

The Wuzhen Model:
Analyzing a Strategy of Old Town Tourism in China

by

Shuxin Li

A Thesis Presented to the
FACULTY OF THE USC SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirement for the Degree
MASTER OF HERITAGE CONSERVATION

December 2021

Copyright 2021

Shuxin Li

Acknowledgments

Born and growing up in Beijing, I first heard about the Gubei water town was from professor Vinayak's class. I was so surprised that there was a traditional water town near Beijing in the north of China. I am very glad to choose this topic so I can visit these places on my own.

I would like to thank my committee chair, professor Ken Breisch, who was so patient giving me much advice. He helped me find many books and resources about my thesis. I would also like to thank my committee members, professor Trudi Sandmeier and Vinayak Bharne, who gave me significant feedback in such a difficult circumstance. It was a very hard year for everyone. I want to say thank you again to my committee for their patience despite the difficulty and distance we have.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	ii
List of Figures	iv
Abstract	v
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: General situation of tourism development in historical towns in China	3
Developing History	3
The Current Situation.....	9
Chapter 2: The Development of the Wuzhen Model	13
Overview of Wuzhen	13
The History of Wuzhen.....	15
The Innovation of the Wuzhen Model	21
Chapter 3: The Advantages of the Wuzhen Model.....	29
Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage	29
Avoiding Over-commercialization.....	37
Chapter 4: Some Issues of the Wuzhen Model	41
The Force Relocation of Original Residents.....	41
Disneyfication of the Historical Town.....	44
Homogeneity in Gubei Water Town.....	46
Chapter 5: Some Recommendations for the Wuzhen Model Developing as a Chain	
Business.....	50
Combining Local Culture to Decide the Theme of the Tourist Town.....	50
Promoting Indigenous Intangible Cultural Heritage.....	53
Enhancing the Preservations of Valuable Properties	57
Conclusion.....	60
Bibliography.....	63

List of Figures

Figure 1.1: Part of the painting: The Kangxi Emperor’s Southern Inspection Tour Scroll 3	4
Figure 1.2: The Qianlong Emperor’s Southern Inspection Tour Scroll 10.....	5
Figure 1.3: Red Guards from Beijing Agriculture University traveling by foot on their way to Yan’An in 1966.....	7
Figure 1.4: Yifei Chen presenting his work to Deng Xiaoping from Memories of <i>My Homeland</i> exhibit at Hammer Galleries.....	8
Figure 1.5: Pingyao old city	10
Figure 1.6: Wuzhen water town.....	11
Figure 1.7: Tianluokeng Tulou cluster.....	11
Figure 2.1: Map of Wuzhen	13
Figure 2.2: Utilization of the space above the water.....	14
Figure 2.3: Mu Xin with his friends in 1946.....	19
Figure 2.4: Handwritten Manuscript of the Prison Notes	20
Figure 2.5: A distressed building using old wood and stone in Wuzhen.....	23
Figure 2.6: Xianghong Chen's hand-drawn drawings: Gubei Water Town.....	24
Figure 2.7: The entrance of the Gubei water town.....	25
Figure 2.8: The pass of Shanhaiguan of the Great Wall	25
Figure 3.1: The picture of a hand-made silkworm flower	31
Figure 3.2: The picture of the Kungfu show on the boat in Wuzhen.....	33
Figure 3.3: The picture of Saibai rice wine making in Wuzhen	35
Figure 3.4: The picture of the internet-famous shooting spot of the blue calico in Wuzhen	36
Figure 3.5: The picture of the McDonald in Lijiang old town.....	39
Figure 4.1: The picture of the same calico store as Wuzhen in Gubei water town.....	48
Figure 5.1: The picture of the terracotta army themed hotel in Xi’an	52
Figure 5.2: The picture of a Lunban pillow	55
Figure 5.3: The picture of the Jiu Qu yellow river lamp array	57

Abstract

Since the second list of National Famous Historical and Cultural Cities was released in 1986, many local governments in China started to revive their historical towns and prepared to apply for the World Heritage Site designation.¹ After that, old town tourism became popular with travelers. Tourism in old towns allowed people to appreciate the historical and cultural atmosphere and experience pure folk customs. However, tourists soon lost their interest in historical city tourism due to the similarity of the towns, as well as safety, management, and many other problems. During this period, Wuzhen water town took the lead in proposing a new business model to save the historical town's tourism industry, which became a turning point. Wuzhen water town, which has a history of approximately 1300 years, was first managed by residents but gradually lost tourists to other old towns.² After a company took over Wuzhen tourism management, it ushered in a tremendous success. Following the success of Wuzhen, the company even constructed a replica, Gubei water town, in Beijing. However, Gubei water town is not a historical city but was only created for entertainment and tourism. For many cultural tourism lovers, this is controversial. Now many other tourist-historical towns also imitate this model.

This thesis will introduce how the Wuzhen model developed and analyze its innovative points by comparing it with earlier models of old town tourism. The thesis will look closely at the cases of Wuzhen water town and Gubei water town to analyze how they contribute to heritage conservation and what potential weaknesses they have. Also, it will give some recommendations to improve the Wuzhen model.

¹ Jianying Guo, Mingjun Xiong, "On the Developing Patterns of Ancient-Town Tour in Western China," *Journal of Xihua University (Philosophy & Social Sciences)* 3 (2007): 24.

² "The Introduction of Traditional Wuzhen," Wuzhen Official Website, Accessed August 25, 2020, <http://www.wuzhen.com.cn/web/introduction?id=2>.

Introduction

China's tourism industry has developed rapidly in the past two decades, and as people's quality of living continues to improve, the tourism market still has the potential to expand further. In 2019, the number of China's domestic tourists reached 6.006 billion, an annual increase of 8.4% including domestic and international travelers. The average percentage of people visiting historical and cultural districts is 42.91%, especially on a short holiday.³ Historical districts became popular for several reasons. On the one hand, the central government attaches great importance to the protection and activation of historical villages and towns. As of 2018, the government had declared 135 cities as National Famous Historical and Cultural Cities, that are located in almost every province in China.⁴ In response to the policy, local governments allocate funds for the rehabilitation of historical villages every year, which provides many sightseeing destinations for tourists. On the other hand, people in China have a certain affection for water towns especially in the Jiangnan area (south of the Yangtze River) of China where people can enjoy their historical atmosphere as well as natural scenery.⁵ The advocacy of the government and the promotion of social media like TikTok rekindled people's passion for traditional Chinese culture. For example, young people like to wear traditional Chinese clothes and ancient make-up while traveling in historical towns.

However, in such a friendly environment for cultural tourism, many old towns cannot balance commercialization and heritage conservation, which can lead to the destruction of historical cities and bad experiences for tourists. In contrast, according to a study conducted by Xiao Xie, which investigated tourists' attitude towards Wuzhen old town, following the adoption of the new model and reforming the original town, the city successfully won the appreciation of

³ "The Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2019 Cultural and Tourism Development Statistical Bulletin," China Tourism Academy, Accessed August 28, 2020, <http://www.ctaweb.org/html/2020-6/2020-6-20-20-27-93560.html>.

⁴ "Reply of the State Council on Agreeing to List Yu County, Hebei Province as a National Historic and Cultural City (Guo Han [2018] No. 70) _Government Information Disclosure Column," China Central People's Government Website, Accessed August 28, 2020, http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/content/2018-05/10/content_5289771.htm.

⁵ Jiayu Fan, " Analysis of tourists' attitude for ancient towns based on text mining," *Big Data Research*, 2017, 3(6): 2017064-.

tourists because many of them believe the authenticity is preserved there.⁶ This thesis will analyze how the Wuzhen model is different from that of other historical towns and how this model contributes to the preservation of a historical atmosphere. The thesis will also critique how the Wuzhen model become a chain business that was applied to Gubei water town, where the original rural village was entirely reconstructed following the concept of the Wuzhen model. Since Gubei water town is an artificial “old” town but located at the foot of Simatai Great Wall, there are always many different opinions about it. Therefore, systematic analysis of the Wuzhen model is necessary to understand the value of Gubei water town, and it may be helpful for maintaining cultural tourism in historical towns in the future.

The thesis will begin by introducing the development history and the current situation of historical town tourism in China. Based on research, my personal experiences and conversations with the person in charge of Gubei water town, the second chapter will analyze what the Wuzhen model is and how it developed. The third chapter will analyze what makes Wuzhen prominent among numerous historical towns. It will also take Lijiang as an example to discuss common problems in previous historical towns. These include problems of management and safety, travel fraud and over-commercialization. In contrast, the Wuzhen model concentrates on the promotion of intangible cultural heritage and strong management to avoid tourists’ unpleasant experiences about over-commercialization. Chapter 4 will discuss the problems with the Wuzhen model including the relocation, Disneyfication, and homogenization issues. Chapter 5 makes some recommendations for the Wuzhen model that is trying to become chain business and other historical towns trying to apply this model.

⁶ Xiao Xie, "Analysis of the Sustainability of Cultural Tourism Destinations in China from the Tourist Perspective: Case Study of the Ancient Town of Wuzhen," *Available online: aggieweighill.com (accessed on 1 March 2018)* (2018).

Chapter 1: General Situation of Tourism Development in Historical Towns in China

Developing History

Although the tourism industry was formally developed after 1978 under Deng Xiaoping's Reform and Opening-up policy, tourism activities have been recorded in feudal China. Tourism activities in ancient China were not related to economic development, instead, people traveled mostly for political, scholarly, and religious reasons. For instance, Zheng He traveled to Japan and Southeast Asia to promote imperial expansion, international trade promotion, and academic communication during the early Ming dynasty (1371-1433), and Xuanzang traveled to India to study Buddhism in the seventh century.⁷ For domestic tourism, many emperors in ancient China traveled to the South of Yangtze River for political activities including quelling uprisings, collecting taxes, and safeguarding national security. Because most capitals during the imperial era were in the north of China, it was necessary for the emperor to personally inspect the South thousands of kilometers away. The earliest recorded southern imperial visit was Emperor Shun in 2184 BCE. His death during his royal visit to the south was recorded in *Shiji* (the Records of the Grand Historian) covering the history of ancient China from 2698 BC to 94 BCE.⁸ Since then, royal visits to the south gradually became a tradition for many emperors especially for the emperors Kangxi and Qianlong in the Qing dynasty, who undertook the most southern visits.

During the sixty-one years of his reign, Emperor Kangxi of the Qing Dynasty made six royal visits to the south of the Yangtze River in 1684, 1689, 1699, 1703, 1705 and 1707, inspecting the process of river governance.⁹ In addition to the inspection, the emperor also worshiped in temples and visited the beautiful scenery during these tours, and his traveling escort was usually enormous and included his mother, imperial concubines, and guards, all of which was recorded in the painting, "The Kangxi Emperor's Southern Inspection Tour." This painting was separated into twelve scrolls and took six years to complete, depicting the majestic picture of the emperor with his immense entourage starting from Beijing and arriving in Zhejiang.¹⁰ It also

⁷ David Airey and Chong King, *Tourism in China: Policy and development since 1949*, Routledge, 2011.

⁸ Qian Sima, *Records of the grand historian: Han dynasty*, Vol. 65, Columbia University Press, 1993.

⁹ Michael G Chang, *A court on horseback: imperial touring & the construction of Qing rule, 1680-1785*, Brill, 2020.

¹⁰ Recording the Grandeur of the Qing, Accessed October 06, 2020, <http://projects.mcah.columbia.edu/nanxuntu/html/scrolls/index.html>.

shows contemporary people and the features and style of the southern water village in the Qing dynasty. Wuzhen restored the scenery of the traditional water town shown in the painting with high degree of accuracy.



Figure 1.1: Part of the painting: The Kangxi Emperor's Southern Inspection Tour Scroll 3.

Resource: The Palace Museum's official website. <https://www.dpm.org.cn/collection/paint/228301.html>.

Compared with the reign of the emperor Kangxi who just stabilized his regime, the Qianlong period was the most prosperous and sound, which was also the peak of the Qing dynasty. Therefore, Emperor Qianlong's southern tours were more to imitate Emperor Kangxi, hold military parades and entertainment, so his travels were more luxurious and exorbitant. Similarly, he made six royal southern visits, but he consumed ten times more people and money than Emperor Kangxi.¹¹

¹¹ Chang, *A court on horseback*.



Figure 1.2: The Qianlong Emperor's Southern Inspection Tour Scroll 10.
Resource: National Museum of China official website.
<http://www.chnmuseum.cn/Portals/0/web/zt/digitalexhi/mobile/index.html>.

With the closure of China at the end of the Qing dynasty in 1912 and the war after that, tourism in China stagnated until 1927, when the first travel agency opened in Shanghai during a brief peaceful period after the Siege of the International Legations in Beijing. This was established mostly to serve international tourists.¹² However, the ensuing war against Japan and the domestic war between the Chinese Nationalist Party and the Communist Party ended tourism activities again. After the founding of PRC (People's Republic of China) in 1949, not only did the tourism industry fail to develop, but cultural tourism even regressed due to the destruction of many historic buildings. One of the reasons was that those in control of the government at that time believed that tourism was a bourgeois activity, so the tourism industry and its related economic development was regarded as a violation of socialism.¹³ Then, chairman Mao proposed the Second Five Year Plan which set a goal to increase the production of steel from 12 million tons to 30 million tons, aiming to surpass Russia and western countries.¹⁴ In order to achieve such an unrealistic goal, people became too fanatical and destroyed many historic buildings of which some were directly converted into factories, while others were torn down as

¹² Airey and King, *Tourism in China*.

¹³ Airey and King, *Tourism in China*.

¹⁴ Angang Hu et al., *The Great Leap Forward: 1957-1965*(Singapore: Enrich Professional Publishing, 2014).

raw materials or fuel for steel production. The Cultural Revolution that followed from 1966 to 1976 made the situation of heritage conservation and cultural tourism even worse due to one of its core goals to remove the Four Olds. The Four Olds were “Old Customs, Old Culture, Old Habits, and Old Ideas”, which initially represented people’s hate of feudal cultures such as Confucianism dividing people into classes, polygynous marriage, and discrimination against women.¹⁵ However, people became so extreme that they regarded everything before the founding of PRC including literature, historic architecture, and even conservationists trying to preserve old buildings as feudal remnants, so many historical buildings or towns were destroyed during that time. Therefore, tourism hardly developed in the early days of socialist China, and there were only two travel agencies and 137 hotels in China.¹⁶

However, there was a special tourist activity that happened during Cultural Revolution, which was called Da Chuan Lian (Big Connection). It was organized by the central government to send Red Guards, who were usually high school or college students that executed and canonized the Cultural Revolution, everywhere in China, especially places that had significance or commemoration in World War II and domestic wars. Governments covered all the transportation, catering, and accommodation fees, and they requested Red Guards to promote the tenet of the Cultural Revolution and resist old remnants while traveling.¹⁷ As this activity began in September 1966, it can be seen in every province in China that Red Guards were traveling. Because there were no hotels in China at that time, all their catering and accommodation were offered by local residents, and host families called Red Guards “the guests of Chairman Mao.” Then, many people whether they were Red Guards or not, joined this tremendous travel activity. The trains became so crowded that even the bathroom inside was full of people. So many people decided to travel by foot.¹⁸ It is said that Beijing received over ten thousand “red guards” a day during that time.¹⁹ This travel was planned to continue for three months at first, but then “red guards” became uncontrollable, traveling everywhere and destroying “feudal remnants.” Therefore, the central government released a notice to order all people to stop traveling in November, and in December, the government added a notice that transportation was no longer

¹⁵ Jonathan D Spence, *The search for modern China* (WW Norton & Company, 1990).

