

# **Media, Heritage and Community in China**

A Case Study of *Dad, Where Are We Going* and Xin-Ye Village

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# ABSTRACT

Reality show *Dad, Where Are We Going* has been a tremendous success in China. Through the lens of the show and the entertaining experience starring celebrity fathers and children, a lot of heritage sites and historical and cultural villages, as well as local tradition, culture, and life of the local community, have been exposed under the gaze of camera and the whole nation. Looking into the story of Xin-Ye, one listed national historical and cultural village that became the second filming location of Season 2, the show as a media power is taking the role of unearthing, displaying, labelling and defining the heritage and cultural uniqueness of a place. Overnight fame and a tourism boom are brought to the villagers and gentrification is triggered. Tourist development as a filming location of the show has, however, also shaded new meanings and values on Xin-Ye and the heritage of the locals. Xin-Ye becomes a destination of parent-child tours. Moreover, in the process of turning heritage into assets for local branding and cultural commodity, local villagers are increasingly losing their voice in the representation of Xin-Ye's heritage as well as their rights of owning, managing, using their heritage and self-determination on how to benefit from their living environment.

Keywords: Heritage; Media; Reality Show *Dad, Where Are We Going*; Community; Xin-Ye Village

# CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES  
LIST OF TABLES

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1 SOME DISCUSSIONS: HERITAGE, IDENTITY, MEDIA AND TOURISM	4
1. HERITAGE AND IDENTITY.....	4
2. MEDIA AND TOURISM: HERITAGE IN EVERYDAY CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY .....	5
3. HERITAGE IN THE CHINESE CONTEXT .....	6
4. FILLING THE GAP.....	8
CHAPTER 2 PRODUCTION OF DAD, WHERE ARE WE GOING	8
1. THE PAST BECOMING POPULAR .....	8
2. ORIGINALITY AND LOCALIZATION AS A PATERNITY OUTDOOR REALITY SHOW .....	9
CHAPTER 3 APPROACHING HERITAGE: XIN-YE VILLAGE BECOMING A FILMING LOCATION	10
1. CHOOSING FILMING LOCATIONS.....	10
2. XIN-YE VILLAGE: TO BE SELECTED AND TO BECOME A FILMING LOCATION .....	12
CHAPTER 4 HERITAGE ON THE SHOW	14
1. DISPLAY OF XIN-YE AND ITS HERITAGE .....	14
2. EXPERIENCING HERITAGE.....	16
3. ENGAGEMENT WITH THE LOCALS .....	18
CHAPTER 5 THE COMMUNITY AFTER THE SHOW: XIN-YE ON CHANGE	19
1. BOOM OF TOURISM.....	19
2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND GENTRIFICATION .....	22
3. CHANGING PERCEPTIONS OF HERITAGE.....	26
4. CONFLICTS AND CHALLENGES.....	30
CONCLUSION	35
BIBLIOGRAPHY	38
APPENDICES	44

# FIGURES

Figure 1. Parent-Child tour group visitors in front of Shui-Yun-Jian..... 1

Figure 2. Running Men show, celebrities dressing up as Jinyiwei (imperial military secret guard in Ming dynasty). (Liu 2015) ..... 10

**Figure 3. Global levy poster from Hunan TV. (Chong-Qing Morning 2014) ..... 12**

**Figure 4. Full-length shot of Xin-Ye Village in *Dad, Where Are We Going*. (Hunan TV 2016) ..... 14**

Figure 6. Shui-Yun-Jian in *Dad, Where Are We Going*. (Hunan TV, 2016) ..... 16

**Figure 7. Poster of Episode 4. (*Dad, Where Are We Going* 2014) ..... 17**

**Figure 10. Fathers Packing Zongzi in central pool of Xin-Ye in *Dad, Where Are We Going*. (Hunan TV, 2016) ..... 18**

Figure 11. Students reading San-Zi-Jing in ancient dress. .... 21

**Figure 13. The locals selling vegetables, toys and food in the street..... 23**

Figure 16. Billboard of Xin-Ye sweet rice cake with *Dad, Where Are We Going* logo and scene of celebrities eating the cake from the show. .... 24

**Figure 18. Exhibition board of Xi-Shan Family. .... 25**

Figure 19. The Xin-Ye Ancient Village Parent-Child Amusement Park. .... 28

Figure 20. Parents and children from a Parent-Child tour group playing with a wheelbarrow in the Amusement Park. .... 28

Figure 21. Photography Exhibition in You-Xu-Tang. .... 29

**Figure 22. Photography of 3rd March Ancestor Worship Ceremony with Xin-Ye Kunqu Opera players on stage..... 29**

**Figure 23. Sign boards of Wen-Chang-Ge and You-Xu-Tang with new names and introductions about the show activities. .... 30**

