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LOCAL CLAN COMMUNITIES IN RURAL CHINA

REVOLUTION AND URBANISATION SINCE THE LATE QING DYNASTY

Zongli Tang

Local Clan Communities in Rural China

Using data collected in fieldwork and surveys, this book examines China's clan system and local clan communities in rural Anhui, covering events in two periods: the imperial pattern as seen in the first half of the twentieth century and changes since 1949. Revealed by this research, during the late Qing and the Republic Era, a local clan in the investigated areas was run as a highly autonomous community with a strong religious focus, which challenges the corporate model raised by Maurice Freedman. Through examining single-surname villages, *citang* constructions, and updating of genealogies, local clans in Huadong, Huizhou and the lower Yangtze River plains in particular, developed earlier than those in the Pearl River Delta Region. Taking a cross-disciplinary viewpoint, this book analyses changes in local clan communities and clan culture as brought by the Chinese Revolution, Mao's political campaigns, and Deng's reforms. Starting with the late 1990s, a large migration from villages to cities has rapidly altered rural China. This geographic mobility would ruin the common residence that serves as part of a clan's foundation. Under such a situation, what transformations have taken place or will affect China's clan system? Will the system continue to revitalise or die out? *Local Clan Communities in Rural China* reports these events/transformations and attempts to answer these questions. Placing a special emphasis on issues that have been overlooked by prior studies, this book brings to light many new facts and interpretations and provides a valuable reference to scholars in fields of sociology, anthropology, history, economics, cultural studies, urban studies, and population studies.

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Local Clan Communities in Rural China

Revolution and Urbanisation since the Late Qing Dynasty

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Preface

Using data collected in fieldwork and surveys, this book examines local clan communities in rural China, covering events in two periods: 1) the classical model or the imperial pattern as seen in the late Qing and the Republic Era and 2) changes brought about by the Chinese Revolution and a series of political campaigns under Mao's leadership, and, more importantly, the recent modernization and urbanization. The emphasis is laid on the second period or changes in comparison with the classical model. With a focus on issues that have been ignored by prior studies, this book provides up-to-date information and analyses.

Part I, containing only one chapter, discusses the objectives and unique values of this research, illustrates data collection and research methods, and briefly introduces the clans and villages in the investigated areas. Part II covers four chapters. Chapters 2 and 3 discuss the so-called late imperial model as displayed by local clan communities, organizations, and culture during the late Qing and the Republic Era. These two chapters are mainly concerned with the first half of the twentieth century; however, this by no means indicates that clans before that period are not examined. While commonalities existed throughout the country, strong regional characteristics appeared at the same time. In Huadong, Huizhou and the Lower Yangtze River region in particular, a local clan was run as a highly autonomous community with a strong religious focus at that time. As a combination of natural existence and social unit, a local clan could live and grow anywhere adopting any production pattern. Rice-oriented agricultural production was unnecessarily seen as the economic basis for clan development in the south. Chapter 2 also analyzes the role of democracy and its distinctive mechanism in managing a traditional clan.

Chapter 4 examines historical clan development in Huadong and Huanan. David Faure emphasized the role played by the Great Ritual Reform during the reigning years of Jiajing, the Ming Dynasty. Of ministers who promoted the reform, two came from Guangdong. David Faure believed that this explained why *citang* (祠堂 or clan ancestral hall or clan temple) came to the fore in large numbers, and why local clans grew rapidly in the Pearl River Delta region after the reign of mid-Ming dynasty. In my investigation, the large-scale *citang* construction in Huadong, Huizhou in particular, started about 400 years before.

The Great Ritual Reform might play a role in clan development in the Pearl River Delta region, but it cannot explain clan development in other areas. Chapter 5 examines peasant merchants in Huizhou and Jingxian before 1949 and analyzes their migration pattern in order to compare it with today's urbanization and the impact on rural clan communities. Meanwhile, this chapter explores contradictory behavior of merchants regarding clan ethics and contract spirit, an issue that has never been touched before.

Clans in Mao's era were overlooked in academia. Researchers often stopped at the classical model and neglected changes brought about by Mao and his comrades, though some engaged in certain specific issues. Part III, covering two chapters, inspects alterations driven by the land reform, the agricultural collectivization, and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR). This part interprets the impact on local clans caused by historical evolution of rural administration system and analyzes descent relations during the collectivization period and the GPCR. Chapters in this part are arranged in a chronological order.

