individual household is to provide sacrifices at the appointed place and time for processions, temple festivals, and public worship. Mostly women prepare food, carry sacrifices and offer incenses to the deity. Old men also visit temples, although usually they travel separately from their wives. Very rarely do young people show up, unless it is daughters or daughters-in-law helping food preparation. For pilgrimage, villagers only need to show up and take the bus at the appointed place and time. It is more like a tour trip, as villagers do not take any ritual responsibility, such as carrying banners or performing dances. When arriving at the destination, villagers go on and worship the deity on behalf of their own household, while a Daoist is hired to perform ritual on the behalf of the community.

The goal of these traditional practices is not to collectively mobilize community members, neither is it to create a shared experience of ritual practices, as in Zhu Stronghold and West Mountain. In Du village, traditional practices do not require participation from every member of the community, and traditional practices are not designed to show collective strength by having complex and extravagant rituals. Only old people are involved in traditional practices, and according to the community norm, only old people have the responsibility of traditional practices. Young people might make a voluntarily donation to community temples. Traditional practices reach to individuals through everyday interaction and work at the level of cognition. Traditional practices do not rely on collective action and mobilization to provoke cognitive and psychological effects, as in Durkheimian's tradition.

Let me take Guomei, my host's son and a workshop owner in his forties, as an example. I ran into him once after attending a temple activity. He was drinking tea with three other Du villagers of his age in the yard. After inquiring where I came back from, Guomei commented that

he has not been to any Du village temple for years. He then asked his friends if they could recall the last time they went to a temple in the community. None of them could. They then made jokes to each other saying that before they retired, the only time they were obligated to go to the community temple was on the day of their wedding. (He referred to the YYG temple and the ancestral hall.) They then started to talk about temple activities in the community, and they appeared to have a basic idea about traditional activities going on in the community, although they did not physically attend these activities. Actually, three out of these four middle-aged men's fathers were representatives of the OCC. Local tradition for these four men exists in their daily life and in their conversation with their fellow villagers and their parents, but not in ritual events.

If this is the case, what is the goal of traditional practices in Du village? The rest of this section will show that the goal is to create an ideal local tradition. These distinct temple buildings and the ritual cycle cast Du village as a traditional village, and local tradition is represented through temples, and the ritual cycle is the core of the collective identity of Du villagers. In other words, the collective identity in Du village is a cultural construction seen through a set of symbols and an image of Du village as a traditional village.

In further exploring the cultural construction of Du village, I find three key symbols constituting the ideal of local tradition: the founding ancestor, the great emperor of Baosheng, and the YYG. These three symbols form the base of the ideal community, determine the community order, and shape patterns of social relations. In what follows, I turn to these three symbols.

B) Three Symbols & Temporal Continuity

In exploring the effects of new local tradition on Du village, the three temples first revived shape the understanding of the community and the formation of a new community order. Symbolically, these three symbols provide a temporal imagination of the community: the shared past created by a common ancestor, the present guarded by the local deity Baosheng, and the future guaranteed by the magic power of the YYG. This symbolic understanding of the community is the basis of the ideal community. In addition to providing symbolic meanings of community continuity, these three symbols also guide different dimensions of community life. Namely, through ancestral worship a social hierarchy is established based on the system of the patriarch. With its jurisdiction, the great emperor of Baosheng defines community boundaries and orders social relations with non-villagers living in the village territory. The YYG promotes the individualistic economic model. Together these three dimensions of community life form the base of community order. This part explores meanings and functions of each symbol in community life.

The Ancestral Temple: the Shared Past and the System of the Patriarch

Although villagers are not enthusiastic about ancestral worship, the common ancestor is the basis for villagers to imagine a community. The common ancestor generates a shared past. It is not nostalgia, but rather about rights and entitlement. The common ancestor entitles villagers to claim their right over the land of Cape Crab. This concept is particularly strong when informants talked about migrant workers. “We are hosts of Cape Crab. The piece of the land is left from our ancestors since six hundred years. All the migrant workers living in the village now

are only temporary residents, and no matter how long they live here, they have no right over the land of our ancestor.”

In addition to their land rights in Cape Crab, current members claim their entitlement to participate and manage community affairs. The particular community rule for community participation is named a system of the patriarch (*jiazhan zhi*), which can be traced back at least in the republican era. The system of the patriarch is a social hierarchy based on one’s fulfillment to the ancestor by carrying the lineage line. Young and middle-age men should take responsibility to raise their own families, and they are not expected to get involved in community affairs. Upon having a grandson the person fulfills his responsibility towards ancestors by having a male heir to carry on the family name. That individual can now rely on his son to take care of the family. Being released from family obligation, he now has time to serve the community and is entitled as a patriarch. Being a patriarch is a transition from an individual family obligation to an obligation toward the community and the lineage.

The local convention of the republican era states that the hierarchy of the patriarchal system only counts male members. The hierarchy, from the lowest to the highest, is as follows: unmarried male members, married male members, the patriarch (*jiazhang*), and the head of patriarchs (*jiazhang tou*). Male members are not given full membership until marriage. Married male members are allowed and obligated to participate in the lineage branch. Later on, when the male head of the family has a grandchild,³ he is promoted to patriarch. Only when one becomes a patriarch, does one have the right and the responsibility to participate in community affairs and enter the ancestral temple. Above the patriarchs is the head patriarch, which refers to leaders of

³ The local convention of the republican era held that one must have to have a grandson be promoted to a patriarch. At the time, it is only a boy who can carry on the family line. With the implementation of the birth control policy in the 80s, not every family can have a male heir. To deal with this problem, Du villagers employ uxoriocel marriage. With the economic well being of the local area, Du families have not had a hard time finding marry-in son-in-laws from the interior. Thus, the local convention of grandson changed to grandchild, regardless of gender.

the descent group. In the republican era, the head patriarch from strong descent groups managed the lineage council. Currently, villagers call representatives of the OCC the head patriarchs.

Participation in community affairs and the ancestral temple continues the patriarchal system in the reform era. It is under this system that we can explain why traditional practices in Du village do not involve mass mobilization of ritual practices. Instead of emphasizing individual participation, Du village emphasizes orders of social status according to one's age and family situation. Thus, regular community issues are discussed in the OCC, and tasks in carrying out traditional practices are distributed among representatives of the OCC. If there are any important community issues that need to be discussed among community members, the OCC calls on a meeting of patriarchs, and only the patriarchs are invited.

Baosheng: the Present Community Order and the Community Boundary

The temple of great emperor Baosheng is believed to be the major guardian of the community that maintains the safety of the community. This is the main deity that informants associate with community order and morality. People do not go to the temple to wish for fortune, but for family safety and health in community order. The membership of this temple is exclusive, and only Du villagers worship in the temple of Baosheng.

The community boundary is defined by the annual procession of Baosheng on the twelfth day of the first month of the lunar year. On this day, the statue of Baosheng sits in a sedan chair and is paraded through three nearby villages (Silver village, Back Mountain village, and Pottery village) and then back to Du village. In addition, the procession also includes tours to Taiwanese factories within the boundary of Du village. Ritually, the activity is meant to purify the territory and maintain cosmological order within the boundary, and also to demonstrate ritual alliance

with nearby villages. As factories are also included, the procession provided an opportunity for these factories to establish relationships with the local community.

Participation in the procession is voluntary for factories within the territory of Du village. Every year, a week before the procession, OCC representatives will invite factories within their boundary to join the procession. Factories need to make a 1,000 RMB donation for a deity's visit. The understanding is that these factories gain a blessing from Baosheng. The first three factories built in Du village have participated in the procession since the 1990s. One time a factory unceremoniously rejected the OCC invitation and two years later it went out of business. A representative of the OCC said, "By rejecting us, the owner gave his factory a hard time to settling in our territory. Those factories built in Du village are also ruled by our deities."

Instead magic power, the failure of the factories that declined participation in the procession is explained by locals as a lack of social connections. "It is important to build good relations with the locality, because you will need them to help you to solve trouble issues, such as indocile workers, local gangs, and the police," the owner of Yi factory commented. Yi factory was the first factory built in Du village, and it was also the first factory that participated in the procession. The owner of Yi factory was invited to the banquet after the procession in 1995 and 1996. He made a joke saying that "I should invite your deity to pass through my factory next year." The friend who invited him to the banquet talked to representatives of the OCC and they started to include Yi factory in the route of the procession. By joining the procession, a factory is ritually recognized as part of the community.

No matter how much these Taiwanese factory owners believe the magic power of the local deity of Du village, the procession marching through local factories reiterates the relationship between Du village and factories located within the former village territory. Du

villagers claim their position as the host, and factories are conceived as guests. Even though Du village has no legal rights on the land occupied by the Taiwanese factories, the procession symbolizes a local order that these Taiwanese factories need to follow to survive and prosper in the locality. This mentality is very crucial in the confidence of Du villagers in their community and in dealing with outsiders, including Taiwanese factories and migrant workers in their territory.

The meaning and corresponding ritual practices of Baosheng is the basic model for other community deities. In the republican era, Basosheng was the only deity to have a procession and pilgrimage. Currently, two other deities also have a procession and pilgrimage, and these practices are modeled after the practice of Baosheng. The only community deity that is not modeled after Baosheng is the YYG.