¹⁶ Airey and King, *Tourism in China*.

¹⁷ Xianghua Peng, My Da Chuan Lian in the “Cultural Revolution,” *Jianghuai Literature and History*, no. 3 (2015): 117–126.

¹⁸ Xianghua Peng, My Da Chuan Lian in the “Cultural Revolution”.

¹⁹ Xianghua Peng, My Da Chuan Lian in the “Cultural Revolution”.

free for red guards. However, students still refused to go back to school, so the government announced again emphasizing that all travel activities including traveling on foot must stop on February 3rd, 1967.²⁰ So this big travel activity was finally terminated. This activity began as revolution but ended with entertainment, leaving a ridiculous and pained memory to Chinese people.



Figure 1.3: Red Guards from Beijing Agriculture University traveling by foot on their way to Yan’An in 1966.

Resource: https://www.sohu.com/a/416547117_166075

After the Reform and Open-up policy was released in 1978, the tourism industry and its related policies were officially implemented in China. Recognizing the need for foreign exchange for economic development, chairman Deng Xiaoping not only encouraged foreign investments to construct more hotels but also focused on promoting Chinese cultural tourism to

²⁰Xianghua Peng, My Da Chuan Lian in the “Cultural Revolution”.

the world.²¹ Meanwhile, with the gradual development of transportation and hotels, domestic tourism also increased. In 1984, a painting that was sent to Deng Xiaoping by Armand Hammer and drawn by Yifei Chen attracted tourists' attention to Zhouzhuang historic town, which also opened the prelude to old town tourism in the south of the Yangtze River (Fig 1.4).²² The historic towns developed in the same period include Tongli, Xitang, and Yongzhi water towns, all of which were developed for sightseeing tourism. This type of old town tourism has two main characteristics. The first emphasizes the value of culture itself, rather than the use of culture as a consumer good. Secondly, it is positioned as a stage for local folk culture, with its original architecture, landscape, and humanistic characteristics as its core attractions, exposing tourists to the most traditional folk culture elements. Visiting the entire historic town was the same as visiting the Forbidden City. It was a static experience, and people have few participatory activities. Therefore, the average visit time is relatively short, and people generally do not stay overnight.²³



Figure 1.4: Yifei Chen presenting his work to Deng Xiaoping from Memories of My Homeland exhibit at Hammer Galleries. Resource: Hammer Galleries.

<http://www.hammergalleries.com/about>

²¹ Airey and King, *Tourism in China*.

²² Zhiyun Xu and Lin Lu, "Model of Preserving and Developing Zhouzhuang Tourism [J]," *Resource Development & Market* 5 (2006).

²³ Zhiyun Xu and Lin Lu, "Model of Preserving and Developing Zhouzhuang Tourism [J]".

The second phase of tourism development is of the resort type, which added catering, accommodation, entertainment, and other facilities to historical buildings, combining active culture and commerce and turning the entire old town into a leisure resort. The two representative old towns of this type are the west scenic area of Wuzhen and Lijiang: Under the Wuzhen model, the developer acquires all the real estate and plans the scenic area uniformly, while in Lijiang and other old towns with the same operating model, the original property owners maintained their own businesses.²⁴ The resort type old towns welcomed and sought Chinese tourists, and usually become popular holiday destinations. However, while the injection of commerce brought new vitality to the old town tourism, it also brought two obvious problems. The first is that the domestic cultural and commercial creativity lagged behind, and the format of cultural business is similar, leading to the problem of homogeneity in historical towns. Second, the high commercialization of old towns has caused a large number of external goods, cultures, and profit-seeking businessmen to act aggressively, expelling local residents and moving them away, which made local culture hollow and false. Eventually, the charm of the original folk culture would gradually disappear, which also affected the sustainable development of historical towns.

The Current Situation

China's 13th Five-Year Plan regulating the basic develop plan during 2016-2020 emphasizes the protection of historical buildings and villages: "Continue to implement the preservation and utilization projects of historical buildings in Shanxi, the Confucian Temple in Qufu, the Wudang Mountain historical districts, and the Shenyang Forbidden City. Continue completing 270 preservation projects of Major Historical and Cultural Site Protected at the National Level and Provincial-level Cultural Site concentrated as villages."²⁵ The plan also emphasizes strengthening the declaration, protection, and management of World Heritage Sites in China and

²⁴ Shiqing Zheng and Dawu Wang, "Research on Mode of Wuzhen Tourism Development [J]," *Areal Research and Development* 5 (2012).

²⁵ "The 13th Five-Year Plan for the Development of National Cultural Relics," The State Council Information Office of the PRC Official Website, Accessed October 10, 2020, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/xwfbh/xwfbh/wqfbh/39595/40355/xgzc40361/Document/1653914/1653914.htm>

the use of the tourism industry to promote Chinese culture.²⁶ Because this political environment supports the restoration of historical towns and the development of cultural tourism, many old villages and cities across the country are being rebuilt. There are 220 historical towns distributed in 24 provinces being developed as tourism sites, of which Zhejiang has the greatest number of old towns.²⁷ These old towns have their own characteristics in architecture and landscapes. For example, the Pingyao historic city in Shaanxi, the water town in the south of the Yangtze River and the old village of Tulou in Fujian have obvious differences in appearance. Pingyao has the typical features of northern China such as wide streets, thick walls, and dignified architecture (fig. 1.5), while water towns to the south of the Yangtze River have narrow streets with more vegetation and a more exquisite appearance (fig. 1.6). And Tulou village represents a unique local architectural style that was developed by the Hakka people (fig. 1.7). However, their business strategies are similar, and even the souvenirs sold in these old towns are the same.



Figure 1.5: Pingyao old city. Resource: <https://www.shanxipingyao.com/ly/jq/87.html>

²⁶ “The 13th Five-Year Plan for the Development of National Cultural Relics,” The State Council Information Office of the PRC Official Website.

²⁷ Jin lv, Research Report on the Tourism Development Trend of Ancient Towns in China, Chinese Township Enterprises, (5), 58-60. (2013).



Figure 1.6: Wuzhen water town. Resource: <http://www.wuzhen.com.cn/web/poto/photo?id=15>



Figure 1.7: Tianluokeng Tulou cluster. Resource: https://www.zhangjiajieturnguide.com/photo-p217-1880tianluokeng-tulou-cluster-fujian-china.html#photo_title

In order to break through the dilemma of tourism homogeneity in old towns, some developers have learned from the Echigo-Tsumari in Japan where people utilized art exhibitions to promote tourism, while preserving the vernacular landscape and its ancient Jomon culture. The Wuzhen model is also a pioneer which created the Wuzhen Theater Festival promoting drama performances and Gubei Water Town's Red Leaves Festival that promotes traditional Chinese clothes.²⁸ With the increasing awareness of heritage conservation and the upgrading of government restrictions on sustainable tourism development, developers and planners are also looking for new ways to protect the original buildings and culture as well as inject vitality into historical towns.

²⁸ Jin lv, Research Report on the Tourism Development Trend of Ancient Towns in China.

Chapter 2: The Development of the Wuzhen Model

Overview of Wuzhen

Located in Tongxiang city, Zhejiang province, only 140 kilometers from Shanghai, Wuzhen is adjacent to the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal. It is naturally divided into four parts by the river into east, west, south, and north areas, among which the east and west areas are the main scenic spots.

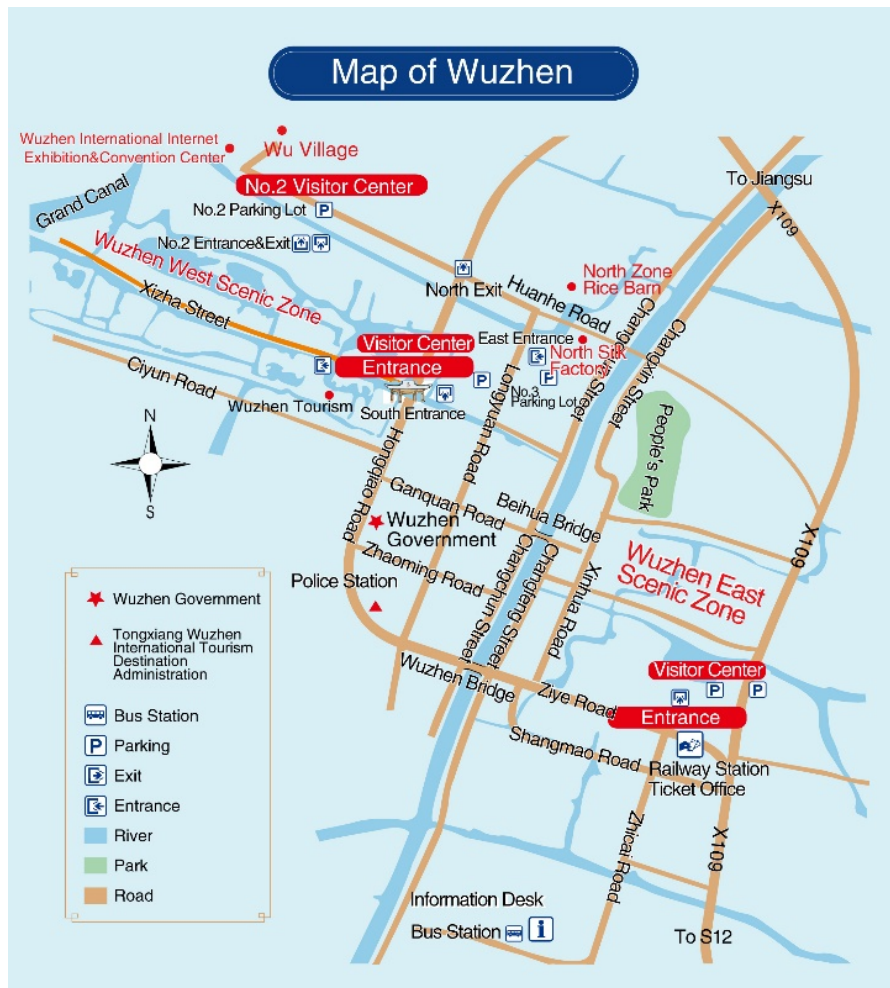


Figure 2.1: Map of Wuzhen. Resource: <http://en.wuzhen.com.cn/web/traver/township>

Wuzhen retains the township characteristic and architectural features of the Jiangnan area in ancient China. Since the south area of the Yangtze River has abundant water resources and a dense river network, the houses and streets are mostly built adjacent to the water, forming a

beautiful scene of bridges, water, and houses. One of the major characteristics of water village dwellings is the effective utilization of space. With a complex topography, large population, and precious land, streets are narrower than the North of China, and the usable building area is also smaller. Therefore, the vernacular buildings usually have a second story or effectively utilize the space above the river. For example, a small part of the building supported by wooden or stone pillars extends over the water.



Figure 2.2: Utilization of the space above the water. Resource: Wuzhen Official Website.
<http://www.wuzhen.com.cn/web/poto/photo?id=15>

Bricks and wood are mostly used as building materials in vernacular houses, and the streets are paved with bluestones. Contrary to the northern residential buildings, the walls of the houses are relatively high and narrow, which is helpful for ventilation and heat dissipation. Because of the high rainfall, the slope of the roof is generally relatively steep to facilitate drainage. Brick walls are usually painted white, and wooden structures are generally painted black, which creates a sharp contrast and makes people feel clean visually.

The History of Wuzhen

Wuzhen has a protracted but relatively plain history, which at the earliest can be traced back to 7000 years. It has been proved by the adjacent Tanjiawan relics, which belong to Majiabang culture in the Neolithic era of ancient China, that the ancestors of Wuzhen settled here and began their farming life.²⁹ Majiabang culture was located in the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River in China, an area considered by archaeologists to be the origin of rice farming culture, and a significant amount of evidence of rice cultivation has also been found in the relics.³⁰ The unique geographical conditions and the historical foundation of Majiabang culture have made Wuzhen an agricultural town for a long time.

According to *Wu Qing Zhen Zhi (the History of Wuzhen)*, which was first compiled in the Qing Dynasty (1760) and re-edited in 1936, in the Liang Dynasty (A.D. 503), the prince, Xiaotong, following his teacher came and studied in Wuzhen. He was addicted to literature and had no interest in politics.³¹ It is said that at Wuzhen, the prince completed *Wen Xuan* (Selections of Refined Literature), which is the earliest Chinese collection of poetry, and the building he studied at was named Zhaoming Academy based on the prince's posthumous name.³² Later, the building was destroyed during the domestic war, and only relics remained.³³ It was restored during the construction of the Wuzhen scenic area.³⁴ The prince's stay and his Zhaoming Academy may have had a strong educational influence on the local populations, hence there were 64 Jinshi and 161 Juren from the Song Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty (960-1905).³⁵ Jinshi and Juren were degree types in the Chinese imperial examination, which was a system of selecting officials through examinations.³⁶ Juren referred to candidates who passed provincial exams, and Jinshi referred to candidates who passed national exams.³⁷

²⁹ "Brief History," History - Wuzhen Introduction, Accessed September 06, 2020, <http://en.wuzhen.com.cn/web/origin?id=10>.

³⁰ Kwang-chih Chang, *The archaeology of ancient China*, Yale University Press, 1986.

³¹ Xuepu Lu, *Wu Qing Zhen Zhi (The History of Wuzhen)*, 1936.

³² "Brief History," History - Wuzhen Introduction.

³³ "Brief History," History - Wuzhen Introduction.

³⁴ "Brief History," History - Wuzhen Introduction.

³⁵ Cunbao Chen, Wuzhen Documentary, Accessed September 07, 2020, <http://www.docuchina.cn/2016/11/18/VIDEwZ4RwQ8E9fi0qqmD2yqs161118.shtml>.

³⁶ Rui Wang, *The Chinese Imperial Examination System: An Annotated Bibliography. The Chinese Imperial Examination System*, Lanham, MD: The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2013.

³⁷ Rui Wang, *The Chinese Imperial Examination System*.

Divided into two administrative regions and reigned by several dynasties, Wuzhen was officially merged and administered under Suzhou prefecture in the Tang Dynasty (about CE 860).³⁸ In the Song Dynasty (about CE 960), Wuzhen gradually formed a system of streets and lanes, which contributed to Wuzhen's economic prosperity and development.³⁹ During the Ming and Qing Dynasties (1368-1912), Wuzhen became an important water transportation hub because of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, and after the establishment of the Republic of China, many historical buildings were not well protected because of war and industrial development.⁴⁰

Before transforming into a tourist town, Wuzhen was so dilapidated that it was rarely visited by ordinary tourists except conservationists or artists. In 1999, ten years after Zhouzhuang was opened as a tourist attraction, Wuzhen was put on the restoration agenda. On February 16, 1999, on the afternoon of Lunar New Year's Day, an old lady went out while cooking dinner, and consequently, a fire turned thirteen houses along the river in Wuzhen to ashes, including seven historical buildings.⁴¹ Following this incident, the Zhejiang government sent Chen Xianghong, who was originally born in Wuzhen, to take over the restoration and tourism development project of Wuzhen historic town.⁴² Xianghong Chen is very familiar with the place where he grew up, and he also has a background in drawing and design, which may also be one of the reasons why Wuzhen's restoration is relatively successful.

The restoration was started from the East Scenic Zone, but it continued in a way similar to other old town tourism at that time, which was the sightseeing travel model.⁴³ However, Chen noticed the drawback of the sightseeing model in other old towns, so he tried to develop a new travel model, the resort model, in the West Scenic Zone. In 2003, the Wuzhen Tourism company bought all the buildings and moved all the folks out of the West Scenic Zone, making it a scenic area with unified operation and management.⁴⁴ Then, with Chen's master plan, the West Scenic Zone was entirely rebuilt, and its reconstruction fulfilled the Chinese people's imagination and

³⁸ "Brief History," History - Wuzhen Introduction.