Part IV, consisting of the last four chapters, discusses revivals and changes in local clans as brought by Deng's reforms and rapid urbanization. The time span starts with 1980 and continues until today. During the period of the 1980s and 1990s when Deng's reforms were implemented in rural areas, clan development entered the most active time since 1949. The Communist Party of China abolished Mao's line of class struggle, and villagers quickly restored blood consciousness. The household land contract system eventually ended the collective economy (except for the land ownership) and turned rural areas back into a small-scale peasant economy, reactivating clan culture. However, the revival process was quickly terminated by the upsurge of urbanization that emerged in the late 1990s. A large movement of population from villages to cities has rapidly altered rural China. More than 286 million peasants are living and working in urban areas. The largest migration or urbanization in human history may lead to an end of the clan system, as some believe that this geographic mobility would undermine the common residence—the foundation of a clan—if a clan is considered a local community. Under this situation, what are the transformations that have already taken place or will take place in rural clan communities? Will China's clan system continue to revitalize or die out? The author reports these events and attempts to provide answers to these questions.

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Part I
Introduction

1 Introduction

As early as my undergraduate studies, I became fascinated by the clan system of China. Being the first batch of students admitted to the university after Deng's reforms, we were very concerned about whether there was a ground for capitalist development in modern China. I believed that the best way was to find answers from rural local clans, the elementary cells for Chinese traditional society and the initial driving force behind Chinese traditional culture. Today, there is no longer a problem for capitalist development in China. However, China's clan system and changes in this system are still worth exploring and studying, as it will extend our current knowledge in this field, help us understand the past, present, and future of Chinese culture and society, and comprehend the distinctions between China and the West with regard to the processes of modernization.

1.1 Research objectives and literature review

The term "clan" in this book is referred to as *zongzu*. *Zong* means the common ancestors respected by their descendants, and *zu* means a group of people who live together.[1] According to the *Erya*, the first surviving Chinese dictionary, *zongzu* was defined as a group of families based on patrilineal descent.[2] Therefore, for the ancient Chinese, *zongzu* was a group of people or a group of families based on patrilineal descent, and they were living in a village or a number of nearby villages. A local *zongzu* was the basic unit in traditional China, so Chinese traditional society can be called a *zongzu* society. Accordingly, the Chinese traditional culture that developed in this society can be called a *zongzu* culture, encompassing the ethics and morals regulating the behavior of *zongzu* members.

The aforementioned terms turned to be complicated after introducing Western concepts. In Western textbooks, two concepts can be interpreted as *zongzu*. Lineage, as first used by Alfred Radcliffe-Brown to describe a social unit, denotes a unilineal descent group based on demonstrated descent, and clan as a stipulated descent. Lineage members can trace the actual generational links between themselves and their ancestors but clan members cannot (Kottak 2010; Parkin 1997). In his first book published in 1958, Freedman did not strive to make a distinction between clan and lineage. Instead, he employed the two terms in an interchangeable way. In his second book published in 1966, Freedman began to demarcate

the two terms. He said that the primary difference between clan and lineage was "common wealth." Lineage members retain common wealth while clan members do not (Freedman 1966). Freedman's definitions of lineage and clan generated a debate through the 1960s and 1970s. Fried (1970) argued that the only difference between clan and lineage was the use of a genealogical or descent system. His attitude actually reflects opinions expressed by most textbooks as mentioned before.

In all Chinese–English dictionaries, lineage is translated as *zongxi* or *xuetong*, denoting descent links, and clan as *zongzu* or *jiazu*, indicating an organized group of families sharing the same ancestor.[3] These two terms in Chinese represent different but interrelated perspectives. Lineage focuses on blood relationships, while clan emphasizes an entity that is built upon blood relationships. Therefore, in Chinese interpretation, the term "clan" represents a social system in a broad sense, and a lineage is a component or a characteristic of the system. From this sense, the term "clan" is of more significance than "lineage" in describing China's patriarchal system. Partly due to these reasons, in their research papers written in English, Chinese scholars, especially those during the 1930s and 1940s, adopted the term "clan" and paid more attention to socioeconomic characteristics and group patterns (Fei 1939; Lin 1947; Hsu 1948; Lang 1946).