The YYG⁴: Shared Future and Individuality

⁴ The YYG should be categorized as the ghost temple, for two dead bodies are worshipped there. It is said that in Ming dynasty, fishermen of Du village found two dead bodies on the location of the current temple. Fishermen buried these two bodies. Afterward, villagers reported that the island no longer flooded, and at night, fishermen could see lights indicating the direction back to the island. Villagers started to worship at the tomb and later built a house that covered the tomb.

A ghost temple is rarely a communal temple. A ghost temple usually comes with rapid economic development and is associated with an amoral request, such as gambling or prostitution. For example see Weller (1996, 1999). The YYG presents an interesting case in the way that it should be categorized as a ghost temple, but the YYG is no different from other local deities of Du village. Apart from the tomb in the middle of the temple and no deity statue, the ghost aspect of the YYG is gone. I collected very little information on the ghost aspect of the YYG, and therefore I simply treat the YYG the same as my informants: as a local deities.

In the Republican era, the YYG temple was a marginal temple, and certainly not a community temple. As elders recalled, the YYG temple was very small and could hold less than ten persons. No one managed the YYG temple, and no donation box was placed in the temple. People dropped by randomly to offer sacrifice and make prayers, and they offered rice cakes on the anniversary. Other than individual sacrifice, no public ritual was held and no opera was played to celebrate the anniversary.

The YYG temple as a community temple was a new creation in the post-Mao era. Choosing to revive the YYG as the first project in the 1976 is unusual from an outsider's perspective. Informants told me that they reconstructed the temple because the YYG was very efficacious. When I asked for more stories, no one had anything from the Maoist period, which I attribute to the marginality of the temple. The marginality includes two facets: the location and the type of the deity. The YYG temple was located in the marginal area of Du village. It was located on an island, not the residential area of Du village, where the rest of deity temples were located. This location provided protection from political authorities, namely, the district government. In addition, the type of

Informants emphasize the magic power of the YYG and believe the YYG blesses local development and individual fortunes. The YYG is a symbol employed to deal with uncertainty in individual life, as discussed in the second section. The YYG represents a symbol with both collective and individual meanings, and these two sides, I argue, correspond to the two sides of the economic situation that Du villagers face. On the one hand, villagers benefit from a state policy that no individual can control. For example, the local area was turned into industrial zone in 1987, and the overall economic well-being of villagers has improved since then. On the other hand, how much an individual can benefit from new economic opportunities varies according one's capacity and luck.

The YYG symbolizes individuality in the new market economy, as the YYG blesses individual households different fortunes according to the different relationships one accumulates with the YYG. On the anniversary of the YYG temple, individuals offer sacrifices and donations to the YYG. Donation is based on the individual—no community norm regulates how much each household should donate. The main motivation for the donation is individuals' wish for good fortune. In addition, non-villagers of Du village can also make offers to the YYG, and it is said that the YYG equally blesses non-villagers and villagers with good fortune. An individual's relationship with the YYG is based on a patron-and-client relationship.

There is no given reason why the YYG decides to bless some more than others. Informants said that the more you believe, the more likely the YYG will grant you a big fortune. A villager who owns a construction team has given at least one night of Chinese opera every

deity—the ghost—is himself a marginal deity that is a symbol of resistance against the totalitarian power of the communist state.

When I conducted my research, the YYG was treated no different from the other deities of Du village. The YYG is seen as a temple of wealth, but immorality is not associated with the YYG. No one ever mentioned seeking blessings for gambling, which is a typical request at a ghost temple. Indeed, sacrifices offered to the YYG were no different from other deities.

year since the community resumed to perform Chinese opera at the anniversary in the early 90s. “It has become a custom for me,” he claimed. He further commented that it was hard to prove if his success had anything to do with the YYG or not, as he considered himself to have benefited from the good economy in general. But, he said, he believed it was a blessing from the YYG. “You just have to believe it, and the YYG will pay you back, even though you have no direct proof.” There is another story about a non-Du villager who owns three big restaurants. The owner lived in a nearby village and started worshipping the YYG in the early 90s when he owned a small shop selling noodles. Over these years, his business grew better and better and he comes back to make donation every year at the anniversary of the YYG temple. None of stories of wealthy persons blessed by the YYG is about a sudden one time big fortune that a believer gained. Instead, all stories are about long time commitment with the YYG and how these believers gradually accumulated their wealth through their own hard work.

In addition to the YYG’s blessing of individuals, informants believed that the overall development and prosperity of Du village is under the blessing of the YYG because Du village is where hosts the temple. This perspective is the collective aspect of the YYG. The efficacy of the YYG is a collective construction of Du villagers. This construction started from the first construction project of the temple in the 1976. Since 1993, the YYG temple has been formally managed by the OCC. Over these years, the OCC pays particular attention to the YYG temple. In 1993, when Du village started the ten-year construction project of the local temples under Congfa’s term of the president, the YYG temple was chosen to be the first project, even though the temple was still usable. After all the community temples were rebuilt in 2004, a renovation project of the YYG temple began. The project placed more extravagant decoration on the roof of

the YYG temple, built more compounds attached to the central part of the temple, and constructed a garden area.

Given the dual sides of the symbolic meaning of the YYG, the link between these two aspects—individual fortune and the community future—is weak and unclear. The collective effort in the construction of the YYG is based on individual effort to build patron-client relations. In other words, in the collective project of the YYG, individuals claimed to be motivated by their own quest for the YYG's blessing. They did not have a clear collective goal in these collective projects. In contrast, in Zhu Stronghold, individual fortune and the community future are intimately intertwined together. Later on, I will further elaborate the feature and arrangement of the link between economic uncertainty and traditional practices of Du village.

Conclusion

These three symbols and their corresponding practices provide basic structure for community life under the market economy. The community is structured with a social hierarchy based on seniority. While the elder is responsible for the community affairs, the rest are free to focus on their personal pursuits. Personal interests, however, do not threaten the community order. Instead, personal interests are connected with the collective through the magic power of the YYG who guards the prosperity of the community and individuals. Last, but not least, a collective identity based primary on Baosheng holds the community together especially with the community being open to outsiders.

These practices originated from local tradition and work to knit together a locality with a flowing mass amount of out-migrant workers that threaten the identity and boundary of the local community. These practices are in response to socio-economic developments since the

collectivization period. That is, the three conditions discussed in the first section: the breakdown of the lineage structure, the emerging village identity, and the economic model based on individualism. Du villagers do not fight against the basic conditions laid out by the state. They work with it, and even with revival movements in the reform era they are not risk adventurers. They work with available cultural resources. In this way, revival movements and current practices are all culturally logical, but it is practicality that guides the development of the new local tradition rather than adherence to cultural ideology. Different elements are used to deal with different issues. As a consequence, there is contradiction in the new cultural synthesis. In particular, villagers mix up elements of the territorial cult and the lineage, and this results in an unstable structure of social relations and power. To which, I am turning to.

[IV] Community Authority in Contention (the OCC)

Du village represents a case where a community constructs and reproduces collective identity through synthesizing a number of cultural resources. I have so far demonstrated Du village as a successful case in constructing an effective new local tradition. This local tradition is a cultural construction that responds to various community issues and individual interests. In benefiting from the integrity of the community, Du village uses cultural resources strategically and leaves out issues that are hard to fix. The pattern of social interaction is left out. As the lineage structure broke down in the collectivization period, social relations became vary complicated and lacking in clear instruction. In their revival movements, Du villagers do not deal with this problem; they further mix elements of the territorial and ancestral cults, which make the problem of social relations become even harder to deal with.

The mixed use of the territorial cult and the ancestral cult leads to an unclear rule for social relations. These two kinds of social organizations prescribe different logics of social relations. The ancestral cult emphasizes the glorious past of the ancestor, and social relations are organized through a genealogical order. In contrast, the territorial cult emphasizes the locality and magic power of the deity. The social relations are formed through a nested temple hierarchy of residing neighborhoods. In the reform era, the collective identity of Du village is based on the territorial cult, while the descent group persists as the basic unit of grouping. There is no nested temple hierarchy of residing neighborhoods, as three temples to the earth god are run by the OCC. On the other hand, agnatic groups above the descent group have no effect in organizing people. The descent group and the whole community lack a link in-between.

Not dealing with social relations has a downside on community-building, especially the coherence of the community. This problem is most clearly observed through the power struggle in the OCC. Through investigating the development and transformation of the leadership in the OCC, I show that factions and corruption are prevalent problems in the OCC. Because of an unstable power structure, the OCC has limited capacity to deal with the problems of factions and corruption. Instead, the community developed informal sanction mechanisms, such as gossip, blackmail, and anonymous posters to monitor problems in the OCC. Although these informal sanction mechanisms worked in the past thirty years to hold the OCC accountable at the moment of crisis, the authority and legitimacy of the OCC was undermined. In what follows, I start from discussing the structure of leadership of the OCC, and then turn to the development and transformation of the OCC leadership.

The Structure of Leadership

The power structure of the OCC is unstable, and alliances within the OCC are unpredictable. Alliance is a personal choice decided by each individual representative, and it is subjected to change in each event. This situation has two causes: the selection of representatives, and unstructured group relations above the descent group. I start with the first cause. There is no clear rule for selecting representatives. The decision is not a collective one, but a personal one—the leader of the OCC makes the decision. Within the OCC, the grouping is divided according to the production team, instead of lineage branch. As such, each production team has an equal number of representatives. The inner structure of the OCC does not directly reflect the social structure of Du lineage. For example, some strong descent groups do not have any member serving the OCC.