³⁹ Jin Zhang and Duo Si, "Research on Parallel Development of Wuzhen Scenic Area and Non-Scenic Area," In *2020 International Conference on Urban Engineering and Management Science (ICUEMS)*, pp. 5-10. IEEE, 2020.

⁴⁰ Zhang and Si, "Research on Parallel Development of Wuzhen Scenic Area and Non-Scenic Area".

⁴¹ Wuzhen Theater Festival Official Website, Accessed September 06, 2020, <http://www.wuzhenfestival.com/index2018.php?m=Xinwen&a=zixundetail&aid=778>

⁴² Wuzhen Theater Festival Official Website.

⁴³ Zhang and Si, "Research on Parallel Development of Wuzhen Scenic Area and Non-Scenic Area".

⁴⁴ "Brief History," History - Wuzhen Introduction.

yearning for the water town in the South of Yangtze River. However, this decision caused much controversy because conservationists believed the relocation of local residents and large-scale reconstruction destroyed the authenticity of the historic town, while other people thought this decision could solve many problems, like the duplication of stores and the kind of travel fraud that happened in the sightseeing model in which the historic town was planned by local governments and managed by residents.

With an investment of nearly 150 million dollars, the Wuzhen West Scenic Zone finally opened in 2006, and many original residents were hired back to the resort.⁴⁵ In 2013, with Chen's new plan to build Culture Wuzhen, the company hosted a grand celebration for people who love performance and named it the Wuzhen Theater Festival.⁴⁶ In 2014, Wuzhen hosted the first World Internet Conference, which created a new culture and new history for this historic town.⁴⁷

The two most famous historic figures in Wuzhen are Mu Xin and Mao Dun, who are both related to literature. Mao Dun is a modern author, social activist, and one of the greatest novelists in China, who contributed to the establishment of the Mao Dun Literature Prize, which is one of the most honored prizes for novels in China.⁴⁸ Mao Dun was born in Wuzhen in 1896. Although he only lived in Wuzhen for thirteen years, he came back every year to visit his mother, and he also wrote a lot about his hometown in his literary work. For instance, in *Ke Ai De Gu Xiang (Lovely Hometown)*, *Gu Xiang Za Ji (Hometown Miscellanea)*, and *Da Di Shan He (Earth, Mountain, and Rivers)*, he wrote about the beautiful nature of his hometown and how he missed it.⁴⁹ He especially mentioned the Ginkgo tree from Tang Dynasty (CE 802), which is still alive. After 1940, Mao Dun never returned to Wuzhen because of his mother's death and his job as the first Culture Minister of the PRC.⁵⁰ He didn't even go back to Wuzhen once before he died

⁴⁵ "Chen, Xianghong: Wuzhen from a shabby town to a Chinese name card," ChainNews, Accessed September 14, 2020, <https://www.chainnews.com/articles/934929098390.htm>.

⁴⁶ "About the Festival," Wuzhen Festival, Accessed September 14, 2020, http://www.wuzhenfestival.com/index_en.php?m=Guanyuxijujie&a=xijujiejianjie.

⁴⁷ "World Internet Conference," Accessed September 14, 2020, http://www.wuzhenwic.org/2015-11/10/c_46113.htm.

⁴⁸ "Authors' Calendar," Authors' Calendar, Accessed September 19, 2020. <http://authorscalendar.info/maotun.htm>.

⁴⁹ Lina Yang and Xuemei Chang, "Wuzhen: Mao Dun's Homesickness," People.cn. Accessed September 19, 2020. <http://cpc.people.com.cn/n1/2016/1214/c64387-28950305.html>.

⁵⁰ Dun Mao, *Ke Ai De Gu Xiang (Lovely Hometown)*, *Mao Dun Quan Ji (Mao Dun Collection)*, Huangshan Publishing House, 2014.

because of his miserable experience during the Cultural Revolution.⁵¹ On March 27th, 1981, he died in his Beijing house and left 36,000 US dollars for the establishment of the Mao Dun Literature Prize.⁵² In 2016, his son brought his bone ash back to Wuzhen and fulfilled Mao Dun's last wish.⁵³

Mao Dun's house in Wuzhen, constructed in the mid-nineteenth century, is a four-room wide and two-room deep timber building facing the street, with a construction area of 444.25 square meters.⁵⁴ Around 1885, Mao Dun's great-grandfather purchased a residence, and he built three additional houses in the half-acre garden behind the building, which was re-designed by Mao Dun to a Japanese style study room in 1934, following his two-year stay in Japan.⁵⁵ In 1983, the former residence of Mao Dun was approved by the central government to be rehabilitated and restored. It was renovated according to the appearance of Mao Dun's childhood and opened to the public on July 4, 1985, on the 89th anniversary of Mao Dun's birth.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Don Warrington, "The Sad End of Mao Dun," Positive Infinity, March 23, 2020, Accessed September 19, 2020, <https://www.vulcanhammer.org/2006/08/29/the-sad-end-of-mao-dun/>.

⁵² Warrington, "The Sad End of Mao Dun."

⁵³ "Mao Dun's Ashes Moved Back to Wuzhen," Sohu News, July 5, 2016, Accessed September 20, 2020, <http://news.sohu.com/20060705/n244104710.shtml>.

⁵⁴ "Former Residence of Mao Dun, Wuzhen, Tongxiang," Zhejiang Provincial Administration of Cultural Heritage, January 13, 2016, Accessed September 20, 2020, http://wwj.zj.gov.cn/art/2006/1/13/art_1676305_36908452.html.

⁵⁵ "Former Residence of Mao Dun, Wuzhen, Tongxiang".

⁵⁶ "Former Residence of Mao Dun, Wuzhen, Tongxiang".



Figure 2.3: Mu Xin (Center) with his friends in 1946. Resource: Mu Xin Art Museum Official Website. <http://www.muxinam.com/index.php?m=Guancang&a=shengping>

Another famous historic figure, Mu Xin, was born in a wealthy family in 1927.⁵⁷ He had shown interest and talent in painting and writing since his youth, and naturally, he was enrolled in the Academy of Fine Arts at Shanghai University.⁵⁸ However, rather than just living a comfortable affluent life, he chose to become a passionate activist, distributing leaflets and appealing to the masses to resist the Nationalist regime, which had him not only expelled from school, but he also had to flee the mainland China due to political pressure, and he didn't return until 1949.⁵⁹ From 1950 to 1956, he worked as an art teacher and designer in Shanghai, returning to Wuzhen and visiting his family every year, during which time, he wrote twenty books.⁶⁰ Tragically, he was falsely accused by his students of forming reactionary groups and

⁵⁷ "About Mu Xin," Mu Xin Art Museum Official Website, Accessed September 20, 2020, http://www.muxinam.com/index_en.php?m=Guanyuwomen&a=guanyumuxin.

⁵⁸ "About Mu Xin."

⁵⁹ "About Mu Xin."

⁶⁰ Bojia Guo, "Mu Xin and the May Fourth New Literature," The Education University of Hong Kong (Hong Kong), 2019. <http://libproxy.usc.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.libproxy2.usc.edu/docview/2362151808?accountid=14749>.

jailed in 1956, and all his literary works were destroyed. Then, in 1971, Mu Xin was jailed again for “the illegal relationships with foreign countries crime”, and his artworks were all destroyed. His mother also died during the time he was in prison. He was arrested the third time from 1977 to 1979, during which, he wrote the *Prison Notes* while avoiding the surveillance of the guard.⁶¹



Figure 2.4: Handwritten Manuscript of the Prison Notes.
Resource: Mu Xin Art Museum Official Website.
<http://www.muxinam.com/index.php?m=Guancang&a=wenxue>

In 1982, Mu Xin moved to New York, continuing to write and paint, and accomplished the great achievement of having his art exhibition tour during his time in America.⁶² Although living in America, he missed his hometown. In 1995, he returned to Wuzhen for the first time during these years, but the experience was not pleasant because Wuzhen was altered to a

⁶¹ Bojia Guo, “Mu Xin and the May Fourth New Literature.”

⁶² "About Mu Xin."

different appearance, which was not the beautiful water town in his memory. In the article *Wuzhen* wrote after this repatriation, he described with deep disappointment that Wuzhen at that time was entirely unrecognizable. When he finally found his house in Dongzha (East zone), what he saw was the deteriorated courtyard and a metal factory in what was previously his garden at the back of his house. Facing the site of his former study room, he sighed: "Farewell, I will not come again."⁶³ He included this article in his book *Tong Qing Zhong Duan Lu* which is composed of ten mourning articles. However, after the rebirth of Wuzhen and the restoration of his former house, he was invited by Xianghong Chen to come back and live in Wuzhen again in 2006, and this time, he was deeply impressed by the successful rehabilitation and lived in Wuzhen again until his death in 2011.⁶⁴

The Innovation of the Wuzhen Model

Under the premise that many historic towns already occupied the market, the innovation of the Wuzhen model brought transcendence to this water town. It made a difference in three aspects: real estate, planning and construction, management, and operation. For the most part in China, developers or local governments operate the historical town by leasing the buildings from local residents or managing them together because the old town is both a tourist attraction and a residential area. Real estate belonging to different residents increases the difficulty of the overall planning. Before the development of Wuzhen, all the other old towns adopted a strategy that planning, construction, and operating were conducted simultaneously. This strategy was usually utilized at the initial stage and helped speed up the activation of the economic development because this strategy required less initial investment.⁶⁵ However, planning normally couldn't proceed well because the property owners did not cooperate. At the first stage of development, the residents did not see their own interests, so they did not change their property following the plan. Once the town became popular, the owners would renovate their property driven by profits, which led to a large number of similar shops and the destruction of the town's historical appearance.

⁶³ Mu Xin, *Tong Qing Zhong Duan Lu (Ten Mourning Articles)*, Taipei hanyin culture press, 1999.

⁶⁴ "About Mu Xin."

⁶⁵ Shiqing Zheng and Dawu Wang, "Research on Mode of Wuzhen Tourism Development [J]," *Areal Research and Development* 5 (2012).

Avoiding this problem, Wuzhen invested about 50 million dollars to purchase all properties in the west scenic zone before the overall planning, which encouraged other projects of this type in China to adopt such a development strategy.⁶⁶ It was also the first old town that cooperated with tourism companies to obtain more investment. Wuzhen Tourism Co., Ltd. is a state-owned enterprise jointly invested in and operated by China CYTS Holdings Co., Ltd. and Tongxiang Wuzhen Tourism Investment Company, in which, CYTS holds 66% and Tongxiang Wuzhen Tourism Investment Company, actually owned by the local government, holds 34%.⁶⁷ In other words, the ownership and supervision rights of Wuzhen belong to the local government, while the daily profitable projects, including shops, hotels, restaurants, and entertainment venues, are in the hands of tourism companies. The purchasing of all the real estate created a severe problem, which was the relocation of the residents. Therefore, it is necessary to negotiate thoroughly with the original residents on the relocation issue if other historical towns want to use the Wuzhen Model.

Planning and construction are the most controversial part because Xianghong Chen's plan dismantled many historic buildings but only restored or rehabilitated "qualified" buildings. The first thing he did was undertake infrastructure construction which other old towns before Wuzhen did not do. Wuzhen established liquefied gas stations, let every household connect to pipeline gas, built direct drinking water plants, buried all exposed pipelines in the ground, and built wireless networks because Chen designed Wuzhen for not only sightseeing, but he hoped tourists would stay.⁶⁸ Wuzhen inserted modern uses in historical buildings, such as the fire departments, public toilets, and a monitoring center, all relying on the internal transformation of historical buildings to achieve effective functions, which ensured the unity of the overall historical appearance of the old town. Then, Chen demolished all the buildings that were inconsistent with the old district like some factories and dormitories from 1970 in order to highlight the old houses.⁶⁹ However, for the remaining historical buildings, bridges, and streets, Wuzhen would purchase old stone and wood for distressed restoration (to make the material look older), and the interior was modernized for the convenience of tourists. Finally, he built some distressed buildings that existed in people's imagination about an old town such as traditional

⁶⁶ Zhang and Si, "Research on Parallel Development of Wuzhen Scenic Area and Non-Scenic Area".

⁶⁷ "About Us," Wuzhen Official Website. Accessed September 23, 2020, <http://en.wuzhen.com.cn/web/brigade>.

⁶⁸ "Chen, Xianghong: Wuzhen from a shabby town to a Chinese name card".

⁶⁹ "Chen, Xianghong: Wuzhen from a shabby town to a Chinese name card".

theaters, wine shops, and dyeing workshops. He planned the water town the same as a traditional Chinese ink painting, but it also limited the culture of Wuzhen or even the entire Southern Yangtze River. Tourists can only experience the culture he “created”.



Figure 2.5: A distressed building using old wood and stone in Wuzhen.
Photo by author.

Different from the previous tourism development of historical towns, which basically relied on tickets, shopping, and catering revenue, the Wuzhen model developed diversified products in accommodation, entertainment, conference, and culture, which changed the composition of tourists and increased the per capita consumption.⁷⁰ Moreover, the daily

⁷⁰ “Chen, Xianghong: Wuzhen from a shabby town to a Chinese name card”.

operations of attractions, hotels, restaurants, shops, and other stores in the Wuzhen Scenic Area are exclusively operated by the Wuzhen Tourism Company instead of by the residents as in other historical towns. In order to guarantee the diversity and limit the excessive development of commerce, the number and business focus of all the stores in the scenic area is regulated by the Wuzhen Tourism Company. Only when the tenant's business wishes are consistent with the company's plan can the lease for the store be obtained, and the business content cannot be changed at the tenant's will. Correspondingly, the Wuzhen company will compensate for any revenue loss.⁷¹ This seemingly compulsory management method keeps Wuzhen from falling into the quagmire of over-commercialization, while also ensuring the diversity of businesses and avoiding the embarrassment of being similar to other ancient towns.

Another Example of the Wuzhen Model: Gubei Water Town

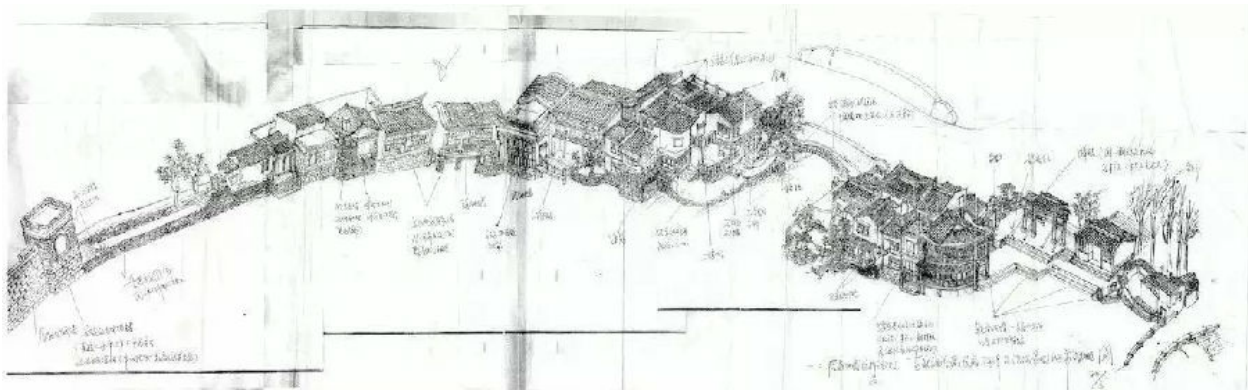


Figure 2.6: Xianghong Chen's hand-drawn drawings: Gubei Water Town. Resource: Gubei water town official website. http://www.wtown.com/index.php/News/media_attention_view/id/67

Gubei water town, the first reproduction of the Wuzhen model, is located in the suburbs of Beijing. Before its construction in 2010, it was a normal village located at the foot of the Simatai Great Wall. Xianghong Chan was also the chief designer of Gubei water town. Taking advantage of the historical background, the popularity, and the spectacular scenery of the Great Wall, he rebuilt the entire village. The business models of Gubei water town and Wuzhen are exactly the same, but the planning and architectural styles are quite different, and the area of Gubei water town is three times that of Wuzhen. Many people criticized it as a Shanzhai (a

⁷¹ “Chen, Xianghong: Wuzhen from a shabby town to a Chinese name card”.