In this book, the term "clan" represents a social system. A local clan is local community whose members share a common surname, possess clear or relatively clear descent links, live in a village or nearby villages, and own the common wealth in the classical sense. This is close to Baker's definition that a clan is a federation of lineages with one surname or a higher-order lineage containing more members and covering larger geographic areas than does an ordinary lineage (Baker 1979). Baker's definition of clan approximates a Type Z lineage in Freedman's categories. According to Baker (1979) and Lamley (1990), a Type Z lineage is a common pattern found in southern China. However, it by no means indicates that there are no such clans in the north. Most clans in the south migrated from the north when it fell into wars and chaos at certain points in history. Chinese scholars generally treated clans between the Zhou and Qing Dynasties as representatives of the classical model or imperial pattern (Xu 1992; Li 2008; Chang 2007; Feng 2009).

China's clan system has caught the attention of scholars in various disciplines. Their studies can be classified into three chronological stages. The first stage, ranging from the 1930s to the 1940s, was characterized by the work of Wu Wenzao and Fei Xiaotong. They, and many others, mainly engaged in the late imperial clan pattern that governed the Qing Dynasty. The second stage was between the 1950s and the 1970s. The leading figure in this stage was Maurice Freedman. In addition to the achievements mentioned previously, he raised the "corporate model," which saw a clan or lineage as a unit with an economic focus (Freedman 1966, 1970). Because of his influence, Western and Chinese scholars (in Taiwan) made great efforts to explore the late imperial model, seeking for evidence of the corporate model through fieldwork in Taiwan (as the alternative of Fujian) and

the New Territories in Hong Kong (as the alternative of Guangdong) (Baker 1966; Skinner 1963–65; Feuchwang 1992; Watson 1982).

The third and current stage was activated in the early 1980s, when Deng Xiaoping opened the door to the outside world, and Western and overseas Chinese scholars resumed their fieldwork in mainland China. Freedman's work was so influential that both Western and Chinese scholars continued to concentrate their work on Fujian and Guangdong, although a few shifted to Northern and Eastern China (Chan et al. 1992; Dean 1993; Lamley 1990; Siu 1989; Zheng 2001; Szonyi 2002; Cohen 2005; Faure 2007; Brandtstdter and Goncaloo 2009; McDermott 2014). Afterwards, researchers began to move away from the classical model and turned to exploring specific issues including family, marriage, the status of women, gender relations, filial piety, reproductive norms, temple fairs, cultural role in modernization, and private life that are embedded in accounts of the clan system (Whyte 1995; Judd 1994; Zhang 2008; Rosenle 2006; Yan 2003; Wu 2003; Friedman et al. 2008; Yuen et al. 2004; Shi 2009; Cong and Silverstein 2008; Ikels 2004; Cooper 2013; Greif and Tabellini 2017). In China, clan studies, terminated in Mao's time, have flourished since the 1980s. At first, this subject was mainly studied by historians. They placed emphasis on archival research and the classical model that existed between the Zhou Dynasty and the Qing Dynasty. Starting with the 1990s, Chinese scholars began to explore interactions between economic development and traditional values (Qian 1999; Wang 1991; Chang 2007; Xu 1992; Li 2008).

Research work in this field has become scarce in recent years. Concerns about prior studies also arise. First, being a complex system, clans in China exhibit strong regional features. Both Western and Chinese scholars focused their studies on Huanan (as represented by Fujian and Guangdong), and less attention was paid to other regions. Second, clans in Mao's era were ignored. Scholars stopped at the classical model and overlooked changes caused by a series of political campaigns under Mao's leadership. There was a lack of systematic study on clans at that time, though some engaged in certain specific issues. Third, researchers treated clan as a whole and did not make differentiations among clan society, clan culture, and clan organizations. I have not seen in-depth and meticulous studies on each part. Additionally, as many of the researchers were involved in studying the positive or negative roles played by traditional values in economic development, the impact on clan culture and rural clan communities brought by modernization and urbanization was neglected.

This research intends to fill the above knowledge gaps and lay great emphasis on changes in rural clans, which have taken place since 1949, in comparison with the late imperial model. Villagers in the investigated areas can only trace their clans back to the late Qing and the Republic Era. Therefore, this study ranges from the beginning of the twentieth century to this century.

Starting with the late 1990s, a huge migration from villages to cities and towns has rapidly altered rural China. Now more than 286 million peasants are living and working in urban regions.[4] This number is still growing day by day. The

largest movement or urbanization in human history may lead to an end of the clan system, as some believe that this geographic mobility would undermine the common residence—the foundation of a clan—if a clan is considered a local community (Kottak 2010; Braudel 1992). Under this situation, what changes have already taken place or will come to China's clan system? Will the system continue to revitalize or die out? This study intends to report these events and provide some answers to these questions.