Figure 24. Landscape of Xin-Ye Village..... 32

Figure 25. Xin-Ye New District..... 32



# TABLES

Table 1. Filming locations of Dad, Where Are We Going Season 1 .....	10
Table 2. Filming locations of Dad, Where Are We Going Season 2 .....	11
Table 3. Filming locations of Dad, Where Are We Going Season 3 .....	11
Table 4. Primary introduction of Xin-Ye in Episode 3, Season 2, <i>Dad, Where Are We Going</i> .....	15

## INTRODUCTION

On a usual Saturday morning in March, the quite little village Xin-Ye surrounded by miles of golden canola fields is awoken by lines of visitors. One tour group is particularly boisterous. Around twenty pairs of young parents holding their children's hands, are walking through the narrow lanes between the white and grey Hui-Style historical residence buildings in the village. The group is not visiting here only for the glorious historical buildings and beautiful landscape. As a 'Parent-Child Tour' group, they are going to have a series of interacting activities to experience the local culture of Xin-Ye together, like that which the celebrity fathers and their children have done in the village in the reality TV show *Dad, Where Are We Going*. On their way to the Parent-Child Amusement Park in the village, the group comes across the little wooden shed lying on the side of the central pond of the village. 'This is where Shui-Yun-Jian, Yang Wei and Yang Yangyang (one celebrity father and his son) lived!' said one young mom, and children start running cheerily to the billboard, uttering the name of Yangyang, Yang.



Figure 1. Parent-Child tour group visitors in front of Shui-Yun-Jian. (Photo by author 2016)

Adopted from Korea's same-titled show, Chinese reality show *Dad, Where Are We Going*, produced by Hunan Satellite TV, has been a tremendous hit in China since its first air in October 2013, though the Korean version ended after two-year-run. Up till now, the show has launched three seasons, with 12 episodes and one extended film for each season, broadcasting both on the TV channel as well as on several simulcast online video sites. The show positions itself as a paternity outdoor reality program, inviting celebrity fathers and their children to different places with aims of enhancing father-child relationships through a series of activities while experiencing the local life and culture. Being a show with entertainment at its core, *Dad, Where Are We Going* finds its popularity and success in China in a broader context. Not only has it addressed the heated social discussions about parenting and transforming the father-child relationship in a modern era, the show has also brought different, less-known, 'original and natural' places as defined by the show to the screen. Along with its establishment of originality and distinguishing characteristics, there is one noteworthy tendency of the show: its extensive engagement with heritage, from heritage sites and historical villages to the intangible heritage and traditional culture of the filming locations. Through the lens

of the show and the experience of the celebrity stars, the landscape of the filming locations, local life, local culture and heritage are transmitted to millions of Chinese TV audiences and Internet users.

Moreover, filmed heritage sites and historical villages earn nation-wide fame and become popular tourist destinations through the high audience-rating for the show *Dad, Where Are We Going* and the subsequent massive exposures in mass media and social media. Due to the rapid growth of its economy, China is embracing an unprecedented tourism boom that has grown exponentially in the last quarter century (Chennan, Wall and Mitchell 2009). New holiday policy has been applied since 2007, cutting two Golden-weeks (seven-day holidays) for three traditional festivals and making two seven-day and five three-day customary holidays in total available for the public. The new holiday system gives more space for the development of the tourist industry, domestic tourism in particular (Yu 2015), and the celebration and transmission of traditional culture. More and more communities with interesting heritage are thus targeted by the ever-expanding market which is craving for destinations. Under such circumstances, the popular show becomes a destination discoverer for the tourist market, and the local culture and heritage of the filming locations has become a valuable development resource for the local community.

Through a case study of *Dad, Where Are We Going* and one of its filming locations Xin-Ye, a state-nominated historical and cultural village, this research aims to explore the relationship between media, heritage and the local community that owns the heritage in China's context. More concretely, it will examine how a reality show, as a media power, becomes tremendously successful by using heritage. It will also look at how the show approaches heritage, and meanwhile, how the local population cooperates with the show and participates in the process of unearthing, presenting and defining heritage. To this end, it will examine the influence the show, with its created-authenticity, has brought to certain locations, the living community there and the local practice of heritage. It will ask how the community finds its way towards gentrification with its heritage and ask is there any conflict between different stakeholders and what would be the potential problem for the long-term development and sustainability of the village?