Once one becomes a representative, he is very much his own man in making a decision concerning traditional practices. There is no structural constraint on one's position in the OCC. The production team has no binding power toward representatives of the same production team. In addition, with unstructured group relations above the descent group, there is no rule on who one should ally with. Foremost, goals in serving in the OCC are unclear. No one in the OCC considers himself having the responsibility to guard the interests of his decent group. This situation is very different from the setup of the lineage council in the republican era. At the time, the Du lineage council was equally managed by five branches. Each representative represented his branch. With this kind of structure, it did not necessarily end up with less inner competition and conflict. However, competition and dispute were easier to predict and deal with. With these general situations of representatives in mind, I discuss power struggles in the OCC over the past thirty years.

The Development and Transformation of the OCC Leadership

The OCC was incubated by the district government. In the formation stage, the district government approached Huiluan, an elite in the locality and asked him to organize the OCC. Thereafter, the OCC was dominated by him. He had the final say on every issue in the OCC, from the presidential candidate and representatives of the OCC to how to practice commemorative rites. His qualification, experiences, and character made him the first choice for the district government. After 1949, he was an elementary school teacher, a ghostwriter for his work unit, and had good relations with his leaders. He knew how to interact with officials. Because he was a member of KMT before 1949, he became a cautious and obedient person in the later political movements. Meanwhile, he used to write letters for villagers to send to their overseas families, and he knew how to contact overseas Du villagers. He also had strong personal ties with overseas Chinese because more than half of his own siblings and close relatives in the same descent group had migrated to Hong Kong and other countries in Southeast Asia in the republican era.

Before 2000, there was no rule for elections, and no terms of office. People served until they died. The president and representatives of the OCC were appointed by Huiluan. There was no division of labor among representatives. This formal organization had no clear rule. In this situation, there was no mechanism to supervise and regulate problems of fractions or corruption. These issues faced a big challenge when the first president passed away in 1991. From the end of 1991 to 1994, because of inner fractions, no one could call for an election meeting. The five most influential representatives of the OCC co-ruled the council.

To explain the problem of inner fractions, I have to go back to the YYG temple. Control over the donation of the YYG temple was the core of communal politics. As local people were

economically better off, each year at the annual festival significant donations were made by Du villagers and other believers from neighborhood areas. The OCC in the 80s did not manage temple affairs. Individual representatives who were patriarchs were requested by local people to handle temple affairs. Without a formal organization, financial management became a black hole. By the end of the 80s, donations for the YYG temple were in the hands of Chide and his two other counterparts, who were all representatives of the OCC. I do not know how these three persons gained control of the YYG temple, as none of them were alive when I did my fieldwork. Some villagers commented that they were aggressive and bold, and this point was demonstrated by the fact that Chide and his two other counterparts hindered the reelection of a new president after the first president passed away in 1991. These three corrupt individuals, Huiluan, and one other person made up the five-collective-lead of the OCC. By the end of the 80s, their corruption was an open secret in the village, and discontent mounted. This issue caused tension within the OCC, but no one dared to challenge Chide and his corrupt behavior.

The whole situation changed when an anonymous poster appeared in front of the YYG temple one day in 1993 after the annual festival of the temple. The poster accused Chide and his other two counterparts for misusing donations, and for using public funds for private use. Later, Chide confronted Huiluan, who claimed false accusation and left the accountant book and money on the table. These three persons resigned from the OCC. A new election of the president of the OCC was held and Congfa was elected as the second president of the OCC. This event demonstrates the sanction power of the public discourse over public affairs, especially when the organization was not well formalized. In addition to the discontent toward the corrupt behavior of representatives of the OCC, the public was also in a great need of revivals of the territorial cult. Congfa in office was a response to this need.

In Congfa's ten-year term disputes and conflicts within that OCC were not any less. In his position, Congfa focused on the revival of the territorial cult. His policy contradicted Hualuan's policy, which emphasized connections with overseas Chinese. Not long after Congfa took office, conflict began over the main task of the OCC. In his ten-year term, Congfa reconstructed ten temples in the community, and expenditures totaled around two million RBM. With such huge expenditures, commissions from these projects became targets of public discourse. In contrast with corruption in the previous stage, the corrupt behavior at this stage was institutionalized with more representatives of the OCC involved. There were unspoken rules that those in charge of public events or construction projects could take commission. Compared to the previous stage, when other than the three of the YYG, no one had any idea about the amount of the donations, at this stage, corrupt behavior was collective and had some constraint.

The conflicts among representatives around 2000 became very complex, with a number of issues happening at the same time, including villagers' discontent over the corruption of the OCC representatives, the conflict between Congfa and Hualuan over the main tasks of the OCC, and villagers' increasing demands for the OCC to take charge of community affairs beyond traditional practices (as discussed earlier). From 2000 to 2003, there were three unsuccessful attempts to reelect the president of the OCC. The conflicts between Congfa and Hualuan became more open, and talk of corruption in the public discourse was more intense. In the 2000s, Hualuan supported Yuanlan to compete for the position of president of the OCC against Congfa. In these three elections, Yuanlan earned more votes than Congfa, but he refused to take the position. He did not want to take the position from Congfa. He saw the complication of the OCC and its problem of fractions. It was not only about Congfa. In a lineage organization, unless the issue was very severe, most people try to avoid hostile confrontation because of dense social

connections within the group. Therefore, Congfa stayed in the position until an incident that provided a greater chance to challenge his capability.

As discussed above, Congfa finally stepped down after a car accident on a trip to an allied ancestral temple in March 2003, which killed six of representatives. Here, I further discuss details behind Congfa's resignation. In August, a letter appeared in Congfa's son's mailbox. The letter advised Congfa's sons to discourage his father to continue serving as president. After briefly praising Congfa in the position, the letter pointed out two main problems of the OCC: the non-transparent handlings of the income from the YYG donation, and the two factions within the OCC. It pointed out that four months had passed since this year's annual festival of YYG and the OCC had not announced the donation amounts. In addition, there was no explanation on how the OCC was going to deal with the donation for this year. Again, the financial management was a black hole.

This letter also brought up the problem of factions in the OCC. It first pointed out that there were two factions: the faction of the lineage temple, and the faction of the YYG temple. These two factions represented two different ideas of the primary task of the OCC. One was to revive lineage activity, for which Huiluan was the leader. The other one was to revive the territorial cult, and Congfa was the leader of this faction. The fraction of the lineage temple emphasized following the tradition of the ancestors, while the fraction of YYG focused on demonstrating the wealth of the community through extravagant temple buildings and rituals.

This event again demonstrates the lack of a formal sanction mechanism within the OCC. Although there had been attempts to formalize a mechanism of checks and balances since Congfa took office in 1994, none of these mechanisms were fully enforced. For example, four representatives were assigned to collectively manage donations of the YYG temple. It required

all four of them to be on the spot to open the donation box to take out money. Wudong—one of these four—said that on April 14th 1996, before he left home for dinner at 5pm, they agreed to come back at 7pm to open the donation box. He returned at 6:30 pm, and found that the other three had already opened the box and finished counting money. He got into a big flight with the other representatives. That was not the first time that he got into a flight at an OCC meeting. Still, nothing changed. “There was very little I can do,” he said. He felt isolated by his fellow representatives because he refused to join their corrupt behavior. He stopped attending the OCC after this event. In the end, he left the OCC in 1998.

After the resignation of Congfa, the OCC underwent a number of transformations. First, the dispute over the primary task of the OCC is not as extreme as it was under Congfa, and the task of the OCC over traditional practices have been well routinized to include both ancestral worship revived under Huiluan in the 80s and deity worship revived under Congfa in the 90s. In addition, Huiluan was gradually removed from his involvement in the OCC. Currently, representatives of the OCC have a consensus on formalizing organizational rules, such as regular elections for the president and other positions, and a clear inner division among representatives. Issues of corruption and factions still exist but are not as severe as ten years ago. Furthermore, the recruitment of new representatives focuses on younger generations in their fifties and sixties, and with the involvement of this red guard generation, as I discussed earlier, the leadership of the OCC expanded to community affairs outside cultural arena.

From the thirty-year history of the OCC, representatives of the OCC can be categorized into four kinds of people. The first kind are local elites serving as governmental agents to carry out tasks designed by the state (such as Huiluan). The second kind are relatives of successful overseas Chinese that bridge between the local community and overseas Chinese. These two

kinds of board members are allied to the local government and reluctant to take risks to violate state policy. The third kind are prestigious patriarchs who respond to the interests of the people, and have charisma to mobilize the masses (such as Congfa). The last kind are intellectuals who are interested in practices and knowledge of tradition (such as Song and Wudong). The last kind have served as gatekeepers for authenticity of the past and legitimacy of the present. Recently, the second kind of people are less important to the OCC, and there is no new representative that fits into this category. The new emerging trend as seen in Wuyi's case (the current deputy president of the OCC, see the third section part C for detailed discussion) is the combination of the first and the third type of people.