Studies conducted in the New Territories noticed changes as villages were merged into a metropolitan area. Geographic extension of a city is known as external urbanization. A more important part of urbanization or internal urbanization is featured by demographic extension in which more and more migrants settle down in cities. This study will emphasize the impact on rural clans caused by internal urbanization when a large number of peasant workers moved into cities.

1.2 Research methods and data

Ethnographic techniques are used in fieldwork by which researchers are able to explore in-depth historical variations and things inherent in a small region through observation. Traditional "fieldwork" often focuses on a particular village or a small community. It is unlikely to obtain data in a large area. To acquire a greater geographical span for horizontal comparisons, I extended fieldwork to five counties in Anhui, including three residential communities in Wangjiang, Yuexi, and a suburb area of Anqing;[5] one administrative village in Fanchang; one administrative village in Jingxian; and four administrative villages in Shexian. An administrative village generally consists of a few natural villages (*zirancun*) or hamlets. This investigation involves ten *daxing* (or big surname) clans and five *xiaoxin* (or small surname) clans. I, with my assistants, visited these villages and clans in 2009, 2014, and 2018, respectively, and worked there for more than 12 months.

The five counties can be classified into three types geographically: 1) the plains region along the Yangtze River, including Wangjiang, the suburb area of Anqing, Yuexi, and Fanchang; 2) the hilly region represented by Jingxian; and 3) the mountain region represented by Shexian. The three types of regions may represent various developmental levels of local clans and clan culture in history. Anhui is a province located across the basins of the Yangtze River and the Huai River. The name "Anhui" derives from the names of two regions – Anqing and Huizhou. This becomes a factor when we choose the target areas for investigation. In the villages we visited, peasants who were living and working in cities and towns made up about 65% of the total local labor forces. As such, Anhui is an ideal window on the process of the transition of clans to modern times.

My research strategy in fieldwork is a combination of ethnographical methodology and sociologist survey. During fieldwork, there was a series of traditional activities of great importance to clan culture, including the Spring Festival (or the Chinese New Year) and the Qing-Ming Festival (or the Festival of Pure

Brightness), which gave us a great opportunity to observe clan ceremonies, rites, religious activities, traditions, and customs. To collect information on clan history, clan organization, descent links, and socioeconomic indicators, we had deep conversations with key and senior figures in the investigated clans and organized group interviews with government officials at the village, township, and county levels. Meanwhile, a sample survey was implemented separately in 2009, 2014, and 2018. Using proportional stratified sampling techniques, we randomly selected 1,157 households from the three residential communities and seven administrative villages based on their population sizes, visited these households, and interviewed the household heads. If a household head was not present at visiting time, we interviewed whoever was at home. In any situation, the interviewee had to be an adult of age 18 or over, capable of answering questions that a household head could answer.

The three sections in the survey–questionnaire include questions regarding socioeconomic and demographic characteristics and descent links of the family and family members, socioeconomic characteristics of *nongmingong* or migrant workers in that household, and attitudes of participants toward a number of issues regarding clan traditions and ethics. Of the selected households, some were not willing to answer certain questions or did not provide complete answers to certain questions. In the end, we completed 997 successful household interviews.

At the same time, I collected 27 pedigrees (*zupu*) of these investigated clans edited at various historical periods and 16 local annals or chronicles in history (*difangzhi*).[6] I, with my assistants, visited museums, libraries, and archive institutions in these regions to collect a large amount of second-hand data covering local and clan history, the land reform, population, migration, and socioeconomic development at the micro and macro levels.

1.3 Regions, villages, and clans

1.3.1 Clans in Shexian

Established in the Qin Dynasty, Shexian is in the northeast part of Huangshan City, and it is rich in cultural relics, memorial temples, and memorial arches. Strolling in Shexian, one can see the towers, bridges, lanes, and houses built in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Being the political and cultural center of ancient Huizhou, this county is well known for its solid Confucian traditions and grounding. Zhu Xi, a founder of the Song-Ming Rationalist School, was born in Fujian. However, his ancestral place was Huizhou, and he developed his teachings in this region. Located in an inland mountainous region, Huizhou was less affected by wars and Western culture during the late Qing and the Republic Era in comparison with Guangdong and Fujian. According to Chinese scholars, this region contains the most complete clan system and the best-preserved clan culture in China.[7] The four administrative villages we investigated include Changxi, Xongcun, Censhandu (also known as Hanbucun), and Xitou. The county government recommended a number of villages to me for selection. My final selection went

to the above villages as they still retained rural attributes and showed the historical cachet of the Huizhou culture characterized by the integration of officials, merchants, and Confucian students.