Research methods that will be used include discourse analysis, audiovisual analysis, interviews and participant observations, and the ethnographic data collected during fieldwork in Xin-Ye which forms the most solid part of my research. To understand how the show approaches Xin-Ye and brings the local heritage into use, I looked into news reports, announcements and posts from the official website and *Weibo* social media account of the show, and interviews of staff members of the show off the press. I also analyzed the episodes of the show to see how Xin-Ye is engaged in the show and is displayed to the audience. From 14<sup>th</sup> March to 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2016, I spent 21 days in Xin-Ye and got the chance to live with one local family. Although the time was very limited, I made contact and held interviews with villagers, visitors and tourist organizers in the village, local officers working in the village committee<sup>1</sup>, managers and residents who work for New-An-Jiang Tourist Development Company, which is responsible for the tourist development and daily run of the site. I firstly experienced and observed the site and the village by myself, like a tourist, joining in with different programs available for all visitors. During the time, I collected data from tourist flyers and brochures, signs and information boards, exhibitions, introductory videos and official tour guides

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<sup>1</sup> Village committee: Fundamental administrative unit for the rural population in China. Xin-Ye is under the administrative jurisdiction of Jiande City, Hangzhou City, Zhejiang Province.

introductions. With their permission, I followed different tourist groups, observing their visits and having conversations with tourists and tour leaders about their experiences and feelings about Xin-Ye. Contacts with individual tourists were more flexible. Conversations with them sometimes developed into in-depth ones, because some individuals spend more time in the village and have multiple visiting experiences. Overhearing communication and discussions has been helpful in getting to know the experiences and thoughts of visitors, as well as those of the locals, especially when they kindly invited me join their group dinners and walks in their leisure time. I conducted in-depth individual and group interviews with local residents, including leading members of the clan, and those who own restaurants and guest houses, shops and street stalls. Further to this, there were young entrepreneurs, house owners of listed historical buildings and other local residents. For some villagers that I was able to build a closer relationship with, I was able to interview them multiple times in different places, from clan temples to their houses and farming lands, allowing me to see more about their connections with specific locations and materials in those places.

By investigating how Xin-Ye, its local culture and local heritage have been approached, displayed, experienced and made use of by one the most influential and representative reality shows, *Dad, Where Are We Going*, as well as how the local authority and community participate in this process, this research functions as an exploration into how heritage is valued, used and managed in China. The rise in popularity of reality TV programs in China during the recent years is putting more and more places under a created-authentic exposure to audiences. This research can shed light on the role and influence of the market forces of media and tourism on heritage in a developing country facing rapid commercialization and growing cultural needs. Meanwhile, this research aims to pay attention to the life experience and the voices of the locals in the community on issues of heritage representation and management as well as usage of their heritage and development of their homelands. The research could also contribute to discussions about the social and economic values of heritage as the cultural property of community; uses of heritage for creating local identity, local branding, gentrification, and social development; the opportunities and potential conflicts of heritage tourism being a strategy for sustainable development.

Based on a chronological structure, this thesis presents the process of how Xin-Ye with its heritage was approached and put on screen under the joint effort of *Dad, Where Are We Going* and the locals, and impacts of the media show and the tourism development on Xin-Ye afterward. Chapter 1 sets out the groundwork, reviewing current notions of heritage and its connection with identity, discussions on the interacting of heritage with media and tourism, heritage management and local development, and heritage in China's context. Chapter 2 examines the social and cultural background of the production of the show. Chapter 3 looks into how the show was approaching heritage in its process of firstly finding, then selecting filming locations; and how Xin-Ye finally became one of the filming locations under local promotion and the support of the local government. Chapter 4 deals with the display of Xin-Ye and engagement of the local community by looking into the video of the show, examining what has been represented and how, as the heritage, the uniqueness and the life of Xin-Ye; and also how the locals are participating in the shooting. Finally, Chapter 5 examines the influence of the show on Xin-Ye, its development and heritage practice. By combining my own experience with critical analysis on data I collected in the field, related governmental statements and social reviews, I shall investigate the tourist and social development, and changes on

heritage in Xin-Ye, revealing conflicts between different stakeholders and some potential challenges in safeguarding the rights and benefits of the local inhabitants and the sustainable development of Xin-Ye.