The benefits of being a representative of the OCC varies from person to person. The material benefits of being a representative is that they and their spouse receive compensation of 600 RMB when they pass away. Although this might not be much from today's standard, it was a significant deal of money in the 80s. As for prestige and reputation, people do not gain a reputation because of their position as representatives of the OCC. Instead, people who have a good reputation are more likely to be invited into the OCC. For these people, they can reinforce their reputation if they have done things for the community. There is another kind of persons in the OCC that cannot be categorized into any of the four types outlined above: the doorkeeper. These people have low social status, and their social status stays the same after they join the OCC. They do not have any say over public affairs, and they do not have an opportunity to be in charge of activities that involve money. All they do is provide free labor for dirty work, such as cleaning, cooking, taking out garbage, and watching community temples and the ancestral temple. As one representative commented, "They are like free servants that are used by Huiluan." In this way, the prestige is only for people with high social status, such as coming

from a strong descent group, or being politically influential. These people could then use their position in the OCC to benefit themselves.

The OCC is an oligarchy. One or two most influential persons make important decisions. Huiluan and Congfa are the two persons dictating traditional practices and the organization of the OCC. Although these leaders claimed that their decisions reflected popular opinions of the community members, there is no formal mechanism in the OCC to debate or negotiate different views of traditional practices.

This section has given a conflicting image of the OCC to the one portrayed in Section two. Section two showed the OCC as a strong organization directing the path of revival movements since 1994. This section, in contrast, shows the inner conflicts and issues of the OCC. The OCC is not a coherent organization; nor does it represent social groups of the village. Given this situation, why does an under-represented organization still have such authority for leading revival movements?

In answering this question, it helps to understand the strict state control since the collectivization period, which Du villagers tend to acquiesce and avoid confrontation. The OCC gains its legitimacy primarily from the sponsorship of the state. Conversations with Du villagers (the past and current president of the OCC, the representatives of the OCC, and ordinary villagers) indicate that in the reform era no one attempted to challenge the authority of the OCC by establishing a parallel organization to lead revival movements. Even in the 80s, when the OCC refused to take part in any activity relating to deity worship, some patriarchs of the strong descent group who also served in the OCC took up the responsibility to organize community-wide activities without challenging the legitimacy of the OCC. The president of the OCC from 1983 to 1991 was the key leader of deity worship.

The OCC oligarchy was supported by the local state, for it was the most effective way to control the OCC. This structure continues to today, even when the local state no longer intervenes. The continuity of the oligarchy structure is a result of unstructured relations among the descent group and diffused interests of individuals. Foremost, no one has a vision on how to deal with the inherent structural and organizational problems of the OCC. Although the numbers of villagers openly complained and criticized the problems of the OCC and were dissatisfied with the current structure of the OCC, not even one informant had a vision on how to reorganize it.

Discontent villagers mostly chose to distance themselves from the OCC. The case of Mingdong speaks to this point. Mingdong is the current head patriarch of the strongest descent group, the Gutter descent group, and has devoted himself to consolidating the strength of the Gutter descent group through the reconstruction of the ancestral hall and periodically hosting activities in the name of their common ancestor. His family is also involved in political arena of the Cape Crab administrative unit. One of his younger brothers served as the party secretary of the Cape Crab administrative unit in the 80s and 90s, and his son is the current head of the Cape Crab administrative unit. Mingdong manages a construction team and he is economically better off than most of Du villagers. He has been invited to serve in the OCC by Congfa and the current president. He excused himself by saying that he was too busy. He told me that he did not want to be involved in the OCC because the politics within the OCC was too complicated and he did not see he would make any difference. He is more concerned with his own business, the solidarity of his own descent group and the career of his son. He does not think that serving in the OCC will benefit him or his concerns.

The example of Mingdong also points out one other feature of Du village. That is, the differentiation among the political, cultural and economic domains. The political administration, traditional organization, and economic organization separate from each other. Capital in one domain cannot be directly translated into the other domains. Therefore, villagers who are unhappy with the OCC or traditional practices simply need to remove themselves from the involvement, as the non-involvement does not hurt their activities in other domains.

In the 2000s, the interaction among the three domains—political, cultural and economic—was more common with the change of political and socio-economic situations. The election of the village head costs money to buy off votes, and therefore, financially better-off persons have more chance to win. In addition, as I discussed earlier, some representatives of the OCC coordinate with the Cape Crab government to deal with community issues the village cadres cannot handle. However, each domain still works under its own logic. (In contrast, in Zhu Stronghold, the three domains work under the same logics—lineage.)

Conclusion

This section illustrated the problem of the OCC, namely corruption and factions. These issues originated from an unstable structure of social relations and the lack of a formal mechanism to sanction the OCC representatives. The OCC representatives do not reflect the power structure of the descent group, as influential patriarchs might refuse to take part in the OCC. With all these above issues, the authority of the OCC is undermined, although the OCC is still the only organization having authority to lead community-wide traditional practices.

The OCC representatives have ambiguous opinions on the issue of unstable group alliance. On the one hand, they recognize it is the cause of the complex politics of the OCC. On

the other hand, they hesitate to revive the hierarchical genealogical structure. In the 80s when the OCC was established, the local state clearly denounced reviving the hierarchical genealogical structure and considered organizing people according to one's branch or sub-branch affiliation. As a consequence, revival movements at the community level in the 80s and 90s did not touch on patterns of social interaction. The OCC focused on building a village identity and ignored the social structure. At the time when I conducted my research, the hierarchical genealogical order was fading from a villager's memory with young generations not knowing it at all. It is very unlikely to revive the hierarchical genealogical order. Currently I observe traditional practices in Du village as a cultural construction focusing on the village identity and disjointed from the social process. The next section discusses what does this feature of traditional practices mean to community life.

[V] Three Features of Community Life

This section discusses the three main impacts of new local traditions on communal life in Du village. The impacts involve three aspects: group affiliation, community management, and the cultural framework. First, unclear instruction of group alliance evolves into strategic choice of group affiliation by individuals. Second, communal management does not involve collective mobilization. It only involves a small portion of community members. Third, new local traditions build on a cultural framework distinguishing traditional practices from modern life. In what follows, I discuss these three impacts of new local traditions on communal life.

A) Flexible Group Affiliation

Although the descent group is clear and functions well, individuals in Du village have flexibility in choosing affiliation if their mother or wife belongs to another descent group of Du village.⁵ In the convention of Chinese lineage, only with an uxori-local marriage arrangement does a man need to switch to his wife's descent line. In Du village, even without uxori-local marriage arrangement, however, there are increasing cases of individuals switching to their mother's or wife's descent group, starting from 80s and prevalent in the 90s to the present. Reasons they give are all the same: being from a strong descent group makes life in the village easier socially, politically, and sometimes economically. In other words, self-interest becomes the primary reason for people to choose the primary descent group that they want to affiliate with.

Although the lineage ideology in Du village is not different from the cases of Zhu Stronghold and West Mountain, villagers of Du village have the most flexibility in making decisions in their affiliation. (In contrast, Zhu Stronghold and West Mountain, although also have inter-lineage marriages, do not have cases in which villagers switching their descent group affiliation out of functional utility.) Individual calculation over the use of one's descent group affiliation in Du village is not common under Chinese lineage convention, and it seconds my

⁵ There are two kinds of alliance through marriage: uxori-local widow marriage and marriage within a lineage. I will discuss these two trends respectively. Uxori-local widow marriage is an unusual practice to solve a great number of no-male-heir widow families from the Japanese invasion (1937-1945) and the civil war (1945-49). The conventional way to deal with a no-male-heir widow family adopting a male heir from sons of the deceased person's brothers did not work because of the great number of these kinds of families. In addition, families struggled to afford the cost of a marriage. The best solution was that widows got married to some other family in Du village. Pre-marital agreement between her new husband and her deceased husband's family was usually that one of their future sons had to carry on the incense of her deceased husband (meaning, worshiping the deceased husband as his father). Because the first and the second husbands belonged to the same lineage (usually belonged to different descent groups), this kind of arrangement prevented regret and violation.

The second trend of marriage alliance is marriage within a lineage. The introduction of the modern civic law in the republican era legalized same family-name marriage as long as the two parties are not immediate blood relatives of three generations. In contrast, the conventional practice of marriage was that people with the same family name, no matter their ancestral relation, should not get married; while cousins with different family names are preferable. From the 1970s onward, same family-name marriage became popular, not just in Du village but also in nearby areas.

earlier argument of Du village strategically using cultural resources and elements the most among the three cases. The reason for the flexibility of culture in Du village has a deep root in the collectivization period. Traditional practices and the social structure of Du village were undermined more severely in the collectivization period than most other rural communities. Villagers had tried to accommodate the political control and maintain minimal traditional practices. In this way, villagers accepted more changes in the fundamental rules of traditional practices. This attitude continues into the reform era.

B) Communal Management: Low Social Mobilization

The second impact of traditional practices on community life is that traditional practices are not designed to involve collective mobilization or mass participation. Only the elder is obligated to partake in ritual practices. The only involvement of young people is a donation based on individual will. In other words, traditional practices do not involve patterns of social interaction.

This kind of setup raises the question of generational transmission. As young people do not participate in community-wide ritual, will traditional practices fade away when the old generations die out? In Du village, I did not observe a breakdown or a potential breakdown in the collective identity of young people. Community building in Du village works at a cognitive layer through everyday interaction, as pointed out earlier. Although young people do not take part in traditional practices, they are embedded in a community associating collective identity with traditional practices. Migrant workers living in the village are the reference group for the maintenance of collective identity.