Chinese term meaning counterfeit) Wuzhen or a historical “theme park,” but the number of tourists in Gubei water town has still increased from 980,000 in 2014 to 2.48 million in 2019, which reflects its popularity among ordinary tourists.⁷²



Figure 2.7: Gubei’s imitation from the Great Wall. The entrance of the Gubei water town. Photo by author.



Figure 2.8: Gubei’s imitation from the Great Wall. The pass of Shanhaiguan of the Great Wall. Photo by author.

⁷² “China CYTS Holdings Co., Ltd. Annual Report 2019,” CYTS official website, Accessed September 23, 2020, http://static.sse.com.cn/disclosure/listedinfo/announcement/c/2020-04-10/600138_20200410_51.pdf

Chen has said that Chinese tourists' love of the historical towns is fake.⁷³ Is it the reason why a simulated water town or a distressed landscape could become popular? First, Gubei water town effectively borrowed the historical background and cultural atmosphere of the Simatai Great Wall. The Simatai Great Wall is the highest, steepest, and most well-rehabilitated part of the Great Wall. Unlike other sections of the Great Wall, the Simatai Great Wall has only been reinforced and repaired in a small area, where it is necessary or because of security risks, and the original historical appearance has been preserved as much as possible. This allows the Great Wall to maintain its damaged overall appearance after rehabilitations.⁷⁴ Moreover, the name Gubei water town utilized the name of Gubeikou, which was the “lock” of the capital in feudal China. According to the *Miyun Xian Zhi* (The History of Miyun) recorded in Qing dynasty (1882), after the Ming Dynasty (1378) strengthened and perfected the Great Wall near Gubeikou, it was defended twice against invasions from the north in 1427 and 1550.⁷⁵ In the defense of the Great Wall against the Imperial Japanese army in 1933, the Kuomintang's (Chinese Nationalist Party) general, Linzheng Guan, once led the army to fight here and successfully defended Gubeikou, although the entire Great Wall Defense ended in the defeat of Chinese army.⁷⁶ Therefore, it is possible that Gubei water town built a General Yang's Temple, which is used to commemorate General Yang in Song Dynasty (980) but irrelevant to the history of Gubeikou, in order to communicate to tourists the history of war. Even the entrance is built imitating the gate of the Great Wall. Gubei Water Town is like constructing a “historical shell,” and Chen is filling the shell with the history related to the Great Wall or the popular traditional culture.

Second, instead of the southern architectural style in Wuzhen, the typical northern Siheyuan and Western-style buildings erected during the Republic of China were constructed in Gubei water town. In terms of overall color and building materials, Gubei Water Town and Wuzhen have obvious differences. The main color of Wuzhen's buildings is white walls and black tiles, while Gubei Water Town is usually gray, and traditional houses in the north of China generally do not use white because of the heavy wind and dust. For the same reason, the wall in the north

⁷³ “Chen, Xianghong: Wuzhen from a shabby town to a Chinese name card”.

⁷⁴ Yang Han, “Simatai Great Wall Protection and Maintenance Project Case Explanation,” Accessed September 23, 2020, https://www.sohu.com/a/258321267_816889

⁷⁵ Dinghua Zhang and Zongjing Huang, *Miyun Xian Zhi: 6 Juan*, Harvard-Yenching Library Chinese Local Gazetteers Digitization Project- Jiu Fang Zhi. China], 1882.

⁷⁶ Long-hsuen Hsu and Mingkai Zhang, *History of the Sino-Japanese war (1937-1945)*, Chung Wu Pub. Co., 1972.

is generally thicker than in the south, and bricks are used more often than at Wuzhen. The scenic area covers a total area of nine square kilometers, of which the Siheyuan buildings cover an area of 430,000 square meters.⁷⁷ The distressed technology of these Siheyuans is so exquisite that Gubei Water Town has become a filming location for the old Beijing in the Republic of China period.

The comments about Gubei water town are polarized. Many tourists are not concerned whether Gubei is a historical town. They do not care about authenticity. Rather, they enjoy the experience of feeling the atmosphere of the South of Yangtze River in a north town, which is also Chen's target market. As statistics collected by Qi Zhao show, many tourists only cared about the natural scenery and the Great Wall, so they still experienced the scenery in the South of Yangtze River, ignoring the obvious northern architectural style in the water town.⁷⁸ They just enjoy the feeling of enjoying leisure time, ignoring the uncoordinated landscape. Before the construction of Gubei Water Town, the area of Beijing, Hebei, and Tianjin were all sightseeing attractions with no experiential tourism. As Chen said that when he went to Beijing in 2010, he found that people in Beijing had nowhere to go on the weekend. Hence, he planned to create a dream town for people escaping from the metropolis during the weekend.⁷⁹ Tourists seem to be satisfied with substitution, ignoring whether it is a simulation. This has driven the market and has resulted in a great number of architectural reproductions in China.⁸⁰ The smart utilization of historical context, the combination of southern water towns and northern architecture, and the appropriate target market made a reproduction landscape popular, even though Gubei water town has no historical background.

However, while the number of tourists is increasing every year, the growth rate went in the opposite direction.⁸¹ There are still many tourists who care about authentic experiences. Comments are often criticizing the fake feelings in the town: "The town is fake!" "The entire designing structure is still very good, but the town feels too theme park and artificial... It is very beautiful there, but there is no soul." "If you have been to Wuzhen, it is not recommended to

⁷⁷ "About Gubei Water Town", Gubei Water Town Official Website, Accessed September 23, 2020, <http://www.wtown.com/index.php/Xzsy/index#menuSub>

⁷⁸ Qi Zhao, "Scenario Characterization of Historical and Cultural Villages and Towns: Taking Cuandixia Village and Gubei Water Town as Examples," *Urban Geography* 9X (2016): 251.

⁷⁹ "Chen, Xianghong: Wuzhen from a shabby town to a Chinese name card".

⁸⁰ Bianca Bosker, *THE FASCINATION WITH FAUX: Philosophical and Theoretical Drivers of Architectural Reproduction in China*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2017.

⁸¹ "China CYTS Holdings Co., Ltd. Annual Report 2019".

visit Gubei. They are the same.”⁸² According to the most recent financial report, Gubei water town’s number of tourists reached a peak rapidly and decreased after 2018.⁸³ Why did this tourist destination move from being loved by everyone at the beginning to rapidly losing tourists’ favor? It is necessary to analyze the advantages and disadvantages of the Wuzhen model before its second reproduction, the Puyuan historical town, finishes construction.

⁸² Reviews of Gubei water town, https://m.mafengwo.cn/poi/comment_7731162.html

⁸³ "原报告: 中青旅造镇"(Finance report on CYTS), 中青旅_新浪财经_新浪网(Sina Finance), May 11, 2020, <https://finance.sina.com.cn/stock/stockzmt/2020-05-12/doc-iircuyvi2578964.shtml>.

Chapter 3: The Advantages of the Wuzhen Model

The centralized planning and management in the Wuzhen west area allows merchants to not have to pursue revenue and benefits because most of them are controlled by the Wuzhen company. Consequently, the Wuzhen model helps the historic town develop its intangible cultural heritage and control the level of commercialization. With reasonable overall planning, Wuzhen designed stores that can display some intangible cultural heritage as well as sell their products. Monumental historic architecture is directly reused as museums, and Mao Dun's house, which is listed in China's Major Historical and Cultural Site Protected at the National Level, is inspected by the government every year. Religious architecture in the tourist area is protected by local governments, and the Wuzhen company also takes responsibility for its rehabilitation. Therefore, the intangible cultural heritage such as Mao Dun's theory, thoughts and religious stories that are associated with tangible heritage is also preserved. In contrast to other tourist old towns, merchants in Wuzhen are not in a competitive relationship, which can serve to avoid excessive commercial development and vicious commercial competition.

Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage

Wuzhen also plays a role as a museum displaying the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) of Zhejiang province. After the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) established the lists of ICH in 2008, China has registered and preserved many ICH projects. Intangible cultural heritage is a witness to human creativity and wisdom. It is worthy of continuous development and preservation because contemporary people can seek the connection with their past, deepen their understanding of mankind, look up to the peak of creation humans have achieved and get inspiration from the past. Although the Chinese government attaches great significance to the preservation of ICH, its preservation is not assured. ICH preservation in China mainly relies on representative successors, authorized by the governments, who inherit the knowledge, history or techniques from the last successor. According to the data from the Paper News, 44.1% of the successors believe their ICH projects are facing a predicament because the ICH projects are less known by the public, have few successors and only survive under the financial support of governments. Eight-point eight percent of the successors demonstrate that

their projects are on the verge of extinction because of the lack of additional successors. Among 42 UNESCO intangible cultural heritage projects and 1530 national projects, only 5.9% of them are well preserved and developed.⁸⁴ Being intensively operated and managed, Wuzhen particularly reserved some stores or open spaces for promoting the ICH market. Wuzhen sells the products and displays Chinese shadow puppetry and traditional sericulture and silk craftsmanship which are all registered by UNESCO. Besides, Wuzhen also helps promote local dying ICH projects such as the incense bazaar, the water market, traditional wine making and traditional blue calico production. The Wuzhen model creates a shelter protecting and developing local intangible cultural heritage.

Incense Bazaar

An incense bazaar was a kind of temple fair where silkworm farmers went to temples and prayed for a good harvest for the upcoming year. When praying in a temple, people would burn some incense sticks and offer them to the gods. Moreover, farmers traded their products at the temple fair, so people gave it the name incense bazaar. Since the Qing Dynasty, Zhejiang was one of the most important provinces developing sericulture and silk craftsmanship. With a large number of temples, the convenient transportation of rivers and the large population of silkworm farmers, the Wuzhen incense bazaar became an annual carnival during the Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China period. Beginning with a huge opening ceremony on April 5th of the lunar calendar, silkworm farmers would carry their silkworm eggs in a purple bag walking to the temple, hoping to be blessed by the silkworm flower goddess. Women would make silkworm flowers (figure 3.1) with paper or silk and bring them to the temple as a kind of oblation. In the procession to the silkworm flower goddess, little boys and girls were dressed up as silkworm flower goddesses and carried on the sedan chair with young women dressed as servants of the goddess, presenting their respect for the goddess. Then, while the Taoist priest chanted, farmers burned incense and knelt down to pray for blessings, and people would bring the blessed silkworm flowers back home, displaying them on the altar.⁸⁵ During the carnival, people also had other activities such as chanting together, Kungfu competitions on the boat, a boat

⁸⁴ "Research Report on the Development of China's Intangible Cultural Heritage," The Paper News, Accessed February 23, 2021, https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_7859149.

⁸⁵ Wenxing Liu, "Temple Fairs, Texts and Legends: The Cult of the Silk Flower God in Modern Jiangnan," *Min Su Qu Yi* no. 208 (06, 2020): 91-185.

performance and dinner party. The Kungfu competition on the boat is also called the Feast Boat, which begun around 1100s BC (the Southern Song Dynasty). As the convenient water transportation and trading developed, bandits were running rampant in Wuzhen. Not relying on the helpless local governments, boatmen and fishermen brought their own swords, hired Kungfu masters, and practiced Kungfu publicly, which not only strengthened their bodies but also resisted the lake bandits. Then, it gradually developed as a custom in the Incense Bazaar.⁸⁶ It is said that on the fifth day, silkworm farmers in the village would carry five wooden statues of the God, which were called the Five Sages of Silkworm Flowers, and went around the village from house to house. When coming across the rich, they carried one of the statues into their house, and the house owner would burn some incense sticks and pray again. Then, the rich family donated rice to the temple as the activity fee of the Incense Bazaar.⁸⁷



Figure 3.1: The picture of a hand-made silk flower. Resource: Zhong Wen Bai Ke (Chinese Cyclopedia) official website: <http://m.zwbk.org/lemma/136662>.

⁸⁶ Wenxing Liu, “Temple Fairs, Texts and Legends”.

⁸⁷ Wenxing Liu, “Temple Fairs, Texts and Legends”.

The celebration customs of each village may have been slightly different, but in general, it was to make the silkworm flower and worship the silkworm flower goddess. As the festival happened in Spring, young men and women could have a chance to meet and talk to each other in the temple or in the streets, so some believe that the silkworm flower goddess also blesses the perfect marriage.⁸⁸

Shen Bao (Shanghai News), the first modern Chinese newspaper, also recorded the Incense Bazaar in Wuzhen:

The crowded people made the rural land become a city. If people in the surrounding four villages and towns failed to participate, they would always be depressed and unhappy throughout the year. Beautiful women or women who had new clothes would definitely participate in the celebration. In front of Pujing Temple, there was an open square that used to be a Kungfu field, which was converted into a tea shed, where men and women could drink tea together. People could even find foreign goods in the trolley shop.⁸⁹

When it came to the modern era, the celebration customs of the incense bazaar were reduced to eating and entertaining. However, after the PRC was founded, this festival was interrupted. Mao Dun (the famous Chinese writer mentioned above) wrote in his essay:

After the ‘revolution,’ it is said that in order to ‘break superstition,’ the incense bazaar was not allowed to be held for two consecutive years. The left house of the temple was borrowed by the ‘Public Security Bureau’ to make a police office, and the square in front of the temple was also fenced, and it is said that a park would be built. There was a new sign of "Sericulture Improvement Institute" on the left-hand hall of the temple.⁹⁰

Although the Incense Bazaar was allowed to be held again in 1933 for local merchants who wanted to attract tourists and make money, the crowded and lively scene has never returned. Mao Dun described that the open-air opera stage was demolished, and only a small audience was watching the Kungfu show. He said it was because the main protagonists of this carnival, farmers, did not participate.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Wenxing Liu, “Temple Fairs, Texts and Legends”.

⁸⁹ "Remember Wuzhen Incense Bazaar", "Shen Bao", 2nd edition, April 24, 1878, issue 1838.

⁹⁰ Dun Mao, *Mao Dun san wen ji* Di 1 ban, Shijiazhuang Shi: Hebei jiao yu chu ban she, 1994.

⁹¹ Dun Mao, *Mao Dun san wen ji* Di 1 ban.

Now Wuzhen only keeps traditional events such as silkworm flower making, the parade to the temple, the burning of incense, and the Kungfu show on the boat because local farmers no longer exist in the west tourist area. The carnival has become an annual show displaying traditional culture to tourists. Similar to the events of Colonial Williamsburg, the preservation of ICH in Wuzhen mainly relies on events or open-air museums, and ICH also becomes a product to attract tourists. According to the *Operational Directives for the implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage*, protecting an ICH is intended to guarantee its vitality.⁹² These events are the only way to maintain the vitality of the Incense Bazaar, and Wuzhen is also applying for its registration.