## Chapter 1 SOME DISCUSSIONS: HERITAGE, IDENTITY, MEDIA AND TOURISM

### 1. HERITAGE AND IDENTITY

Definitions of heritage have become increasingly fluid and wide reaching today (Harvey 2001). Widely accepted as a cultural product with social and political functions (Lowenthal 1985), heritage is not merely a passive practice of preserving the past, but a cultural construct; the result of a social process that reflects chains of connectivity and sets of values of the present, which shade consequences into the future (Harrison 2013). Being a practice that uses the past selectively for the contemporary purpose (Ashworth and Graham 2005), heritage is therefore 'inherently political and discordant' (Smith 2006) and interwoven within the power dynamics of any society. Heritage has been used largely by various degrees of legitimacy (Smith 2006) and is intimately bound up with identity construction at both communal and personal levels (Harvey 2008). The economics of heritage and tourism are catching up in practice, driven by the increased emphasis on individual 'experience', and the need to market heritage to a diverse range of consumers (Harrison 2013).

Association between heritage and identity is well established in the heritage literature. Heritage provides meaning to human existence by conveying the ideas of timeless values and unbroken lineages that underpin identity (Graham, Ashworth and Tunbridge 2000). Smith (2006) has argued that identity could also be viewed as an active process of continual creation and recreation. When different links and meanings are continually remade, attached and negotiated based upon heritage, various identities are also created, maintained and reaffirmed. Construction and expression of identity could be multilayer and at different levels. How heritage has been actively used to construct national identities has been written on by many scholars (Brett 1996, Meskell 2002, Smith 2006). Growing critical attention has also been paid to the role of heritage in the articulation and expressions of identity in regional, more local and even personal contexts (Dicks 2003, Ashworth and Graham 2005, Anico and Peralta 2009). As Anico (2009) notes, heritage and identity are always inscribed in reference to places. Construction of identity and the sense of belongingness to groups or communities through heritage projects are closely linked with the marking of 'place'. Corsane, Davis and Murtas (2009) note on the growing appreciation of place identity with senses of local distinctiveness, local pride, and local belongingness in the heritage narration as against the threat of local and global changes. In *Senses of Place: Senses of Time* (Ashworth and Graham 2005), scholars examine how government, media, residents and tourists use heritage to create senses of place at the urban, rural, regional and international scales, how senses of place interact with cultural and social identities and how heritage becomes 'dissonant' with different meanings and conflicting identities; the universal and the particular, the collective and the individual.

## 2. MEDIA AND TOURISM: HERITAGE IN EVERYDAY CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY

Alongside the professional and authorized discourse, the popular and the vernacular are drawing increasing attention from scholars, contributing to the rise of ethnographic and multidisciplinary approaches in the heritage field. Billig (1995) argues that it is often the commonplace symbols and everyday activities that work to continually flag and remind people of their identities. Harvey (2015) also argues that it is an imperative towards personal conduct, and that a perceptibly 'national', yet specifically 'everyday,' brand of common sense that is founded upon a supposedly shared heritage should trump all other axes of identity. Howard (2003) describes heritage as a product in the market-place, in which six major players are included: owners, governments, academics, insiders, visitors and the media. The media and visitors, in particular, could be the promoters and consumers on the most massive scales that contribute to the everyday circulation of images and meaning of heritage, and the construction of the everyday and common sense notions of heritage that people associate with.

Media is one industry interacting with heritage that has been assigned a leading role in the creation of collective memory and imagined communities (Anderson 2006). The mass media both reproduce and produce everyday representations and interpretations that come from the general public, and meanwhile, as they aim to reach out to a mass audience, are influential in shaping the collective consciousness and common culture (Morley and Robins 1995). Robinson (2011) notes that the role of heritage has changed, slipping from (or rather actively removed from) its long-perceived status as a signifier of 'high culture' to the realms of popular and 'mass culture', because heritage now embraces popular culture which deals with the immediate, the imminent and the contemporary, brought together and widely distributed by and through, the mass media. In popular culture, heritage is often not valued for its literal content, but for its metaphorical content (Holtorf 2010). Instead of the specific information it contains about the past, heritage is more valuable for the topics and notions it alludes to and evokes among people who offer and receive it.

Media also transforms our engagement with heritage, blurring the personal and the public; the intimate and the everyday; our understanding of scale in various forms (Harvey 2015). Groote and Haartsen (2008) view heritage as a communicative practice that creates place-identities, suggesting that heritage is produced and communicated through representations in the dominant sites of contemporary cultural production: films and television. While definition and selection of heritage from the non-experts seems to be increasingly popular, Groote and Haartsen (2008) have criticized that the democratization of heritage is arguable and still problematic because, as the British heritage films and TV programs they have examined show, the initial selection and budgets control are fundamentally in the hands of the cultural elite, the professionals and experts. In her reflection on heritage production in the dimension of cultural display, Dicks (2004) argues that both salvaging the past and also staging it as a visitable experience are involved. Moreover, heritage is discursive and dissonant because heritage has been a resource for not only the professional interpreters and planners, but also people who attempt to represent their history and identities on a public stage as well (Dicks 2004).