In the past thirty years, there has been no problem on transmission. The YYG is the main symbol that connects young people. The majority of donations come from young or middle-aged people. This kind of participation adversely effects the socialization of the young generation to community affairs and leadership, but it is effective in sustaining individual identity. Young people no longer learn their leadership skills by participating in ritual practices and community affairs. Instead, they learn their leadership skills in secular life and bring these skills to the community once they become the patriarch. This is the path of the red guard generation. This red guard generation are in their fifties and sixites, and they did not participate in revival movements in the 80s and 90s. In 2000, they gradually began taking over the OCC leadership.

This kind of model works in communities where members mostly stay in the community. It probably will not work in communities where most members migrate to big cities for jobs or business, as in my other two cases. In this aspect, Du village is lucky in the way that it does not need to deal with the problem of out-migration, as do the other two cases.

C) A Cultural Framework Distinguishing Traditional Practices from Modern Life

The ideal community of Du village lies in a new local tradition that is separate from modern life. The ideal community provides a distinction from modern life through a distinctive traditional space and the ritual cycle. The traditional buildings, such as the ancestral temple, ancestral halls and deity temples, are exclusive space for Du villagers to gather. Migrant workers do not gather in these places. The market for Du villagers is held in the plaza for Chinese opera, while the market for migrant workers is held on the road connecting the residential area and the factory area. Other than the YYG temple, the rest of the traditional practices are exclusive for Du villagers, and the ritual calendar using the Lunar calendar is distinct from the solar calendar of

secular life. In this way, these traditional places and the ritual cycle create a distinction for Du villagers.

This distinction through traditional practices does not alienate these villagers from modern life. Du villagers are not losers or escapists of the modern world, as are the subjects of the shelter enclave theory (e.g. Berger 1967; Hunter 1987), although there is similarity in the way using traditional religion to construct a distinction from modern life. Du villagers are successful in the new market economy. The distinction or shelter enclave is in relation to outsiders in the village. Traditional practices are not incompatible with modern life. Moreover, the new local tradition is not traditionalism, meaning that everything is based on the model provided by the past. Innovation and a vision of the future are inherent in this new local tradition.

Conclusion

This chapter speaks to three general issues of this dissertation: the malleability of culture, the disjoint between the cultural and social processes, and the compatibility between tradition and the market economy. I here briefly summarize the case of Du village in light of these three general issues.

On the malleability of culture, Du villagers demonstrate more flexibility in manipulating cultural resources, compared to the other two cases. The discussion of the new synthesis emphasizes that symbols and practices today do not have coherent cultural logics, although Du villagers only have a limited number of choices and these choices are originated from its cultural past. The case of Du villager leads to the question, why some pasts are more flexible than the others. I will address this question in the conclusion chapter.

On the cultural and social process, my position is that revival movements need to be examined through these analytically separable processes. As for how these two processes work together, each case has its own path, and the intersection between these two processes affects the strength of the community. Du village is an example where revival movements work mostly on reframing culture, and neglecting the pattern of social interaction. As a consequence, Du village ends up with an unclear rule of social alliance and an unstable power structure, which undermines community authority.

On the third issue of the compatibility between tradition and the market economy, my general position is that a local community does not lose traditional authority in the face of the market economy. In contrast to Zhu Stronghold, where tradition is framed as an integrated part of the market economy, Du village provides a distinct example showing a local tradition in contrast to modern life. Traditional practices of Du village are what distinguish Du villagers from neighborhood communities and migrant workers residing in the village. This cultural construction, however, does not cast tradition against modern life. Du villagers are not escapers or losers of the market economy. Instead, this cultural construction aims to preserve and promote their advantage in the market economy.

The concluding chapter will further discuss and elaborate my position on these three issues, which are based on the three cases. I will also compare the three cases and engage existing theories on these issues.

Chapter 6: Conclusion—Comparing and Summarizing

This study has shown that the same sets of cultural practices and symbols with different arrangements can produce different degrees of community solidarity and strength. Five forces shape these arrangements of social and cultural processes of traditional practices: the cultural legacy, new demographic process and living mode caused by market economy, the state intervention on traditional practices, political institution, and community issues. This study refutes a simple causal relation among independent variables (i.e. the cultural legacy, the state, market economy) and dependent variable (the community strength). Instead, I emphasize interactive relations among all the above-mentioned variables. For example, a strong community can buffer the impact of the state and the market economy, as shown in the case of Zhu Stronghold.

This study emphasizes that traditional practices are at the center of community building. A sense of community motivates community members to practice local tradition, and practicing local tradition is still the most effective method to produce and reproduce community identity. I do not deny that there are rural communities failing to revive traditional practices and losing community solidarity. These communities are on the edge to dissolve, although this is not what my study deals with.

My study also argued that economic success in Chinese communities cannot be attributed to the general Chinese culture, as there are more communities failing in market economy. Instead, my study showed that local people using traditional practices to deal with community issues, and risk and uncertainty in the market economy is only one dimension. There are individualistic and collective methods in responding to economic uncertainty, which is the issue

faced by all three of the communities studied above. As for which method one community is capable of employing, it depends on complex local situations. My study shows that a collective approach, as in the case of Zhu Stronghold, requires more sophisticated ritual arrangement and results in better economic achievement for community members as a whole. An individualistic approach, such as Du village and West Mountain, does not necessarily mean that members of these communities are failures of market economy, only that the traditional authority in this approach has less impact on the economic sphere.

My study does not counter the argument of new institutionalism in explaining economic development in China. Rather, it supplements new institutionalism by posing the question how individuals mobilize family and lineage networks in their economic ventures. Nee and Oppen's most recent work—the representative work on new institutionalism—argues that the economic miracle in China is not a state engineered program, but rather is supported by informal norms and social networks within close-knit business communities (Nee and Oppen 2012).

Entrepreneurs of his study rely heavily on collaborative networks, guided by the reputations and governed by informal sanctions. The private sector is able to respond effectively to changing market incentives and opportunities through such institutional arrangements. I show that using family and lineage networks in economic ventures requires sophisticated cultural and social arrangements, and it is neither universally shared by all Chinese nor an individual choice.

Throughout the study, I use the term community identity and emphasize the importance of community solidarity. Community solidarity, as I have shown, coexists with individuality. As in the case of Zhu Stronghold, community solidarity and individuality are dual facets of the community. In the case of Du village, the economic model is based on individualism, while there

is a strong collective identity toward local tradition. I avoid the term collectivism, because collectivism is commonly connoted as opposite to individualism.

The rest of this concluding chapter goes into detail to compare the findings of the three cases and discuss further implication for our understanding on community building and cultural adaptation. The first section recaps difference in the three cases. The second section discusses the interaction model to explain differences in the three cases. The third section discusses how the arrangement of traditional practices in each community contributes to community building. The fourth section examines the malleability of the past in the three cases.

[I] Three-case Comparison

This study compared three rural communities of different village types—village-in-the-city, the village of out-migrant workers, and the entrepreneur village—through an ethnographical approach. The previous pages showed that revivals of ancestral worship and deity worship in these three communities is an effort to construct a strong community by the community members to deal with uncertainty and difficulty in the face of a period of rapid transition. This finding echoes my earlier claim that ancestral worship and deity worship are the means of forming the moral community providing principles and norms for collective cooperation. In addition, informants were very aware the need for a sense of community and could clearly articulate this need. This finding is contrary to Durkheim's thesis in the elementary forms of religious life (1995), suggesting that the need for a sense of community is hidden.

In addition to the general trend of revival movements, this study aims to have a systematic understanding of the diverse development of local communities in employing cultural

resources to respond to the retreat of state control and the new market economy. Based on the existing literature, this study was designed to emphasize the relationship between the mode of living and the functional utility of traditional practices. Cases were chosen with similar characteristics of traditional practices that might affect community strength, such as single lineages, a long inhabitation history, and strong presence of traditional practices. The findings, however, show that there is not only variation in functional advantages, but also great differences in community strength, power relations, and the cultural ideas of community building. Table 6.1 recaps differences in all these aspects.

[Table 6.1] Major Differences among the Three Cases

	Du village	Zhu Stronghold	The West Mountain
The key utility of traditional practice	Social distinction	Lineage network for business practices	A new hometown identity
Cultural repertoire in community management	The OCC is in charge of community affairs	The Zhu Stronghold temple council mediates all aspect of community life, including public and private, as well as religious, social, economic, and political activity	The local cadre utilizes traditional practices to gain legitimacy and moral ground for their ruling
The cultural authority	No structuring power and authority is limited to cultural and social domains	Strong structuring power in determining power relations in economic, political and social domains	No structuring power and the authority is limited to cultural domains
The cultural idea of the community	Temporal continuity (the image of a traditional village)	Codependency (the pre-existence of the community before the individual)	Affection and belonging (egalitarianism)

The rest of this section deals with two issues that arose in the three-case comparison. The first issue is about the treatment of the differences in the starting point of comparison among the three cases. The second issue concerns the factor determining different degrees of community strength and the cultural authority among the three local communities.

A) The starting point

The starting point of the inquiry of this research is the first public activity devoted to traditional practices. In the initial design of the research, I chose cases with similar characteristics of traditional practices and expected to narrow the difference of lineage and social composition among the three cases. In the field, I discovered that the social structure and social composition of the three cases in the republican period and the Maoist period depart from each other a great deal. The differences are more significant than what existing literature on the single lineage community suggests.¹ This is not a consequence of wrong research design. Rather, it reveals that in real life, local communities are more diverse than what the theory can predict, and it is impossible to find cases with the exact same social structure and composition. The diversity of the three cases presents two challenges. The first is the question about the need to extend the time period of inquiry back to the republican period and explain the events prior to the intended period of the study, i.e. the reform era. The second challenge is whether the difference among the three cases is determined by the difference of the starting point of comparison.