Figure 3.2: The picture of the Kungfu show on the boat in Wuzhen. Resource: Wuzhen official website: <http://www.wuzhen.com.cn/web/folk/details?id=6>.

Traditional Wine Making

Zhejiang is one of the biggest wine-producing provinces that has a 2400-year history of making traditional wine, and Wuzhen has been making its local wine, Sanbai rice wine, since the Ming Dynasty (1300s). In the Ming Dynasty, there were more than twenty wineries, among which Gao Gong Sheng, Shun Xing and Yong Sheng were the most famous. The only remaining Gao Gong Sheng was built in the first years of the Ming Dynasty.⁹³ It is said that the wine originates from a boy's filial piety. He was given some rice dumplings as a reward by his employer, and he wanted to bring the dumplings to his mother after working, so he grabbed some

⁹² "Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage," UNESCO, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>.

⁹³ "Folk Customs," The Story of Sanbai Rice Wine|Local Customs - Wuzhen Tourism Official Website, <http://en.wuzhen.com.cn/web/folk/details?id=10>.

grass and covered them. However, it rained heavily on his way home, and the rain and grass juice penetrated into the rice dumplings. He still brought them to his mother, and surprisingly, the rice dumplings tasted good. Then, they found out that the grass cover was a kind of wine herb that brews wine.⁹⁴

Sanbai rice wine is brewed with a century-old traditional craftsmanship. It uses locally produced glutinous rice as the main raw material. First, the glutinous rice is steamed well and then placed in cold water. Then, the folks mix the wine yeast into the rice and stir evenly and pour it into a big wine vat. They squeeze it and dig a hole in the center. After that, they put a bamboo basket in the hole, then seal the wine vat and cover it with straw around the big vat to maintain a suitable temperature. A few days later, the bamboo basket was full of fermented wine. At this time, wine makers will pour cold water into the vat to submerge the rice, and then tightly cover it again. After a week, it can be taken out and put into the steaming barrel for distillation.⁹⁵

Wuzhen imitated the architectural style of the Ming and Qing Dynasties and built a wine shop selling wine and serving as a museum. Traditional wine making is a more involving activity for tourists compared to the Incense Bazaar. At the back of the store, there is a comprehensive introduction to the origin, manufacturing process and tools of Sanbai rice wine. The staff dressed in traditional costume will demonstrate the wine-making procedure, and tourists can experience winemaking. The experiential program is quite similar to walking into Cinderella's castle in Disneyland, watching the show presented by staff, and taking pictures with a well-dressed Cinderella princess. However, children can learn the story with joy, and tourists can also know the history of traditional wine making, which is an effective way to combine ICH preservation with tourism.

⁹⁴ "Folk Customs," The Story of Sanbai Rice Wine|Local Customs - Wuzhen Tourism Official Website.

⁹⁵ "Folk Customs," The Story of Sanbai Rice Wine|Local Customs - Wuzhen Tourism Official Website.



Figure 3.3: The picture of Saibai rice wine making in Wuzhen. Resource: Wuzhen official website: <http://en.wuzhen.com.cn/web/folk/details?id=10>

Traditional Blue Calico Making

Unlike the above two ICH programs that have not been registered in any preservation list, Wuzhen's traditional blue calico technology has been listed in both the National List of ICH-Fourth Batch and the Zhejiang province intangible cultural heritage website. Before the Qing dynasty (1600s), blue calico was rigorously controlled by the emperor, who only allowed blue calico production and trading for the imperial family. Additionally, its textiles were strictly limited according to the hierarchy in each different dynasty.⁹⁶ After the manufacture and trade of blue calico was opened to ordinary people, there were over ten dyehouses in the east area of Wuzhen, so the east area has a road called Randian Long (street of dyehouses).⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Guanfa Jia, "蓝印花布" (Blue Calico). 上海集邮(Shanghai Stamp Collection), no. 6 (2013): 14–15.

⁹⁷ "Souvenir," Blue Calico|Vacation Resort-Wuzhen Tourism Official Website, <http://en.wuzhen.com.cn/web/food/details?id=53&type=hand>.

Same as the experiential program as traditional wine making, Wuzhen also has a store for selling clothes or decoration made from the blue calico with a small museum at the back. Following the interest that young people enjoy taking pictures at an internet-famous spot, the store markets the scene of drying the blue calico into a picture opportunity. Consequently, more younger tourists can be attracted here learning the history of blue calico while displaying beautiful pictures on their social media. The preservation of intangible cultural heritage needs the participation of the community and public, and an effective marketing or advertising method can draw public attention to it. Archiving and documentation are necessary to the preservation of ICH, but modern practices and its transmission are very important to energize it through young generations.



Figure 3.4: The picture of the internet-famous shooting spot of the blue calico in Wuzhen. Resource: Wuzhen official website: <http://www.wuzhen.com.cn/web/food/details?id=53&type=hand>

China pays more attention to the registration and documentation of ICH than explicitly preserving and practicing it. It is very necessary to consider what safeguarding ICH is and how to retain the vitality of it. Academic study and museums are the best methods to keep the authenticity of ICH, but events and experiences that need the participation of the public and

community are more significant for energizing it.⁹⁸ Wuzhen has attempted to transform its local ICH projects into more opportunities for public participation and the engagement of young generations. The traditional celebration activities such as making silkworm flowers, the celebration parade and the Kungfu show on the boat remained only in this town in the century when the silk production is no longer limited by weather. The festival was not eliminated even if the silkworm farmer no longer needs to pray for a good harvest. Visitors can resonate with some daily life or cultural customs of people living in the agrarian society. Wuzhen utilized a modern display method that may influence the authenticity of the ICH to some extent. For instance, the original celebratory activities are converted to performance. These modern interpretations help ICH to engage with contemporary society, so restrictions and judgments from the perspective of authenticity could be indulged by conservationists and governments.⁹⁹ Although modernization and urbanization accelerated demise of tangible and intangible heritage, such cultural tourism can help bring them back. Wuzhen utilizes local ICH projects as a selling point to attract more tourists. At the same time, these ICH projects can remain vigorous and suitable for modern society. Moreover, Wuzhen also reproduced the wine and the calico shop in Gubei water town, so historical towns with the Wuzhen model could engage more tourists in learning the knowledge of intangible cultural heritage.

Avoiding Over-Commercialization

Due to the different property ownership model between the Wuzhen and earlier historic tourist towns, the Wuzhen model practically managed an entirely commercialized historical town. However, with a rational plan and adequate management, the Wuzhen model can better minimize the tourists' feeling and experience of over-commercialization and modernization. Therefore, avoiding over-commercialization of the Wuzhen model actually reduces tourists' unpleasant encounter with outrageous stores and vicious business competition. Compared to one of the most famous China's historical towns, Lijiang, the innovative property ownership and

⁹⁸ Marilena Alivizatou, *Intangible Heritage and the Museum: New Perspectives on Cultural Preservation*, Walnut Creek, Calif: Left Coast Press, 2012.

⁹⁹ Marilena Alivizatou, *Intangible Heritage and the Museum*.

overall plan of the Wuzhen model reveals its superiority in management and comprehensive appearance.

Lijiang old town is not owned by any developer or tourism corporation, so it remains a beautiful vernacular landscape. However, driven by economic benefits, most traditional residential houses have been transformed into motels, restaurants, and stores. At first, local residents ran their own business, and later outside merchants started selling goods at a lower price, which resulted in the displacement of the indigenous population. Local Nashi people rented their houses to merchants and moved out of Lijiang old town because they couldn't compete with foreign merchants. According to the census data, there were 86 thousand households in the old town in 2000, while 47 thousand were left in 2020.¹⁰⁰

Without the Wuzhen model's centralized management, foreign merchants destroyed the original sequence and appearance of Lijiang old town, making tourists unable to experience its authenticity. Since the Lijiang government did not regulate renovations, the new facades of many stores destroyed the consistency of the community. For example, McDonald's used a wide expanse of glass instead of maintaining the traditional Nashi wooden facade. Without limitations, commercial homogeneity became very critical, and foreign merchants supplanted local stores through vicious competition. For instance, the silver shop in Lijiang was very famous for selling traditional hand-made Nashi silver accessories. However, silver businesses from outside Lijiang invaded in the old town with lower prices so that local stores had to close. Then more businesses sought out profits and opened more silver shops, which led to thirty-three silver stores opening in the old town.¹⁰¹ Moreover, local tangible and intangible heritage didn't get preserved since traditional Nashi people and stores moved out of the town. The old town was forced to close for six months in 2017 by local governments because of tourist fraud and irrational prices.¹⁰² Uncoordinated store façades, homogeneous shops, and bad commercial competition became the biggest problems for old town tourism, leading to unpleasant experiences to tourists.

¹⁰⁰ Tabulation On the 2010 Population CENSUS of the People's Republic of China, <http://www.stats.gov.cn/english/Statisticaldata/CensusData/rkpc2010/indexch.htm>.

¹⁰¹ Wenyu Bao, "过度的商业化经营矮化了丽江旅游形象," (Excessive commercialization has dwarfed Lijiang's tourism image), Chinanews, Accessed June 10, 2021, <http://www.chinanews.com/sh/2017/03-08/8168330.shtml>.

¹⁰² Wenyu Bao, "过度的商业化经营矮化了丽江旅游形象".



Figure 3.5: The picture of the McDonald in Lijiang old town. Resource: <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1627507752463389150&wfr=spider&for=pc>

In contrast, the Wuzhen model can avoid these problems through a comprehensive plan and restricted regulations. For the street view, every façade in the Wuzhen and Gubei water towns is designed in imitation of traditional residential houses using wooden structures. The person in charge of Gubei water town, Yanhua Zheng, said that many wooden doors, furniture and paving stones were bought from other historical villages in Xi'an in order to build an "old town" that fit tourists' expectations. Foreign merchants are not allowed to change the store façade. Additionally, Wuzhen and Gubei water towns restricted the number of the same types of stores, which directly reduces commercial homogeneity. The Wuzhen model supports original and unique business, so chains stores such as Starbucks and McDonald's can only occupy the entrance building separated from the street view. The architectural consistency can be achieved under the Wuzhen model.

Although there are almost no original residents in Wuzhen except for a few who are employers, Wuzhen does not allow the rampant invasion from foreign merchants and protects local business such as the Sanbai rice wine store and the blue calico store. Also, Wuzhen created

detailed regulations for products and prices avoiding malicious business competition. It is said Wuzhen regulated even meal recipes. For example, it made rules for the price of a dish including how many tomatoes and eggs should be used in it.¹⁰³ Since all the profits that the store makes belong to Wuzhen company, and merchants' salaries are issued by the company, this model avoids vicious business competition at the root. Consequently, the old town can stay authentic for tourists.

¹⁰³ "番茄炒蛋鸡蛋不少于 3 个，乌镇商家自律获浙江省工商局点赞." Paper News. Accessed June 10, 2021. https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_1602759.

Chapter 4: Some Issues of the Wuzhen Model

Compared with the Western concept of the open-air museum, Wuzhen is slightly different. Open-air museums or museum village tourism in the United States or the United Kingdom usually caters to the authentic experience of tourists, and they maintain historical property as period rooms. This refers to the preservation of living history during a certain period, including not only the replication of all elevations but also the inside furniture and decoration.¹⁰⁴ Wuzhen tried to reconstruct a traditional village filled with modern interior ornaments. The Wuzhen model's land acquisition and massive reconstruction with the support of the government also brought corresponding problems including the conflict of forced relocation and the Disneyfied landscape. Also, Wuzhen constructed a replica in the suburbs of Beijing transforming the historical tourist village into a chain business, which would cause tourist assimilation in China. All historical tourist towns that intend to apply the Wuzhen model should be conscious of these problems.

The Forced Relocation of Original Residents

The Constitution of the People's Republic of China article 8-10 of general principle stipulates that China is divided into state-owned land and land collectively owned by peasants, and the land use law specifies that collectively-owned land can be taken by the nation.¹⁰⁵ Because of their different system and regulations, the planning of land use in a Chinese tourist area is completely different from that of the United States. Local governments in China have the right to requisition residential land or farmland for tourism. Developers and governments should be more prudent towards the relocation and compensation for the original residents in cases where conflicts happen due to additional losses and compulsory implementation.

Now the relocation and compensation for requisition of residential land is more specifically regulated in the law, but in 2004, when Wuzhen was started reconstruction, many conflicts

¹⁰⁴ Sandra M Shafernich, "On-Site Museums, Open-Air Museums, Museum Villages and Living History Museums: Reconstructions and Period Rooms in the United States and the United Kingdom," *Museum management and curatorship* (1990) 12, no. 1 (1993): 43–61.

¹⁰⁵ The National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, http://www.npc.gov.cn/zgrdw/englishnpc/Constitution/node_2825.htm

occurred between the residents and governments. Contrary to the east, the west scenic zone was planned to retain no original residents, so approximately 800 families needed to be relocated.¹⁰⁶ However, the negotiation between residents and local government didn't go smoothly so that some residents were not willing to move out. The government chose the most unpleasant way, which was forced demolition without the residents' agreement to directly solve the problem. Lots of residents there were over fifty years old and had lived their entire life in the houses that were constructed in the Qing dynasty.¹⁰⁷ It was very hard for them to move out. Here are some accounts about the residents that were forced to leave their houses.

Ruan was a 64-year-old retired geological prospecting worker living with his wife in a 200-year-old traditional house.¹⁰⁸ It was unreasonable that such a traditional residential building that was still alive and retained its authenticity was dismantled for the overall planning. Wuzhen should have demolished buildings and modern factories constructed after the Qing dynasty and reverted to the earlier appearance of Wuzhen rather than tear down all residential houses. Although under such an unreasonable circumstance, most villagers had signed the House Demolition Resettlement and Compensation Agreement that regulated the detailed monetary compensation and property exchange compensation. Property exchange compensation referred to idea that the developer would provide a new property in a certain area. However, modern apartments were bigger than villagers' traditional houses, so residents had to pay for the additional proportion.¹⁰⁹

Ruan didn't sign the agreement because the developer estimated his house was worth RMB 55,000 for about 78 square meters, and the compensation property was 113 square meters worth RMB 121,000. The developer ignored the historical value of a 200-year Qing dynasty-style traditional residential architecture and estimated a relatively low price. Not only Ruan but also his father's whole family spent their entire life in this house. With such an irrational price, the property owner should be unsatisfied. Additionally, Ruan didn't have enough money and

¹⁰⁶ Xiaolin Cui, "乌镇拆迁:谁的眼泪在流淌?" (Wuzhen Demolition and Relocation: Whose tear was shedding?), *时代潮*, no. 1 (2005): 40–41.

¹⁰⁷ Xiaolin Cui, "乌镇拆迁:谁的眼泪在流淌?".

¹⁰⁸ Xiaolin Cui, "乌镇拆迁:谁的眼泪在流淌?".

¹⁰⁹ Xu Huang et al., "Compensation, housing situation and residents' satisfaction with the outcome of forced relocation: Evidence from urban China." *Cities* 96 (2020): 102436.

couldn't pay the balance. Consequently, Ruan didn't move out until the day of demolition.¹¹⁰ He involuntarily became a "nail household," which originally means people who are not satisfied with the compensation and refuse to move out when facing housing demolition and relocation in China.