1.3.1.1 Changxi

Changxi, located in southern Shexian, is 30 km from the county town and seven km from the Xin'an River. Residential houses are built in the butterfly-shaped basin, surrounded by mountains. A stream, a tributary of the Xin'an River, winds beside the village. The village was initially called Cangxi. During the time of Chunxi, the Southern Song Dynasty, the Wu family, moved in. Then the village was renamed to Changxi. Afterwards, families including Feng, Liu, Chen, Zheng, Jin, He, Mei, Huang, Li, Fan, Zhang, Luo, Ling Yu, Shao, and Kang moved in, but the Wu family developed into the largest. Later, two clans extended their residence to the south of the village and established Xibangtoucun, which is called the Lower Changxi. In the Yuan Dynasty, the Zhou family moved in Xibangtoucun. After becoming the largest clan there, they renamed the village to Zhoubangtou (Wu 2005). Changxi, as an administrative village with a population of 2,979 and households of 973 (in 2009 figures), includes three natural villages, namely Hongqi, Hongxin, and Changyuan. The Wu clan members mainly live in the two villages of Hongqi and Hongxing, while the Zhou clan members live in Changyuan today.[8] Starting with the Ming Dynasty, residents in Changxi built more than 800 dwellings lining three km from west to east along the river. More than 200 buildings with typical Huizhou architectural styles were built in the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties. In addition, there are water outlets, stone arch bridges, schools, restaurants, taverns, ancestral halls, temples, and nunneries. The village contains three north-south streets and more than 100 lanes.

The Wu people in Huizhou respect Wu Qian as their ancient ancestor and Wu Shaohui as the recent ancestor. The ancestor of the Wu clan in Changxi—Wu Yizhi—was of the fifteenth generation of Shaohui. In 1174, he traveled to Lin'an to pay taxes and passed by the town of Shendu. He climbed Tangfengqi Mountain near Shendu and saw the Changxi River. Believing that a piece of land in that village was a treasure, he bought that land and built a tomb for himself. In 1181 when he died, he was buried there. Later, Wu Yuanyu, his youngest son, resided at Changxi. After several generations, his family developed into a large clan (Wu 2005). The third generation of Yuanyu developed into four branches: Dazhi, Dacheng, Daming, and Dafu. The Dazhi branch moved to Chakeng, and the Daming branch was not seen in the genealogy. The remaining two branches are currently the two main factions of the Wu clan in Changxi: 1) Xiangli, the descendants of the Dafu branch, and 2) Tiangan, the descendants of the Dacheng branch.[9]

During the time of 923–936 AD, Zhou Yao, who was considered the originator of the Zhou clan in Huizhou, migrated to Jixi from Lujiang, Anhui. Between 968 and 975, Zhou Tong, the eldest son of Zhou Yao, moved to Xiaolukou in

Shexian. During the period of 1111–1117, Zhou Wuyi, one of the fifth generation of Zhou Tong, moved to Zhoujiacun in Shexian. His fourteenth son, Zhou Longsun, moved to Changxi in 1343. Since then, the Zhou clan has had 26 generations.[10]

1.3.1.2 Xiongcun and the Cao clan

Xiongcun, located in the lower reaches of Jianjiang, or the Jian River, is only 7.5 km from the county town. With 628 households and a population of 2,485 (in 2009 figures), this village administers 4 natural villages and 15 villager groups.[11] From the Tang to the Yuan Dynasties, a few surnames, including Mei, Xia, Hong, Li, and Shi, co-resided in this village. Later, the Mei family was involved in a crime and suffered genocide. The Xia family moved elsewhere. As for the Shi family, their whereabouts were unknown. The Li family has lived in Xiongcun up through the present day with only about 30 members. In 1381, Cao Yongqing moved in with his uncle, married a woman from the Hong clan, and settled down. The Hong clan gradually diminished, and the Cao family developed into a large clan and renamed the village as Xiongcun. The eldest son, born by his wife, was named Zongren, and the younger son, born by his concubine, was named Zongli. Since then, the Cao clan in Xiongcun has been divided into two main factions or branches. The two factions have seven sub-branches (called *fang* or 房). Each sub-branch has a few lower sub-branches known as *tang* (堂). Currently, this clan has reached the twenty-second generation. In the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the Cao clan was well known in Huizhou because it produced quite a few high-ranking officials.