Before addressing these two questions, I first summarize the difference among the three cases in the Republican period and the Maoist period. In the Republican period, Zhu lineage was a strong, unified lineage that included all Zhu surname villages of the same ancestral origin, and which was organized around activities of the Zhu Stronghold temple. In the Maoist period, although the Zhu Stronghold temple was abandoned, the basic lineage structure was sustained. All local cadres and leaders of the production team in the Maoist period came from strong descent groups, as defined in the Republican period. In addition, the most important ritual of

¹ Existing literature distinguishes different stages and composition of the single lineage. Zheng (2001) provides the best typology of different types of lineage according to the size of the lineage and the management of collective properties. However, all these works only analyze lineage based on lineage structure. The complication of the single lineage community found in my cases is mainly from the intersection between lineage branch identity and village identity, and between using the ancestral worship and the deity worship as the base of the community. These variations have not been systematically analyzed.

deity worship in the community—spirit possession—was protected and continued to be performing, even in the Maoist period. To emphasize the point, no spirit medium was persecuted. In fact, the party secretary of the Sea-peace unit from the late 1950s to 1976 was a spirit medium himself. Throughout the Maoist period, he never stopped performing spirit possession. With such strong continuity in local practices and lineage structure, it is not surprising that Zhu Stronghold started reviving traditional practices much earlier than the other two cases. They began in 1971, way before the end of the cultural revolution in 1976. Therefore, I refer to the case of Zhu Stronghold as a case of strong continuity from the republican period through the Maoist period to the reform era.

In contrast, the Lu lineage in the West Mountain area, which has a similar population size as Zhu Stronghold in the Republican period, was stratified into a number of cross-village alliances based on the agnatic relation and land control in the locality. There was no organization or ritual that organized all Lu surname villages into a unified community. In the Maoist period, land redistribution ended the material base of social stratification. However, the community was left with fragmented groupings. The revival movement, therefore, had to deal with this historical past, and had no ready-usable leadership structure to reorganize villages and surnames of the West Mountain area into a collective.

Du village was a strong single-lineage community in the republican era. The community structure was based on a hierarchical genealogical order. In the Maoist period, because of the suppression of higher-order lineage organizations and the implementation of the production team, the hierarchical lineage structure was broken into fragmented descent groups. Out of functional necessity, descent groups allied with other groups of geographical affinity or affinity based on marriage. I call this kind of alliance a horizontal alliance because the higher-order

lineage attribution no longer matters. A new alliance was not based on sharing an ancestor other than the common ancestor of the whole lineage, and the new alliance did not engage in practicing shared rites.

The horizontal descent group alliance continued into the reform era, and is the base of social relations in the reform era. Each descent group of the allied groups is an independent ritual unit. The alliance fosters the exchange of human labor or political collaboration. Compared with alliances based on genealogical orders, these kinds of alliance have less bonding power, and the corresponding social structure is less stable in that the alliance could easily break down. Therefore, compared to the hierarchical genealogical order, the horizontal descent group alliance is not as stable or cohesive.

In sum, at the beginning of the revival movement, the three communities had a very different social/lineage structure to begin with. Zhu Stronghold had a tight lineage structure and a coherent organization, while the West Mountain area was left with stratified social groupings, and it was stratified among villages of the Lu surname and ten different surname groups. Du village had to deal with the breakdown of the hierarchical genealogical order and worked in a less stable social structure of the horizontal alliance.

I treat the different starting points of the revival movement in the three communities as the background of this research. I point out the differences of cultural practices and lineage structure as the starting point among the three cases, but I do not explain differences. In my fieldwork, when I realized that there were a great deal of differences in the republican period and the Maoist period, I did all I could to collect data about communal life and lineage/social structure before the reform era. I did this through interviews of elders and gather local documents, such as genealogy. But to address the research question—how traditional practices

enable and constrain local people to adapt to new socio-economic changes—I contend that it is sufficient to only focus on the revival movement. In the period of the revival movement, I focus on processes. That is, how a community responds to socio-economic changes through traditional practices.

Take Zhu Stronghold for example. Zhu Stronghold is a case of strong continuity, which raises the question of how it maintained the lineage structure and a strong collective throughout the Maoist period, contradicting what we know about that period. The case of Du village, on the other hand, fits the common understanding of the serious rupture of traditional practices in the Maoist period. For the purpose of this research, it is unnecessary to explain why Zhu Stronghold was able to keep its local tradition in the Maoist period. What is key for this study is to illustrate how Zhu Stronghold maintained and strengthened the community in the reform era, and how this process is intertwined with the emergence of businessmen. The maintenance of community strength throughout the Maoist period might be the same or it might be different from the reform era. Either way, it does not change the argument of this study.²

Having just addressed possible challenges to the choice of the time period, and stating why I do not need to explain the differences in the starting point among the three cases, I now turn to the second challenge: what if the differences among the three cases is determined by the differences at the starting point of comparison?

This appears evident in comparison compare Zhu Stronghold and the West Mountain area. Compared to that of Zhu Stronghold, the stratified community structure provided different ground for the West Mountain area to build the community in the reform era. The different paths of cultural development and adaptation in the reform era in these two communities might be

² The maintenance of community strength in the Maoist period is a fascinating topic that I take up in a separate paper.

determined by the starting point.³

However, this answer is unsatisfactory in that it does not account for the possibility to initiate change. Why does a community with weak traditional authority not develop into a strong one, as in the case of Du village? Furthermore, the strong local tradition of Zhu Stronghold is a product of conscious reproduction requiring high maintenance. In addition, to maintain community strength Zhu Stronghold has undergone changes.

In brief, I overcome the challenge posed by the differences of the starting point by emphasizing process. This research is about how each community developed from the starting point to what it is now, and it is justifiable to treat different starting points as the cultural legacy or background. Nonetheless, the variation of the community structure and cultural practices among single lineage communities is worth further exploration as a question of Chinese lineage that has not yet been fully examined.

B) Community strength

There are different degrees of community strength and cultural authority among the three cases. Zhu Stronghold is the most solidified community with the strongest consensus on community norms and rules, the strongest sanction power of violation, the strongest capacity to mobilize community members for collective action, and most integrated structure among lineage, political, economic and social spheres. In contrast, West Mountain is the weakest community, as the collective has no power over individual life other than collective ritual practices. The community strength of Du village is inbetween that of Zhu Stronghold and that of West Mountain. Du village has some authority over religious and social spheres of communal life, and

³ On the determining factor of the starting point see Acemoglu et. al. (2005).

the community has a strong capacity to mobilize its members over activities in these two spheres.

These findings violate the general consensus in the literature on traditional practices. The literature assumes that communities with similar intensity of traditional practices have a similar level of community strength (e.g. L. L. Tsai 2007a). However, the three cases here all have extravagant traditional practices, in terms of the money spent, the people that are mobilized to participate in the rituals, and the degree of reviving traditional practices, compared to those in the Republican period. Contrary to what might be expected, therefore, my findings suggest that the intensity of community practices is not the determinant factor for the strength of the community. In order to understand communal solidarity, we need to inquire into the details of the ritual arrangement.

My finding also counters the prediction of the traditional authority from the general thesis on modernization. The common hypothesis is that the more urbanized and the wealthier a community, the less traditional organization is likely to have strong authority (Bell 1973; Inglehart 1990). That is to say, the remote, poor villages are more likely to rely on the traditional organization to provide social support and organize among themselves. Under this proposition, the local tradition in Du village was expected to have the least authority and to be least relevant to people's lives. West Mountain, as the poorest community and the most remote, was supposed to have the strongest traditional authority and the highest level of solidarity.

From this proposition, it is expected that the degree of cultural authority is determined by the economic state of a community. My research suggests, however, that the relationship between the cultural authority and the economic state is more complex than a unilinear relation (similar argument see Portes 1973). The economic state of a community cannot be treated as an independent variable that is not affected by cultural authority. The economy and the cultural

authority mutually shape each other (also see Patterson 2000). This becomes clear if we examine community strength across time. The wealth of the community could have been a consequence of the community strength, as shown in the case of Zhu Stronghold. The poor community could have been a consequence of a weak community, as shown in the case of the West Mountain. As for the case of Du village, traditional authority returns to deal with communal issues that are caused by the economic transition. In brief, the wealth and the degree of urbanization cannot predict the strength of the traditional authority.

In continuing the discussion on the strength of the traditional authority, I propose an interactive model with a number of factors jointly shaping the community strength. These are the local legacy, the state, the new market economy, and interests of individual community members. The following section explores this interactive model.

[III] Cultural Legacy, the State, and the New Market Economy

This section discusses the relationship among cultural legacy, the state, and the new market economy. My findings do not support the deterministic historical view (i.e. Lerner 1958; Weiner 1966), whereby a force (usually assumed to be the market or industrialization) moves society in a determinant direction. In explaining the difference among the three cases on community strength, my analysis takes into account a number of factors: a series of cultural practices, successful and failed ones, efforts and agenda of the key leaders of these practices, the motivation of the ordinary participants, and the changing arrangement of the political, social, and economic structure.