On the morning of July 26, 2004, when his wife went to the grocery no one was left at home, and workers tore down their house without notification. Ruan and his wife were forced to move into their son's house because they couldn't afford the additional price for the relocation apartment. Including Ruan, five families' homes were demolished without reaching an agreement, and they had to appeal to the local government or seek help from the media to defend their rights.¹¹¹ It is understandable that the Wuzhen project was approved by the government, and the project director, Xianghong Chen, previously worked for the local government. With the expectation of the governments and consideration of maximizing profits, the developer accelerated the construction progress but ignored the requirement of local residents.

With the rapid urbanization in China, residential house demolition and relocation is familiar to many people. According to the survey conducted by Xu Huang, Dongsheng He, Shuangshuang Tang, and Xin Li, if developers and governments can appease people with reasonable compensation, their housing conditions generally are improved in this process. Most people in China are willing to cooperate positively with relocation when they obtain satisfactory compensations.¹¹² The premise is that governments and developers show their sincerity and make a more circumstantial throughgoing relocation agreement. Besides reconsidering the additional value of the property, governments and developers should also take original residents' emotional factors into account. In Ruan's case, if developers had re-negotiated with Ruan, by providing another choice of an equivalent property and helped Ruan solved the issue that he couldn't afford the additional payment, he wouldn't have been negative towards the relocation.

Compared to 2004, the policy about demolition and relocation has made progress especially in a big city. Since Gubei water town applied the Wuzhen model completely, it also confronted

¹¹⁰ Xiaolin Cui, "乌镇拆迁:谁的眼泪在流淌?".

¹¹¹ Xiaolin Cui, "乌镇拆迁:谁的眼泪在流淌?".

¹¹² Xu Huang et al., "Compensation, housing situation and residents' satisfaction with the outcome of forced relocation: Evidence from urban China."

the same circumstance of relocating original villagers. The situation in Gubei water town is more positive. Different from the traditional style residential houses in Wuzhen, Gubei water town was originally occupied with modern residential buildings, so the developer didn't need to consider their historical value. However, approximately half of the villagers refused to move because they were worried about their source of income.¹¹³ Simatai village, the original village of Gubei water town, was located at the foot of the Simatai Great Wall, so many original villagers made a living by providing accommodations and catering for tourists of the Great Wall. Therefore, the developer provided higher compensation and job opportunities for the villagers.¹¹⁴ Unnecessary conflicts and forced demolition were avoided in this case.

Since the central government maintained a positive attitude towards the transformation of historical towns or villages into tourist attractions, it was important for developers and local governments to deal with the contradiction in the process of housing demolition and relocation when applying the Wuzhen model. Whether rural land or residential land, local governments need to balance the relationship between original residents and the authority to guarantee social stability.¹¹⁵ First, developers should identify which properties need to be demolished. Then, it is significant to take the historical value and emotional value into account when estimating their values. Also, developers and local governments should consider offering job opportunities on the occasion that farmers lose their rural land. When carrying out the demolition, developers and local governments can choose a more moderate way to avoid unnecessary conflicts and ease the dissatisfaction of the original residents due to compulsive property loss.

Disneyfication of the Historical Town

Disneyfication, or Disneyization, in the context of heritage conservation refers to the simplification of design and history of a historical district creating mimicry and marketed landscapes for tourism.¹¹⁶ To some extent, Disneyfication is suitable for tourism because it

¹¹³ Xiangchao Meng, "北京司马台长城关闭当地村民将搬迁." (Beijing Simatai Great Wall closes, local villagers will relocate), Sina News, <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2010-07-15/022720679852.shtml>.

¹¹⁴ Xiangchao Meng, "北京司马台长城关闭当地村民将搬迁."

¹¹⁵ Hongping Lian, *The Relationship Between Land-Lost Farmers and Local Government in China: Integration, Conflict, and Their Interplay*, Singapore: Springer Singapore Pte. Limited, 2016.

¹¹⁶ "Disneyfication," *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, 2009.

pursues an orderly and neat experience. The Wuzhen model utilized the concept of theme parks to build a delicate exterior that matched people's image of a traditional water town, which is also convenient to maintain the order and environments inside the town. Disney's internal landscape is completely opposite to the outside, trying to create the happiest and most wonderful place in the world. Similarly, the delicate simulated historic forms inside of Wuzhen and Gubei is opposite to the modern buildings outside, separating the spatial areas and making a traditional experience for tourists. The marketed cultural activities may simplify or even transform the authenticity, but tourists can accept the knowledge more easily. Tourists can better enjoy the leisure "historical town" and have an illusion of authenticity with this simulated environment.

However, the over Disneyfication of the tourist destination can split the historical buildings chronologically and isolate the tourist town spatially. The Wuzhen model starts with the purchase all land and properties and demolishes all buildings that are not coherent with the image of a historical town. Consequently, buildings constructed or altered in the modern period are gone along with the history inside they contained. For example, before being transformed into a tourist destination, there were many modern or altered traditional buildings, such as factories that were utilized during the Great Leap period. Although it is a difficult phase for Chinese people, history, and the buildings they represented should be preserved rather than be concealed. History is complicated, and it witnesses how people went astray and saved themselves. Every period of history is worthy of being recorded whether it is subjectively right or wrong. The process that diverse histories and characteristics gradually accumulate constitutes a place, and all rebuilding or gentrification belong to this process.¹¹⁷ Blindly pursuing a seemingly historical appearance, demolishing all modern architecture, and idealizing the historical landscapes creates a chasm of architectural continuity chronologically.

By applying the Wuzhen model to Gubei, this entire theming environment separated the space inside and outside Gubei town. Amidst the water shortage in northern China, steep cliffs and the mighty Great Wall, a town with gentle waters represented the characteristic landscape in the south was suddenly constructed. The Wuzhen model would cause a cultural enclave with its hyperreal themed circumstances. Surrounding Gubei water town were villages requiring gentrification and bare land after the previous village was demolished, so tourists will pass

¹¹⁷ Yunnan Ding, Marinelli Maurizio, and Xiaohong Zhang, *China: A Historical Geography of the Urban*, Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018.

through an area lacking a plan and enter the border of an entirely different landscape. On the one hand, this will bring a gap to tourists' experiences. On the other hand, neighborhoods can be altered because they are expected to match tourists' image of the destination.¹¹⁸ Additionally, the surrounding villages are covered under this illustration of the Disneyfied tourist town ignored the actual issues such as poverty, housing gentrification, cultural conflicts and so on.¹¹⁹ A fragmented landscape will inevitably relate to the culture and identity of space because cultural commodities would happen in the enclaved tourist town.¹²⁰ In the case of Gubei, not only does it commodify traditional culture, but it "appropriates" the southern water town culture to the North, which will also aggravate the difference inside and outside the town. Thus, tourists experience would feel less authentic with the opposite landscape and culture.

Disneyfication of cultural tourism manufactures the heritage it demands in an ideal way, which improved the imitated construction of traditional architecture to some extent.¹²¹ Cultural tourism in China now is increasingly pursuing a goal of how to construct a building resembling traditional architecture rather than managing the cultural contents. The tourism company advertises the tourist town as the most "authentic" town that tourists can experience "real" environments in the past through those traditional-style buildings. However, the more delicate the imitated buildings are, the more theme-park feelings tourists have because of the separation between the tourist destination and reality.

Homogeneity in Gubei Water Town

Although the Wuzhen model controlled the commercial homogeneity in a single tourist historical town, it failed to restrain the problem when becoming a chain business. Cultural tourism is usually expected to present local indigeneity and ethnic cultural perspectives, but the Wuzhen model ignored the difference of the unique regional characteristics between the North and South of China when applying to Gubei water town. Besides tourists aiming to have leisure

¹¹⁸ Jarkko Saarinen, and Sandra Wall-Reinius, "Enclaves in Tourism: Producing and Governing Exclusive Spaces for Tourism," *Tourism geographies* 21, no. 5 (2019): 739–748.

¹¹⁹ Jarkko Saarinen, and Sandra Wall-Reinius, "Enclaves in Tourism".

¹²⁰ Jarkko Saarinen, and Sandra Wall-Reinius, "Enclaves in Tourism".

¹²¹ Yannan Ding, Marinelli Maurizio, and Xiaohong Zhang, *China: A Historical Geography of the Urban*.

time in the historical town, tourists whose purposes are learning and enjoying cultural tourism are usually motivated by the willingness to go back and the satisfaction of learning local culture.¹²² Repeated stores or activities leading to similar tourist experiences would make visitors less interested in cultural tourism because this phenomenon limited tourists' choices of destinations and influence the entire historical town tourism market in China.¹²³ Additionally, local business and tourist events represent indigenous intangible cultural heritage. Consequently, homogenous stores and activities confuse the intangible culture of tourist destinations.

Gubei water town has several of the same stores combined with museums as in Wuzhen, such as the traditional wine shop, the shadow puppets shop, and the calico shop. It is understandable that reproducing the plan and management model in Gubei water town is more profitable and simpler because the tourism company has already received positive feedback from tourists of Wuzhen. Therefore, Gubei water town copied the calico stores and museums exactly, even the internet-famous shooting spot (figure 4.1), which directly replaces the local culture in Beijing and results in tourism homogeneity. Although Gubei water town is not a historical town and was recently constructed with approximately no regional tangible or intangible cultural heritage, it is not suitable to appropriate the culture of Southern China to the North. More importantly, Gubei water town is located at the foot of the Simatai Great Wall and surrounded by the Great Wall culture, which is uncoordinated with the water town culture. The water town culture usually implies a fertile, mild, and elegant identity due to circumstances of historical geography and climate.¹²⁴ On the contrary, the Great Wall culture symbolizes the cruelty of war and soldiers' honor of guarding the nation.¹²⁵ Applying the same store as in Wuzhen limits the indigenous culture and destroys the coordination with surrounding cultural heritage. Tourists aiming to experience and learn traditional culture would also be confused by the homogenous store.

¹²² Greg Richards, "Cultural Tourism: A Review of Recent Research and Trends," *Journal of hospitality and tourism management* 36 (2018): 12–21.

¹²³ Feng Ding and Te Ma, "Dynamic Relationship Between Tourism and Homogeneity of Tourist Destinations," *IEEE access* 6 (2018): 51470–51476.

¹²⁴ Beibei Tang and Paul Cheung, *Suzhou in Transition* Abingdon: Routledge, 2021.

¹²⁵ Karen Latchana Kenney, *Mysteries of the Great Wall of China*, Minneapolis: Lerner Publishing Group, 2017.



Figure 4.1: The picture of the same calico store as Wuzhen in Gubei water town.
Resource: Photo by author.

From a long-term perspective, many historical towns in China are under construction, transforming into tourist destinations with the support of the central government, and the Wuzhen model is a typical example to imitate because of the great profits it made. If historical tourist towns fail to incorporate local cultural events and businesses, the problem of homogeneity

will reduce the attraction of historical towns. The 2020 financial report of CYTS revealed that the overall performance of Gubei Water Town had experienced a serious decline. In 2020, it received 1,165,500 tourists, a year-on-year decrease of 51.31%.¹²⁶ In contrast, the number of tourists in Wuzhen has remained stable at around 8 million.¹²⁷ Although the Covid-19 has severely influenced the tourist situation in both the Wuzhen and Gubei water towns, it is not the biggest reason why the number of tourists decreased. In fact, tourists of Gubei water town reached their peak in 2017 and started to decline in 2018.¹²⁸ After the initial freshness, the repeated shops and similar scenery cannot attract more tourists. Without the historical background, Gubei Water Town is like an exquisitely designed theme park blindly imitating Wuzhen without any innovation and considerations of integrating local culture. Jingneng company, which once held 20 percent of the stake in Gubei water town, sold off all its equity because of the financial loss.¹²⁹ Simultaneously, Wuzhen still maintains its tourism boom, except for being influenced by the pandemic. It seems that tourists will soon lose their interest in a copied water town.

¹²⁶ "原报告: 中青旅造镇," 中青旅_新浪财经_新浪网.

¹²⁷ "原报告: 中青旅造镇," 中青旅_新浪财经_新浪网.

¹²⁸ "原报告: 中青旅造镇," 中青旅_新浪财经_新浪网.

¹²⁹ "原报告: 中青旅造镇," 中青旅_新浪财经_新浪网.

Chapter 5: Some Recommendations for the Wuzhen Model Developing as a Chain Business

When developing Gubei water town, CYTS as a developer, considered that Beijing had a huge tourist market of 20 million people without a formal destination for a leisure trip on short holidays. Meanwhile, they aimed to import the water town culture to the north with a dry climate and few rivers. Ignoring the historical background and regional cultural factors, the developer attempted to create a historical tourist town combined with the theme park. However, this kind of “cultural tourism” that pursues the external form more than the internal culture seems to fail to win tourists’ hearts based on the decline of tourist numbers in Gubei water town. Given that the historical appearance and tourist management are relatively completed, I would like to make some recommendations from the aspect of heritage conservation. My suggestions are focused on three aspects related to cultural products and preservation of historical properties. Besides the CYTS and Wuzhen company, many historical towns are preparing to be reconstructed for tourism. These recommendations are also suitable for those historical towns applying the Wuzhen model.

Combining Local Culture to Decide the Theme of the Tourist Town

It is very important to maintain coordination with the context when designing a tourism destination. Whether it is a theme-park tourist town or a real historical town, tourists expect to experience authenticity in the trip. The idea of authenticity in tourism is always controversial, but from the perspectives of tourists, their experiences and knowledge are obtained from the display and arrangement of the destination. Although many interpretations of history and local culture in tourism attractions may have deviations, they are created based on authenticity.¹³⁰ Besides the performance of the destination, tourists’ experiences are the additional interpretation of the authenticity. If the tourist “old” town has an entirely different theme from the context, visitors will have the feeling of disception. This is also one of the reasons why people criticize Gubei water town as a fake old town.

¹³⁰ Keir Martin, “Living Pasts: Contested Tourism Authenticities,” *Annals of tourism research* 37, no. 2 (2010): 537–554.

In the case of Gubei water town, the water town theme is uncoordinated with its surrounding historical background. Located at Beijing, the north of China, there are few rivers and no water town because of geography and climate. Gubei water town drew support from the reputation of the Simatai Great Wall, serving as the accommodation for it but failed to maintain the relationship, destroying the overall theme. Consequently, visitors cannot experience authenticity from the opposite landscape and cultural context. The Great Wall was originally built for resisting enemies, so wars and military activities could be the main theme of Gubei rather than the mild water town. Gubei water town could have been designed as a cultural tourist destination for ancient military activities. This can be similar to the Sekigahara tourist town in Japan and the terracotta army themed hotel in Xi'an.

Sekigahara was the main battlefield, gathering many lords' encampments during the Sengoku period (Warring States period). Sekigahara town was entirely turned into a war-memorial tourist destination where tourists can visit the historical battle sites while learning Japanese samurai (warriors) history. It is designed like a Sengoku theme park that contains battlefields, encampments sites, tombs, museums, samurai figures, performances and several events related to the famous Sekigahara war. The terracotta army themed hotel in Xi'an places many imitated statues of the terracotta warriors in the hotel room to respond to the terracotta army in the tomb. Whether people have a freaky reaction or positive attitude, the Xi'an site has become a popular tourist attraction. Both of these tourist destinations are designed to integrate local historical themes presenting an illustration of cultural elements. It is better to present regional characteristics rather than simply copying when there are too many of the same types of tourist destinations.