1.3.1.3 Censhandu and the Cheng clan

Censhandu, a neighboring village to Xiongcun, is under the administration of Xiongcun Township. As an administrative village, Censhandu is smaller than Xiongcun in population size. Cheng is the largest clan in this village. All the Cheng people in China respect Gongsunqiaobo as their ancestor. He was an official of the West Zhou Dynasty. In the seventh year of Zhouchengwang (周成王), Gongsunqiaobo presented three treasures to the emperor: an uncut jade from a well, a utensil from Taishan, and double spikes of crop. The emperor was very happy and conferred upon him the title of Count of Cheng State (now in Jize County, Hebei). Later, his descendants adopted the state name as their surname. The Cheng people in Huizhou respected Cheng Yuantan as their migration ancestor. Cheng Cheng, the progenitor of the Cheng clan in Censhandu, was one of the forty-third generations of Yuantan. He lived originally in Dachengcun, Shexian. In Cheng's genealogy, we could not find when Cheng migrated to this village. It would be somewhere between 1450 and 1465.[12] Currently, the Cheng clan in Censhandu has continued to 21 generations. Cheng Cheng had five sons named Yue, Yi, Mei, Fu, and Tong, who are the ancestors of the five branches today.

1.3.1.4 Xitou and the Ye clan

Xitou, surrounded by mountains, is located in northeastern Shexian, 21 km from the county town. A small river flows around this village, which administers two natural villages, Xitou and Lantian.[13] My fieldwork was conducted in Lantian. With 990 *mu* of arable land, 7,520 *mu* of mountain land, 270 households, and 760 residents (in 2009 figures), this village has seven villager-groups. Ye, the dominant surname there, came from Ji, the royal family of the Zhou Dynasty. It is said that their original ancestor was Ji Zai, a younger brother of Zhou Wuwang (周武王).

Ye Meng, the progenitor of the Ye clan in Lantian, was the Minister of Revenue in the Liang Dynasty (578–580 AD) and married a princess. During the chaotic time, he sent his wife to Lantian to take refuge. In 627, he returned to this village and lived there with his wife until his death. His son, called Liuyi, bore three sons: Peng, Lang, and You. The descendants of Peng and Lang all moved away from Lantian. Only You's descendants stayed behind. Nian Jiu, one of the nineteenth generation of You, or the twenty-first generation of Meng, had four sons, including Sanliu, Sishi, Sier, and Siliu, known as four olds, who became the ancestors of the four main branches in Lantian today. Under each branch, there are many sub-branches. During the reign of Ming Dynasty, there were altogether 36 ancestral halls, known as the 36 branches. This clan is proud of business leaders and senior officials. Of them, Ye Chun, who obtained *zhuangyuan* (状元) in the imperial examination in 1071, was appointed the Minister of Military. The peak period for this clan in producing officials was between the reigns of Tang and Song Dynasties.

1.3.2 Jingxian, Fengcun, and the Feng clan

Jingxian, a county in southern Anhui, is to the north of Yellow Mountain and near Taiping Lake. With an area of 2,059 square kilometers and a population of about 350,000 (in 2009 figures), Jingxian is well known for beautiful mountains, large forests, and clear rivers. Jingxian's northern part, basically a plain region, was under the influence of Jiang-Zhe culture, while the southern part, connected with Yellow Mountain, was a section of the Huizhou cultural zone. At the beginning of the last century, Western culture and commodities first reached the coastal and plains regions and then spread to inland areas via the Yangtze River and other rivers. It is possible that southern Jingxian as a whole received Western influences and new ideas earlier than Huizhou; though we are not sure whether this difference was as significant as expected. At the same time, it could appear more traditional than coastal and plain regions.

Fengcun, an administrative village under Maolin Township in the southern part of Jingxian, is 35 km from the county town. With an area of 2.45 square kilometers, arable land of 2,924 *mu*, 8,841 *mu* of forest, and a total population of 2,166, Fengcun consists of 22 villager-groups and 675 households (in 2009 figures).[14] We chose Fengcun because of the location. Maolin is more famous