The position that no single force moves society in a determinant direction does not contradict the fact that in a particular time period one force might have a stronger impact on the development of a local community. In fact, in the past thirty years, a single force has had outstanding power in each of these cases in shaping the direction of the local community. In Du village, the state is the dominating force in the dynamic process of interaction among the political, cultural and economic domains. The revival of traditional practices and the reestablishment of the traditional authority have worked under the limited cultural sphere defined and permitted by the state. In Zhu Stronghold, the legacy of the local tradition is the dominant force in the interaction among the political, social and economic domains. Political and socio-economic transition is navigated through existing cultural schema and framework. In contrast, the social structure and social composition of West Mountain are primarily dominated by the out-pulling force of the market that creates labor demand in the cities. The development of local tradition reflects the reaction of local tradition to this irresistible force of out-migration.

Throughout the dynamic process of interaction, three communities developed in three different levels of differentiation. Du village represents the most complete process of differentiation, which shows the separation among the political, economic, and cultural domains. This separation happens at the level of the organization among these domains and in the capital held by individuals. In the organizational level, the political administration, traditional organization, and economic organization separate from each other. At the level of the individual, the leaders of these three organizations lose connection among each other, and capital in one domain cannot be translated into the other domains.

West Mountain represents incomplete differentiation, as traditional rituals and symbols are drawn on for the purpose of political control. Since the 1990s, local cadre accepted their

leadership in traditional practices as a routine task in exchange for legitimacy in political and social control. In contrast, the patriarch is left with little authority other than instructing ritual practices.

Zhu Stronghold represents the least degree of differentiation, as economic organization, political administration, and traditional organizations are well integrated under the same rule of authority—tradition (although each domain has separate managing organizations). When it comes to communal affairs, business leaders, local cadres, and lineage leaders work together; they have sanctioning power over all domains of individuals' daily lives. Leaders of these three domains are not only integrated but also overlap. Capital is interchangeable in all domains—social, symbolic, political and economic. In addition, the highest social status is reserved for people who hold more capital in all domains.

Through a comparison of three cases, my study demonstrates complex interaction among the state, the market, and cultural legacy. Local tradition continues working in various situations, although the degree of cultural authority and community strength varies. Although Zhu Stronghold may represent the ideal of local tradition, different strength and various functions of the local tradition in all three cases demonstrate the vitality of the local tradition in facing and adapting to the new market economy. From the perspective of the well-being of the community members, some communities (such as Zhu Stronghold) provide more protection and advantage to members than others. In regard to the local tradition, however, it does not mean that the local tradition in the former is more successful than the later. As long as community members are working together as a community, and local tradition can provide cultural resources for community building, local tradition in these communities is successful.

A local community does not deem to lose community strength and traditional authority in

the face of the market economy. Instead, there are more complex micro-processes happening in each community, and both structure and cultural elements need to be taken into account. As I show in the case of West Mountain, weak community solidarity and limited cultural utility is a result of the combination between the market economy and a problematic ideal of community.

To develop cultural repertoires for a business venture, as in the case of Zhu Stronghold, requires a sophisticated arrangement to link traditional practices with economic behaviors. This further necessitates a corresponding collective ideal of community to form a strong, solidifying community with floating boundaries. This kind of cultural arrangement cannot be developed overnight, and neither can it be developed simply out of rational calculation, as I show in the case of Zhu Stronghold.

In contrast to Zhu Stronghold, where tradition is framed as an integrated part of the market economy, Du village provides an example of another way to interact with the market economy. Traditional practices of Du village provide cultural identity that distinguishes Du villagers from neighborhood communities and migrant workers residing in the village. Local tradition is in contrast to, but not against to modern life. This new cultural construction preserves and promotes Du villagers' advantage in the market economy.

These three different ways to interact with market economy are arranged and reproduced through traditional practices. The next section turns to the link between traditional practices and community building.

[III] Community Building and Traditional Practices

As demonstrated in table 6.1, functional utility of local traditions, the community strength, power relations and the cultural ideas of community building of the three case studies

all vary. These findings suggest that the causal relations assumed in the existing literature is inaccurate, if not completely wrong. The existing literature (e.g. Jordan and Overmyer 1986; Yang 1961) categorizes cases according to types of practices, and assumes that communities with similar practices, such as worshipping ancestors, should have more in common than those communities of different cultural practices or religious traditions. My finding suggests that the type of community practice is not important. The type of community practice does not determine the community strength, power relations or the cultural idea of the community. Instead, what we should pay attention to is the arrangement of traditional practices in each community. Chapter one identifies two analytical strategies to approach traditional practices: forms of traditional practices and the work of traditional practices. In what follows, I summarize how each strategy explains case differences.

Among the three forms of traditional practices—mnemonic objects, historical inscription, and commemorative rites—a careful reader might already notice that I discuss commemorative rites in almost each case. I do so because commemoratives rites have a stronger impact on individual cognition and behavior. Commemorative rites, such as temple festival and pilgrimage, involve most community members. Even in the case of Du village, where only elders partake in rituals, the rest of villagers are aware of community rituals and talk about community rituals more than other forms of traditional practices.

In contrast, historical records, such as genealogy, ritual manual, and stone steles at the temple only matter to local leaders. At the very early stage of the revival movement, surviving historical records played an important role in instructing how things should be revived. Once traditional practices were revived and practiced on a regular base, historical records faded into the background. Genealogy is the most important source to preserve the lineage line, but it

matters little in day-to-day activity. For example, Du village and Zhu Stronghold have recently published new genealogies, and most households have a copy. Only very little people read it, however. In my fieldwork, most ordinary literate people did not even know where to find their own name. They admitted to me that they had never tried to find their own name before I asked them to do so.

The case of Du village also shows that when there is a discrepancy between the historical record and ritual, local people internalize ritual practices and ignore the historical record. For example, in Du village, sub-branches of the third branch that are currently sustained are treated in sacrificial rituals as if founders of these sub-branches are brothers. Most members of the third branch, therefore, think and act in this way. However, in genealogical records, not all founders of sub-branches of the third branch were brothers. In strict genealogical order, two sub-branches are supposed to be one sub-branch and further divided into two sub-sub-branches. These two sub-sub-branches were prosperous with an equivalent number of members as the rest of sub-branches, and were promoted into equivalent status with other sub-branches (probably in the ninetieth century). Today, members of these two sub-sub-branches do not remember this history, and they do not consider their relation with the other sub-sub-branch any closer to the rest of sub-branches, not to mention that there is no extra cooperation between these two sub-sub-branches.

In addition to that different forms of traditional practices weigh differently in shaping member's cognition and action, same traditional practices might work differently in community building. Chapter one identifies three different dimensions in which traditional practices work: through arousing individual's affective state (psychological dimension), through reproducing framework of expressive symbols and community norms (cultural dimension), and through

promoting particular social patterns (social dimension). In my analysis, I focus more on the latter two dimensions. The psychological dimension is found in all three cases. A successful practice must have aroused an individual's affective state—although I did not find any obvious characteristics that further distinguish the psychological dimension.

Different arrangements of the same type of traditional practices emphasize different dimensions of the work they do, and have different consequences for community building. The pilgrimage, for example, where villagers take a trip to the mother temple of the local deity to rejuvenate the spiritual power of the local deity by passing the statues through the smoke of the mother temple's incense fire (Sangren 1987:87–91). The pilgrimage in Du village is arranged to work at the symbolic (cultural) dimension. The yearly trip to the mother temple of Baosheng aims to rejuvenate the spiritual power of Baosheng. What used to take a day, modern public transportation condenses to two hours. The rejuvenation ritual in the mother temple takes about twenty minutes. The ritual is done by a Daoist priest, while the rest of participants pray for their individual households. In contrast to the simplification of pilgrimage in Du village, Zhu Stronghold retains elaborate rituals that emphasizes not only the magic power of the local deity but also collective collaboration among subgroupings of Zhu Stronghold. A pilgrimage typically lasts between seven to fourteen days. In addition to two days spent on the trip to the mother temple of the local deity, the rest is spent on marching around the territory of Zhu Stronghold and neighborhood villages. Pilgrimages in Zhu Stronghold require sophisticated community-wide coordination to make a pilgrimage possible. A pilgrimage exposes a community's capability of fundraising, inner community coordination, ritual arrangement, and extra-community communication. Through pilgrimage, particular social patterns and ways of collective collaboration are promoted and rehearsed.

From the above comparison on the arrangement of pilgrimage, differences in the community strength between Du village and Zhu Stronghold are partially revealed. In the field of Chinese religion and culture, I have not seen any work examining secular arrangements of traditional practices. The common approach emphasizes religious aspect of ritual and neglects community aspect of ritual. Therefore, the same kind of ritual is conceived to have the same effect on the community. For example, pilgrimage is done to rejuvenate the spiritual power of the local deity. In contrast, although I do not deny that the rejuvenation of the spiritual power is the core religious meaning of pilgrimage, I argue that different arrangements of the same ritual brings different effects on community building.

In examining a series of traditional practices in the reform era, my study shows that the three communities arrange traditional practices in identifiable different ways. The work of traditional practices in building the community has different emphasis in each community. As a consequence, the social and cultural processes work differently and have different interaction in each case. In what follows, I recap the social and cultural processes of traditional practices in each community.