Figure 5.1: The picture of the terracotta army themed hotel in Xi'an. Resource: <https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/378498690>

Referring to Gubei water town, rather than creating an artificial “romantic” water town as the advertisement goes, the town could be an illustration depicting how ancient soldiers created encampments and defended national territory. The Simatai Great Wall is the only well-rehabilitated one built in the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) representing authenticity and designated by UNESCO.¹³¹ With the steepest mountain and the greatest number of beacon towers, the Simatai Great Wall has witnessed many wars. It is more consistent for Gubei town to design a landscape with an elevation difference, encampment-themed hotels, and traditional war museums creating a harmonious image with the Great Wall. The construction of the Gubei town could have been a win-win strategy. The town could attract more tourists to the Great Wall while promoting the cultural background to attract more visitors, but the uncoordinated cultural atmosphere makes the tourism feel less authentic.

¹³¹ “The Great Wall at Simatai, Your Best Choice,” *China today* (Beijing, China: 1990: English ed.), no. 5 (1997): 68–70.

Imitation landscapes were popular in the past when transportation was not as convenient as in modern society. For example, the emperor Qianlong of the Qing dynasty made a replica of the west lake in Yuanming Yuan park of Beijing because he loved the scenery of it, but it took months for him to reach Hangzhou. Now, tourists can travel from Beijing in only two hours by plane or 8 hours by train to Wuzhen. An entire replica in short distances may not be suitable for contemporary domestic tourists.

Promoting Indigenous Intangible Cultural Heritage

Wuzhen has stores and museums preserving its local intangible cultural heritage, while Gubei reproduced those stores, ignoring its indigenous cultural characteristics. Beijing currently has 103 national-level ICH registered projects, 273 municipal-level projects, and 909 district-level projects, among which the Beijing opera and shadow puppetry are designated by UNESCO. There are 104 national-level representative inheritors, 254 municipal-level inheritors, and 731 district-level representative inheritors.¹³² The locality of Gubei water town, in Miyun district, has 10 ICH projects including 1 national, 6 municipal and 3 district-level projects.¹³³ Two of the local ICH projects are myths related to historic buildings, and two of them are about traditional craft techniques. The rest of them are performances related to local festivals. It is feasible to replace the traditional wine and calico stores from Wuzhen with the two local traditional crafts which are the pyrography and a traditional wooden craft called Luban pillow.

Similar to other pyrography in the world, it is a kind of decorative art using heated irons. Pyrography has a history of approximately 2000 years in China, and the most famous pyrography artists used to be awarded wealth and noble positions by the emperor in feudal society.¹³⁴ There is a famous district-level representative inheritor pyrography artist in Miyun

¹³² "专访北京非遗保护中心负责人姜婷婷 - 中国非物质文化遗产网·中国非物质文化遗产数字博物馆,"(Interview with Jiang Tingting, head of Beijing Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Center-China Intangible Cultural Heritage Network-China Intangible Cultural Heritage Digital Museum,) IHChina Website, http://www.ihchina.cn/luntan_details/18135.html.

¹³³ 北京市密云区人民政府非物质文化遗产(Intangible Cultural Heritage of People's Government of Miyun District in Beijing), Miyun District People's Government of Beijing Municipality. <http://www.bjmy.gov.cn/col/col4187/index.html>.

¹³⁴ Hongwei Zheng, "浅谈烙画的发展及传承意义,"(On the development and inheritance significance of pyrography), 美术教育研究(Fine Arts Education Research), no. 18 (2016): 30–30.

called Shengcun Chen, who has created 500 pyrographic crafts with many kinds of material over 20 years. It is possible to promote this ICH project the same way as Wuzhen. Gubei could also include a small-scale museum to present the history of pyrography, display the masterpieces, and invite the inheritors to make a representation.

Similarly, the Luban pillow is also a traditional craft that is easily commercialized. The Luban pillow is a kind of foldable wooden daily necessity which can be used as a bench or as a pillow. It is said to be invented by a famous wooden carpenter 2600 years ago, and the carved patterns on it are very delicate and artistic. The craftsmanship of the Luban pillow is difficult and complex, and it is made from one piece of an entire wooden board. In the production process, dozens of processes such as sawing, polishing, grinding, drilling, chiseling, digging, painting, and waxing are needed to complete it.¹³⁵ Using the traditional Chinese tenon-and-mortise construction, the Luban pillow is more like a dexterous wooden mechanism. Because of its complex design, difficult production process, no standardized drawings and text references, and the scarcity of physical remains, there are very few people who have mastered this technique. This production technique is in danger of being lost.¹³⁶ It is more attractive for Gubei to have a museum displaying endangered ICH, and simultaneously, it can help more tourists have a chance to know about it. As Xianghong Chen mentioned, there is no proper tourist destination for people in Beijing to stay overnight. If the artificial tourist-town targets people in Beijing, it is more rational to investigate the culture of the target market and design a unique town for them instead of appropriating the culture of Wuzhen to Beijing.

¹³⁵ 北京市密云区人民政府非物质文化遗产, Miyun District People's Government of Beijing Municipality. <http://www.bjmy.gov.cn/col/col4187/index.html>.

¹³⁶ 北京市密云区人民政府非物质文化遗产, Miyun District People's Government of Beijing Municipality.



Figure 5.2: The picture of a Lunban pillow. Resource: Miyun District People's Government of Beijing Municipality website: http://www.bjmy.gov.cn/art/2021/1/4/art_4187_94240.html

Utilizing the concept of theme parks to promote cultural tourism makes it easier to attract young people, but the tourist town still needs different cultural events to maintain the number of visitors over time. Sekigahara for example, has seasonal events such as kids' summer seminars, samurai sword and armor experience, anniversary events and so on.¹³⁷ Colonial Williamsburg has seasonal activities such as black history month, women's history month, colonial fashion days and so on.¹³⁸ Gubei water town can combine the six ICH projects that related to festival celebrations creating its unique seasonal events.

¹³⁷ "イベント・おすすめ情報: 関ヶ原観光ガイド." (Event Information: Sekigahara Sightseeing Guide), 関ヶ原観光ガイド, (Sekigahara Sightseeing Guide), <https://www.sekigahara1600.com.e.ajr.hp.transer.com/event/?page=2>.

¹³⁸ "Colonial Williamsburg Special Events," Colonial Williamsburg Wax Seal, <https://www.colonialwilliamsburg.org/explore/special-event/?from=navexplore>.

The Jiu Qu (nine curves) Yellow River Lamp Array is a type of this cultural event that is also endangered and the only national registered ICH project of Miyun district. The lamp array is a traditional folk activity of the Lantern Festival held in the middle of the first month in the Lunar calendar. In the Ming dynasty (1371 AD), the Shanxi immigrants brought it into the Miyun district. It has a history of more than 600 years. The array is actually a labyrinth made by lamps following the Bagua and Nine Palaces from *I Ching*, which is a Taoist textbook about divination. With good wishes, people pass through the lamp labyrinth to pray for good fortune and peace. The lanterns used in the array are traditional hand-made paper lanterns with beautiful patterns. There is a drawing that has been circulated for hundreds of years recording the detailed array, and now it belongs to a local villager, Jihua Liu.¹³⁹ This traditional activity is worthy of being studied because it is an intelligent folk game and related to Taoism. However, the Jiu Wu Yellow River Lamp Array is now in an endangered state, and Miyun County has managed effective measures to rescue and protect it.

¹³⁹ Litao Jia. “游灯与破狱:九曲黄河灯阵的仪式象征.” 贵州大学学报（艺术版） 33, no. 3 (2019): 89–95.



Figure 5.3: The picture of the Jiu Qu yellow river lamp array. Resource: Miyun District People's Government of Beijing Municipality website: http://www.bjmy.gov.cn/art/2021/1/4/art_4187_94245.html

Additionally, the Miyun district has the Drum Play, Butterfly Dance, and other traditional celebratory ICH projects for different festivals. It is recommended that Gubei to have seasonal or holiday events for tourists, especially the lamp array because people can participate in it. Cultural tourism is always combined with intangible cultural heritage because it brings the tourist destination to life. It is an effective way to manage a historical tourist destination as a theme park, but if the cultural contents are the same tourists would soon lose interest in it. Worsley, with the numerous advertisements and marketing methods of the tourism company, Gubei water town and the southern culture inside may replace the original history and culture in Gubei village in tourists' memories. People only know the water town instead of the war history and local intangible cultural heritage. Therefore, combining local culture when constructing a historically themed town will be good for both the developer and the local culture preservation.

Enhancing the Preservations of Valuable Properties

Many historical towns in China now lack detailed investigations of its buildings' historical value before being transformed into tourist attractions because it is easier to rebuild than to rehabilitate a house, and the compensation for relocation will be more complicated. In fact, it is true that although China has a long history, not so many historical properties have survived and are well preserved.¹⁴⁰ As opposed to historical residential houses, the imperial palace, gardens of the rich, and monuments related to the Communist party or resolutions are mostly registered as national significant heritage and under good conservation. Ordinary residential historical areas are usually impossible to be registered even if they are well preserved and present a period of architectural style. The Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Cultural Relics regulates two criteria for national registration of buildings or relics:

1. sites of ancient culture, ancient tombs, ancient architectural structures, cave temples, stone carvings and murals that are of historical, artistic or scientific value;
2. important modern and contemporary historic sites, material objects and typical buildings that are related to major historical events, revolutionary movements or famous personalities and that are highly memorable or are of great significance for education or for the preservation of historical data.¹⁴¹

Historic districts of ordinary residential houses and architectural value are not specifically listed. Consequently, people's overall awareness is relatively weak when it comes to preserving historical areas that embody traditional architectural styles. This is also one of the reasons that historical properties are hard to preserve and rehabilitate in the development of tourism. Moreover, the traditional thought that has been passed down by the Chinese since ancient times believes that the new is better than the old.¹⁴² For example, the earlier imperial palace would always be torn down when a new dynasty began because the emperor needed to present his authority and status. In the process of modernization, this perspective was enhanced because

¹⁴⁰ S. (Ryckmans, P.) Leys, L'humeur, l'honneur, l'horreur, Paris: Laffont, 1991.

¹⁴¹ " Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Cultural Relics ", UNESCO, https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/china_lawprotectionlt_entof

¹⁴² Yannan Ding, Marinelli Maurizio, and Xiaohong Zhang, China: A Historical Geography of the Urban.

people believed what was new improved the development of China.¹⁴³ Therefore, even though registered in the national list, Mao Dun's residence in Wuzhen was entirely rebuilt.

Maybe it is easier when designing and planning the tourist town to simply demolish those shabby properties, but a better policy would be to identify and rehabilitate reusable buildings. Some traditional houses in Wuzhen have inherited the history of several families for hundreds of years. Every mark of maintenance in those houses may cover a story from the past. Moreover, waste from demolition and reconstruction is not conducive to sustainability. The plan for theming tourism should focus on the place-making of the built-environment rather than simply the redesign of all of the landscape. It is necessary to identify properties that can be reused through rehabilitation to decrease unnecessary waste and damage to the authentic before planning the tourist destination.

Additionally, the Wuzhen model reveals the lack of awareness of modern building preservation. In order to create a fantastic ancient-themed town, all modern buildings that are inconsistent with the theme whether significant or not would be demolished. It is understandable that modern history is difficult for Chinese people to understand, but those historical buildings remind people that humans have tenacity and spirit to reinvigorate from sufferings. Modern buildings representing reality become a bridge connecting the past, where utopian themed historical towns interrupt this stream of history. Local governments should pay more attention to significant modern buildings when applying the Wuzhen model to transform a historical town into a tourist attraction. As time passes by, those tourist towns will look just like historic towns, and people in the future won't care about authenticity and will be left with no evidence of difficult and complex histories. Therefore, preserving those modern buildings is very important. Historical towns should be spaces that are related to humans and time.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Tania Murray Li, *The Will to Improve Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

¹⁴⁴ Yannan Ding, Marinelli Maurizio, and Xiaohong Zhang, *China: A Historical Geography of the Urban*.

Conclusion

The history of the cultural tourism industry in China is not so long, but it developed rapidly. Tourists have great interest in and enthusiasm for historical towns with regional characteristics and identities. However, excessive commercialization and vicious business competition have brought bad experiences to tourists, so the previous model where local governments and residents together operate and manage an historical town like Lijiang has been gradually replaced by the Wuzhen model. Compared to the previous model, the Wuzhen model separates the scenic area from the outside by purchasing all land and properties in it, thereby better designing and managing the interior of the historical town. Judging from the number of tourists and profit in Wuzhen each year, it must be admitted that tourism in historical towns under the Wuzhen model is suitable for China. With a large population and difficult market supervision, the Wuzhen model that combines the concept of theme parks can effectively decrease disorder to create a more tidy and pleasant environment for tourists.

Wuzhen is the first example of this model. It can successfully win tourists' appreciation because it represents its unique historical characteristics with carefully rebuilt traditional buildings and attractive tourist events combined with local intangible cultural heritage. Additionally, with a detailed plan prepared before construction, Wuzhen controls the proportion of commodified and homogeneous business inside the town. Not only did tourism bring financial development to Wuzhen, but also it benefited Wuzhen from different aspects. According to the survey conducted by Wei Guo etc., tourism has accelerated the development of Wuzhen, improved traffic conditions and strengthened the construction of infrastructures.¹⁴⁵ Also, tourism has provided more job opportunities to local residents, and it has increased the popularity of Wuzhen worldwide through the Wuzhen Theater Festival and the World Internet Conference.¹⁴⁶ The Wuzhen model has also boosted the local crafts by creating an enclaved tourist space and limiting foreign merchants.

¹⁴⁵ Wei Guo, Yu-Qing Liu, Shu-Mei Zhang, Jiang-Ping Yu, and Yang Lu. "目的地居民对旅游影响的认知态度实证研究." 中國人口·資源與環境 16, no. 5 (2006): 57-61.

¹⁴⁶ Wei Guo, Yu-Qing Liu, Shu-Mei Zhang, Jiang-Ping Yu, and Yang Lu. "目的地居民对旅游影响的认知态度实证研究." 中國人口·資源與環境 16, no. 5 (2006): 57-61.

However, more and more historical towns are applying the Wuzhen model, and people gradually get bored with what feels less authentic and more homogenized. The replica of Wuzhen, Gubei water town, ushered in a business crisis after tourists' initial excitement because it is opposite to the topography of northern China. It has a cultural theme foreign to its surrounding context, and the same commodified cultural as Wuzhen.

It seems now transforming a historical town into an enclaved theme environment is the general strategy for cultural tourism. It is hard to tell whether the Wuzhen model is good or bad. From the perspective of markets, this model can attract more tourists because this entirely commercialized and themed place aims to provide better service for tourists.¹⁴⁷ It cannot be denied that the essence of the tourism industry is to attract more tourists to obtain more profits. Besides, cultural promotion and heritage conservation need financial investments. The integration of tourism and heritage theoretically could attract more tourists and enhance public awareness of preservation. Moreover, it can obtain more financial support for conservation and create a closed space to preserve historic properties.

However, the excessive pursuit of theming results in hyperreality in tourist destinations. Numerous demolitions and reconstructions present the space as an illustration of an idealized ancient town, which causes cultural misinterpretation and historical gaps chronologically and spatially. This hyperreal tourist destination also influences the authenticity of the historic districts. The "Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China" states that reconstruction is not recommended for demolished sites, and distinction is necessary for the restored parts to maintain the authenticity of the historic sites.¹⁴⁸ The preservation principle reflects the trend in Western countries, where due to the difference in land ownership, significant historic properties can be easily preserved and rehabilitated. However, it is difficult to transfer this basic principle to local Chinese governments. Under the Wuzhen model, the government rebuilt a hyperreal traditional historical town ignoring the authenticity and integrity. The China Principles also regulate that "sites evolve over the course of history and physical remnants from

¹⁴⁷ Mark Gottdiener, *The Theming of America: American Dreams, Media Fantasies, and Themed Environments* Second edition, London: Routledge, 2019.