Zhu Stronghold exemplifies the most sophisticated and totalistic arrangement of traditional practices. Solidarity is built into the social process of traditional practices through emphasizing collective mobilization and mass participation. This social process is recognized, designed, and modified by members of community. Solidarity is not a psychological state resulting from a ritual that has nothing to do with secular life. In addition, the social and cultural processes of traditional practices develop hand in hand. Patterns of social interaction and the framework of expressive symbols and community norms are consistent and coherent. With the integration between the social and cultural process, the community is highly solidified with a

high capacity to mobilize community members, and has strong sanction power toward transgression.

In West Mountain, the Procession was revived to build a new local identity that emphasized egalitarianism among surname groups. To achieve the stated goal, the Procession emphasizes mass participation and represents egalitarianism among surname groups. In contrast, local leaders do not pay as much attention to the framework of expressive symbols. As a consequence of the detachment between the social and cultural processes, Lord Grace fails to carry the meaning of solidarity and provides little force to the maintenance of community order and solidarity. In emphasizing mass participation and egalitarianism of the social process, traditional practices are capable of maintaining basic community order and producing local identity, while local tradition has no utility in the economic sphere.

Du village is an example where revival movements work mostly on reframing expressive symbols and community norms, and in neglecting the pattern of social interaction. Traditional practices of Du village involve no mass participation or collective mobilization. Only old people are responsible for traditional practices. Traditional practices reach individuals through everyday interaction and work at the level of cognition. In other words, the social process and cultural process do not develop together, and thus result in a disjuncture between social structure in the cultural idea and the actual social structure. Du village ends up with an unclear rule of social alliance and an unstable power structure.

Community building is not just a sentiment. This study shows that community building is realized and reproduced through concrete traditional practices. With different arrangements of traditional practices, community building can take different directions and have different effects

on local people's daily life. Traditional practices have their own inner cultural logic and are constantly modified to the current situation.

Assisting local people in dealing with uncertainty in the market economy is one aspect of local tradition. In all three cases, the efficacy of the local deity is associated with the economic success of local people. However, there are two approaches to economic success and how the local deity chooses to bless one over the others: collective and individualistic.

The collective approach emphasizes the collective effort and solidarity in dealing with economic uncertainty, as shown in the case of Zhu Stronghold. In specific, traditional practices emphasize collective mobilization, and are designed to be complicated and require collective effort to carry on. In addition, traditional practices are designed to be responsive to the economic needs of community members, e.g. I show that the local deity requests a pilgrimage periodically to respond to changes in market situations. In speaking about their opportunities and future in the market economy, businessmen of Zhu Stronghold seldom use the term luck. They show a high level of confidence to cope with economic changes through the strength of the community. The use of lineage networks in doing business is a result of such a high confidence on the community strength. Businessmen of Zhu Stronghold are also risk adventurers in their business ventures.

The individualistic approach emphasizes patron-client relation between the local deity and individual. As shown in Du village and West Mountain, traditional practices are designed with little collective appeals in the face of market economy. My informants talked about luck that might be a result from worshipping the local deity. The term luck entails a sense of mystical power that is out of the control of any individual or community. For example, in Du village, the symbol of the YYG is not associated with community solidarity. One just needs to have faith in the YYG, and the faithful believer will be rewarded. In ritual practices, there is little collective

demonstration. There is no community regulation for one's obligation to the YYG. Individuals worship and donate money according to their own will. No one ever mentioned community sanctions for an individual's contribution to the YYG. This aspect of traditional practices corresponds to the economic pattern in Du village. The economic unit in Du village is based on the individual household. There is very little collaboration among siblings, and no business collaboration beyond siblings. Du villagers only work within economic opportunities provided by the state, and they lack risk taking spirit. In West Mountain, the situation is very similar. Lord Grace has an ambivalent connotation with the community as a whole. Instead, what the symbol mainly conveys is that the more one offers to Lord Grace, the more blessing he can earn from Lord Grace. Individual utilitarian is the key message.

Diverse paths to cultural adaptation

There is no doubt about various cultural resources that Chinese tradition can provide to the changing political landscape and socio-economic situations, as the existing literature and my study demonstrate. This study further explains diverse development in local communities regarding traditional authority and functional utility through carefully analyzing arrangement of traditional practices. How traditional practices are arranged to work in a locality determines the capacity and sets the limitation of community building and functional utility.

Local tradition, on the one hand, provides resources for local people to deal with community issues. On the other hand, local tradition limits the collective vision of local people to deal with community issues. For example, as an outside researcher, I would like to know why Du village and West Mountain do not develop intense lineage networks as did Zhu Stronghold to provide support for economic development. Villagers of Du village and West Mountain were

aware of successful stories of some villages using lineage network for business. When I raised the question why they did not use lineage network in such a way, informants simply told me that that was not how things worked here. Villagers of these two villages simply have no such vision about the local community and the use of lineage networks for business venture.

In explaining the diverse development of cultural adaptation and community building, my study provides no simple causal link. Instead, I provide a framework identifying the most important factors that shape the path of cultural adaptation and community building. These factors are the cultural legacy, individual interests, the state, and the market. The cultural legacy can be further disaggregated into the cultural ideal of community building and the arrangement of traditional practices. My analysis pays particular attention to the arrangement of traditional practices and its effect on community strength. In this framework, community strength and the path of cultural adaptation are not randomly determined. Instead, they are consequences of a series of social and cultural processes of traditional practices.

[IV] Malleability of the Past

Restoring the past is commonly used as the slogan for bottom up revival movements in Chinese local communities. All my three cases demonstrate this phenomenon, which leads to an examination of an indigenous understanding of restoring tradition. Restoring tradition cannot be taken literally, even when informants said that it meant reviving traditional practices of the republican era. In a Chinese context, local tradition is an ideal that links people with their ancestors and a past with which they themselves do not have personal experience. Local tradition forms a collective identity based on a group of people undertaking the same sets of traditional

practices that their common ancestors created and practiced. In understanding local tradition as an ideal, rather than literally, it becomes compatible with new elements and innovations. Traditional practices, as I have repeatedly shown in all three cases, are used to deal with current issues. Innovation and adaptation is an inherent part of local tradition. Moreover, in the beginning of the reform era, local tradition as an ideal is often used as an excuse to gain legitimacy and avoid government inspection. This is particularly evident in the case of Du village before 2000, when villagers still sensed the threat of political intervention of traditional practices.

Changes are observed in the traditional practices and symbols in all three cases. The past-and-present relation is constantly redefined, particularly in the face of rapid socio-economic changes. At the same time, local traditions are still important for local people to interpret the present state, and a sense of continuity provides stability in the face of a rapid transition. My cases show no major difference from the proposed relation between the present and the past in the current social memory studies, which treat the present-and-past relation in a dialectic (Schwartz 1996). On the one hand, the past encodes and reproduces class conflict, interest structures, and mentalities of the present. The past also provides a symbolic framework that makes experiences meaningful. On the other hand, the past is constantly made and remade according to the present concerns.

In this dialectical relation between the past and the present, the constraint of the past can vary. The degree of the malleability of the past, as shown in my cases, is determined by external forces. When the corresponding social structure and institutions of traditional practices are transformed or destroyed by external forces, especially the state, the past becomes more malleable in order to survive in the new situation, as shown in the case of Du village. With the

breakdown of the lineage structure and the state economic policy promoting individualism since the Maoist period, Du village is the most malleable case among the three cases. The malleability is particularly seen in the new synthesis of the local tradition and the flexibility in choosing descent group affiliation if the mother or wife belongs to another descent group of Du village.

When the corresponding social structure and institutions of traditional practices are maintained the similar, the past is the model of the present, as shown in the case of Zhu Stronghold. In Zhu Stronghold, the model of the present mainly refers to patterns of social interaction and framework of expressive symbols that can be easily traced back to the late imperial period. The present is largely organized by these patterns of social interaction and framework of expressive symbols. With this great force of the past, however, it does not mean nothing can be changed. Instead, the model of the present is in itself under transformation. As the community further develops into a successful entrepreneur village, a new development is formed—namely, the honor system. Although deity-related activities are still an inevitable part of the honor system, new elements—mainly logics of the market—are introduced in structuring the community order.

In the case of West Mountain, the past is different from Du village and Zhu Stronghold. With a past carrying sin—stratification and suppression among surname groups—West Mountain struggles to build a new egalitarian community in the reform era. The practice of the Procession is reformulated into one that carries the message of egalitarianism. However, the past as collective memory is not easy to dispel. By denouncing the past surname politics without providing reconciliation toward group differentiation, local leaders turned lineage identity into the oppositional position of collective identity. This either-or framework, as I have shown, places surname groups into endless contestations and undermines community solidarity. In addition, by

ignoring the past history of the Procession, local leaders created a situation where symbols are open to interpretation and have little relation to the community. Together, the sacredness of the past is lost in the new formulation, and traditional authority is undermined.

All the three cases, no matter the degree of malleability of the past, share the same character of Chinese tradition. That is, Chinese tradition is a special class of tradition “whose ‘traditionality’ is an explicit part of their legitimizing function” (Otto and Pedersen 2005:29). This quality, refers to “the past as a criterion of validation” (ibid). This is particularly evident in the case of West Mountain. On the one hand, community members want to build a new community that overcomes the past surname politics. On the other hand, community members cannot not use traditional practices that were associated with the past surname politics. This character of Chinese rural communities— the past as a criterion of validation—explains why we still need to pay attention to traditional practices and why the local tradition would not easily disappear as the individualization thesis claims.

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