¹⁴⁸ ICOMOS China, State Administration of Cultural Heritage. "Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China Revised 2015." Getty. Accessed August 12, 2021. https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/pdf_publications/china_principles_revised_2015.html.

a different period should be respect.”¹⁴⁹ The Wuzhen model, on the other hand, demolished all buildings and elements that were not related to the Qing Dynasty. Local governments and the developers chose the latter in contradiction between preserving the authenticity of historic sites and maintaining the consistency of tourist attractions. It can be seen there is still a long way to go to exactly implement the preservation principles in historical tourist towns.

Therefore, the last chapter gives some recommendations from the perspective of culture and heritage conservation. For an original historical town, it is recommended to first investigate and document the valuable historical properties and reduce unnecessary demolition. Instead, rehabilitation could promote sustainable tourism. Local governments should pay more attention to the preservation of significant modern buildings. For a pure historical imitation of a town like Gubei, the theme should be consistent with the context to reduce the separation of space and hyperreal environments. Also, the cultural contents should represent local cultural identities to reduce the homogenization of cultural tourism in China.

“The consumption of tradition as a form of cultural demand and the manufacture of heritage as a field of commercial supply are two sides of the same coin.”¹⁵⁰ Themed tourism could activate a historical town as well as redefine it. Although applying the Wuzhen model can effectively enhance the pleasure of tourists, there are still many problems remaining. Developers and local governments should balance tourism and heritage conservation when utilizing the Wuzhen model.

¹⁴⁹ ICOMOS China, State Administration of Cultural Heritage. "Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China Revised 2015." Getty. Accessed August 12, 2021. https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/pdf_publications/china_principles_revised_2015.html.

¹⁵⁰ Nezar AlSayyad, *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage: Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism* London, Routledge, 2001.

Bibliography

"About Gubei Water Town." Gubei Water Town Official Website.

<http://www.wtown.com/index.php/Xzsy/index#menuSub>.

"About Mu Xin." Mu Xin Art Museum Official Website.

http://www.muxinam.com/index_en.php?m=Guanyuwomen&a=guanyumuxin.

"About the Festival." Wuzhen Festival.

http://www.wuzhenfestival.com/index_en.php?m=Guanyuxijujie&a=xijujiejianjie.

Airey, David and King, Chong. *Tourism in China: Policy and development since 1949*. Routledge, 2011.

Alivizatou, Marilena. *Intangible Heritage and the Museum: New Perspectives on Cultural Preservation*. Walnut Creek, Calif: Left Coast Press, 2012.

AlSayyad, Nezar. *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage: Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism London*. Routledge, 2001.

"Authors' Calendar." Authors' Calendar. <http://authorscalendar.info/maotun.htm>.

Bao, Wenyu. "过度的商业化经营矮化了丽江旅游形象" (Excessive commercialization has dwarfed Lijiang's tourism image). Chinanews. <http://www.chinanews.com/sh/2017/03-08/8168330.shtml>.

Bosker, Bianca. *THE FASCINATION WITH FAUX: Philosophical and Theoretical Drivers of Architectural Reproduction in China*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2017.

"Brief History." History - Wuzhen Introduction. <http://en.wuzhen.com.cn/web/origin?id=10>.

Chang, Kwang-chih. *The archaeology of ancient China*. Yale University Press, 1986.

Chang, Michael G. *A court on horseback: imperial touring & the construction of Qing rule. 1680–1785*, Brill, 2020.

Chen, Cunbao. Wuzhen Documentary.

<http://www.docuchina.cn/2016/11/18/VIDEwZ4RwQ8E9fi0qqmD2yqs161118.shtml>.

"Chen, Xianghong: Wuzhen from a shabby town to a Chinese name card." ChainNews.

<https://www.chainnews.com/articles/934929098390.htm>.

"China CYTS Holdings Co., Ltd. Annual Report 2019." CYTS official website.

http://static.sse.com.cn/disclosure/listedinfo/announcement/c/2020-04-10/600138_20200410_51.pdf

"Colonial Williamsburg Special Events." Colonial Williamsburg Wax Seal.
<https://www.colonialwilliamsburg.org/explore/special-event/?from=navexplore>.

Cui, Xiaolin. "乌镇拆迁:谁的眼泪在流淌?" (Wuzhen Demolition and Relocation: Whose tear was shedding?), 时代潮, no. 1 (2005): 40–41.

Ding, Feng and Ma, Te. "Dynamic Relationship Between Tourism and Homogeneity of Tourist Destinations." IEEE access 6 (2018): 51470–51476.

Ding, Yannan, Maurizio, Marinelli and Zhang, Xiaohong. *China: A Historical Geography of the Urban*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018.

"Disneyfication." The Dictionary of Human Geography, 2009.

Fan, Jiayu. " Analysis of tourists' attitude for ancient towns based on text mining." Big Data Research, 2017, 3(6): 2017064-.

"Folk Customs." The Story of Sanbai Rice Wine Local Customs - Wuzhen Tourism Official Website. <http://en.wuzhen.com.cn/web/folk/details?id=10>.

"Former Residence of Mao Dun, Wuzhen, Tongxiang." Zhejiang Provincial Administration of Cultural Heritage. January 13, 2016.
http://wwj.zj.gov.cn/art/2006/1/13/art_1676305_36908452.html.

Gottdiener, Mark. *The Theming of America: American Dreams, Media Fantasies, and Themed Environments Second edition*. London: Routledge, 2019.

Guo, Bojia. "Mu Xin and the May Fourth New Literature." The Education University of Hong Kong (Hong Kong), 2019.

Guo, Jianying and Xiong, Mingjun. "On the Developing Patterns of Ancient-Town Tour in Western China". Journal of Xihua University (Philosophy & Social Sciences) 3 (2007): 24.

Guo, Wei, Liu, Yu-Qing, Zhang, Shu-Mei, Yu, Jiang-Ping, and Lu, Yang. "目的地居民对旅游影响的认知态度实证研究." 中國人口·資源與環境 16, no. 5 (2006): 57–61.

Han, Yang. "Simatai Great Wall Protection and Maintenance Project Case Explanation."
https://www.sohu.com/a/258321267_816889.

Hsu, Long-hsuen and Zhang, Mingkai. *History of the Sino-Japanese war (1937-1945)*. Chung Wu Pub. Co., 1972.

Hu, Angang, Guangyu, Hu, Hui, Vivian C. W., and Griffith, Glenn. *The Great Leap Forward: 1957-1965*. Singapore: Enrich Professional Publishing, 2014.

ICOMOS China, State Administration of Cultural Heritage. "Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China Revised 2015." Getty. Accessed August 12, 2021. https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/pdf_publications/china_principles_revised_2015.html.

Jia, Guanfa. “蓝印花布” (Blue Calico). 上海集邮(Shanghai Stamp Collection), no. 6 (2013): 14–15.

Jia, Litao. “游灯与破狱:九曲黄河灯阵的仪式象征.” 贵州大学学报（艺术版）33, no. 3 (2019): 89–95.

Kenney, Karen Latchana. *Mysteries of the Great Wall of China*. Minneapolis: Lerner Publishing Group, 2017.

“Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Cultural Relics.” UNESCO. https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/china_lawprotectionclt_entof.

Li, Tania Murray. *The Will to Improve Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

Lian, Hongping. *The Relationship Between Land-Lost Farmers and Local Government in China: Integration, Conflict, and Their Interplay*. Singapore: Springer Singapore Pte. Limited, 2016.

Liu, Wenxing. "Temple Fairs, Texts and Legends: The Cult of the Silk Flower God in Modern Jiangnan." *Min Su Qu Yi* no. 208 (06, 2020): 91-185.

Lu, Xuepu. *Wu Qing Zhen Zhi* (The History of Wuzhen). 1936.

Lv, Jin. “Research Report on the Tourism Development Trend of Ancient Towns in China.” Chinese Township Enterprises, (5), 58-60. (2013).

Mao, Dun. “Ke Ai De Gu Xiang” (Lovely Hometown). *Mao Dun Quan Ji* (Mao Dun Collection). Huangshan Publishing House, 2014.

Mao, Dun. *Mao Dun san wen ji Di 1 ban*. Shijiazhuang Shi: Hebei jiao yu chu ban she, 1994.

"Mao Dun's Ashes Moved Back to Wuzhen." Sohu News. July 5, 2016. <http://news.sohu.com/20060705/n244104710.shtml>.

Martin, Keir. “Living Pasts: Contested Tourism Authenticities.” *Annals of tourism research* 37, no. 2 (2010): 537–554.

Meng, Xiangchao. "北京司马台长城关闭当地村民将搬迁." (Beijing Simatai Great Wall closes, local villagers will relocate). Sina News. <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2010-07-15/022720679852.shtml>.

Mu, Xin. *Tong Qing Zhong Duan Lu (Ten Mourning Articles)*. Taipei hanyin culture press, 1999.

Peng, Xianghua. My Da Chuan Lian in the “Cultural Revolution,” *Jianghuai Literature and History*, no. 3 (2015): 117–126.

Recording the Grandeur of the Qing.

<http://projects.mcah.columbia.edu/nanxuntu/html/scrolls/index.html>.

"Remember Wuzhen Incense Bazaar." *Shen Bao*, 2nd edition. April 24, 1878, issue 1838.

"Reply of the State Council on Agreeing to List Yu County, Hebei Province as a National Historic and Cultural City (Guo Han [2018] No. 70) _ Government Information Disclosure Column." China Central People's Government Website.

http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/content/2018-05/10/content_5289771.htm.

"Research Report on the Development of China's Intangible Cultural Heritage." The Paper News.

https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_7859149.

Richards, Greg “Cultural Tourism: A Review of Recent Research and Trends.” *Journal of hospitality and tourism management* 36 (2018): 12–21.

Saarinen, Jarkko and Wall-Reinius, Sandra. “Enclaves in Tourism: Producing and Governing Exclusive Spaces for Tourism.” *Tourism geographies* 21, no. 5 (2019): 739–748.

Servoise, René. “Simon Leys. L’humeur, l’honneur, l’horreur.” *Politique étrangère* 56, no. 3 (1991): 754–755."

Shafernich, Sandra M. “On-Site Museums, Open-Air Museums, Museum Villages and Living History Museums: Reconstructions and Period Rooms in the United States and the United Kingdom.” *Museum management and curatorship* (1990) 12, no. 1 (1993): 43–61.

Sima, Qian. *Records of the grand historian: Han dynasty*. Vol. 65. Columbia University Press, 1993.

"Souvenir." Blue Calico|Vacation Resort-Wuzhen Tourism Official Website.

<http://en.wuzhen.com.cn/web/food/details?id=53&type=hand>.

Spence, Jonathan D. *The search for modern China*. WW Norton & Company, 1990.

Tabulation On the 2010 Population CENSUS of the People’s Republic of China.

<http://www.stats.gov.cn/english/Statisticaldata/CensusData/rkpc2010/indexch.htm>.

Tang, Beibei and Cheung, Paul. *Suzhou in Transition*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2021.

"Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage." UNESCO.
<https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>.

"The Great Wall at Simatai, Your Best Choice." *China today*. (Beijing, China: 1990: English ed.), no. 5 (1997): 68–70.

"The Introduction of Traditional Wuzhen." Wuzhen Official Website.
<http://www.wuzhen.com.cn/web/introduction?id=2>.

"The Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2019 Cultural and Tourism Development Statistical Bulletin." China Tourism Academy. <http://www.ctaweb.org/html/2020-6/2020-6-20-20-27-93560.html>.

The National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China.
http://www.npc.gov.cn/zgrdw/englishnpc/Constitution/node_2825.htm.

"The 13th Five-Year Plan for the Development of National Cultural Relics." The State Council Information Office of the PRC Official Website.
<http://www.scio.gov.cn/xwfbh/xwfbh/wqfbh/39595/40355/xgzc40361/Document/1653914/1653914.htm>.

Wang, Rui. *The Chinese Imperial Examination System: An Annotated Bibliography. The Chinese Imperial Examination System*. Lanham, MD: The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2013.

Warrington, Don. "The Sad End of Mao Dun." Positive Infinity.
<https://www.vulcanhammer.org/2006/08/29/the-sad-end-of-mao-dun/>.

"World Internet Conference." http://www.wuzhenwic.org/2015-11/10/c_46113.htm.

Wuzhen Theater Festival Official Website.
<http://www.wuzhenfestival.com/index2018.php?m=Xinwen&a=zixundetail&aid=778>.

Xie, Xiao. "Analysis of the Sustainability of Cultural Tourism Destinations in China from the Tourist Perspective: Case Study of the Ancient Town of Wuzhen." <https://www.aggieweighill.com/uploads/1/0/2/3/102377988/thesis-xiao%EF%BC%88sylvia%EF%BC%89xie.pdf>.

Xu, Huang, He, Dongsheng, Tang, Shuangshuang, and Li, Xin. "Compensation, housing situation and residents' satisfaction with the outcome of forced relocation: Evidence from urban China." *Cities* 96 (2020): 102436.

Xu, Zhiyun and Lu, Lin. "Model of Preserving and Developing Zhouzhuang Tourism [J]." *Resource Development & Market* 5 (2006).

Yang, Lina and Chang, Xuemei. "Wuzhen: Mao Dun's Homesickness." People.cn. <http://cpc.people.com.cn/n1/2016/1214/c64387-28950305.html>.

Zhang, Dinghua and Huang, Zongjing. Miyun Xian Zhi: 6 Juan. Harvard-Yenching Library Chinese Local Gazetteers Digitization Project- Jiu Fang Zhi. China], 1882.

Zhang, Jin and Si, Duo. "Research on Parallel Development of Wuzhen Scenic Area and Non-Scenic Area." *2020 International Conference on Urban Engineering and Management Science (ICUEMS)*, pp. 5-10. IEEE, 2020.

Zhao, Qi. "Scenario Characterization of Historical and Cultural Villages and Towns: Taking Cuandixia Village and Gubei Water Town as Examples." *Urban Geography* 9X (2016): 251.

Zheng, Hongwei. "浅谈烙画的发展及传承意义"(On the development and inheritance significance of pyrography). *美术教育研究* (Fine Arts Education Research), no. 18 (2016): 30-30.

Zheng, Shiqing and Wang, Dawu. "Research on Mode of Wuzhen Tourism Development [J]." *Areal Research and Development* 5 (2012).

"原报告: 中青旅造镇"(Finance report on CYTS). 中青旅_新浪财经_新浪网(Sina Finance). <https://finance.sina.com.cn/stock/stockzmt/2020-05-12/doc-iircuyvi2578964.shtml>.

"番茄炒蛋鸡蛋不少于3个, 乌镇商家自律获浙江省工商局点赞." *The Paper News*. https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_1602759.

"专访北京非遗保护中心负责人姜婷婷 - 中国非物质文化遗产网·中国非物质文化遗产数字博物馆." (Interview with Jiang Tingting, head of Beijing Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Center-China Intangible Cultural Heritage Network-China Intangible Cultural Heritage Digital Museum.) IHChina Website. http://www.ihchina.cn/luntan_details/18135.html.

北京市密云区人民政府非遗物质文化(Intangible Cultural Heritage of People's Government of Miyun District in Beijing.) Miyun District People's Government of Beijing Municipality. <http://www.bjmy.gov.cn/col/col4187/index.html>.

"イベント・おすすめ情報: 関ヶ原観光ガイド." (Event Information: Sekigahara Sightseeing Guide). 関ヶ原観光ガイド (Sekigahara Sightseeing Guide.) <https://www.sekigahara1600.com.e.ajr.hp.transer.com/event/?page=2>.