As heritage is becoming available everywhere and for everyone, tourism has been another well-recognized interacting field in which to explore how heritage has been commercialized for, or 'consumed' by the public for purposes of the present, and how heritage is used as an economic asset for place marketing, national

or local branding, and sustainable development. Increasingly, museums and natural and cultural places are transforming into heritage tourist destinations under the promotion of nation states and, increasingly, of non-governmental organizations and agencies (UNESCO in particular), as a sustainable way to balance the need of heritage preservation and local development.

Drawing from Foucault's concept of 'the gaze', Urry (2011) develops the idea of a 'tourist gaze', explaining that the tourist experience seeks to cut people out of the 'real world' and emphasize their exotic aspects, which is directed by the images of tourism and leisure produced and reproduced constantly and pervasively by the media. It has also been argued that instead of receiving the top-down 'creation' of heritage from the state passively, the consumer has also played a major part in selecting and creating what is and also what is not heritage (Urry and Larsen 2011). Corresponding to the development of tourism, the world is staged under an 'exhibitionary complex' as called by Bennett (1995) and an increasing number of museums and heritage sites are creating themselves as tourist 'destinations' by putting what could simply be considered 'places' on the cultural stage (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998). Dicks (2004) terms this process as the production of 'visitability', the value and capacity of a place to be somewhere worthwhile going to, to experience and to be consumed, and with culture being the hardcore of visitability, cultural particularism, local identity and meaningfulness of the local past and heritage are explored, produced and promoted.

As consequences, on the one hand, 'heritagization' and heritage tourism strategy could be promising solutions to save historic areas from demolishment, to help groups and communities to gain social recognition, and to bring poverty reduction and gentrification, while on the other, problems remain and new conflicts arise. Ashworth and Tunbridge (1996) point out that as heritage and the messages subsequently constructed about that heritage becomes a touristic product, the tensions and dilemmas inherent in all commodification for contemporary markets are endowed. Besides from the issues of ownership and stewardship, conflicts between different interest groups over how sites are to be presented, preserved and accessed also arise in heritage tourism (Porter 2008). While tourism emphasizing cultural experience, 'local lifestyle' and the 'experience of a place' is getting increasingly popular (Coccosis 2009), communities, as the basic reason for traveling and the source of tourism, also become commodities and part of the tourist product (Richards and Hall 2000). Impacts of tourism on the sustainability of destinations and communities with heritage assets subsequently become a hot topic among scholars from both tourism studies and heritage studies (e.g. Richards and Hall 2000; Girard and Nijkamp 2009; Chhabra 2010; Staiff, Bushell and Watson 2013). Community as an elusive term refers to not only a locality but also a network of relationships (Salazar 2012). Therefore, they could be both opportunity and threat, the idea of developing tourism sustainably for heritage and the community needs to be inquired upon critically as pointed by Richards and Hall (2000): Whose community? How should the community be presented to the tourist? Who should benefit from tourism? Who are the 'locals' in the local community?

### **3. HERITAGE IN THE CHINESE CONTEXT**

Needs and demands of heritage preservation are recognized and highlighted in China nowadays under the context of fast-paced modernization and rapid eco-social transformation. The intricate interplay between culture, economics and politics in China further complicates the meanings and uses of heritage. As Shepherd notes, "Heritage is an encounter of time (past and present), materiality (the ontologically

authentic and the market-driven copy), and use value”, and heritage preservation is fraught with tensions and conflicts between tourism, economic development, and a fragmented regulatory system in the rapidly-changing China (Shepherd and Yu 2013).

Lots of scholars have paid critical attention to how heritage is used as a political tool and as a strategy for nation-building and nation-branding in China. Ai (2012) argues that official narratives are consciously bringing diverse heritage and cultural traditions into a uniformed sense of ‘Great Chinese,’ to serve the goals of strengthening ethnic harmony and national unity. Moreover, heritage has become one of the main vehicles through which the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) markets and promotes itself, and the selections of what receives heritage preservation support are most directly aligned with priorities of CCP (Ai 2012). The current government’s efforts to protect and preserve extensive patrimony are also implicated closely with China’s assertive political maneuvering on the world stage (Blumenfield and Silverman 2013). At this moment, China has 48 heritage properties inscribed on the World Heritage List. Active participation in the international system and enthusiasm for UNESCO’s revered list reveal China’s interest in increasing cultural soft power, which has been adopted as a national strategy (Kurlantzick 2008), and global competitiveness in the international race.

The economics of, and value of heritage (World Heritage in particular) as cultural capital for tourism and economic development are not only highlighted by the national and local government, they have also become key topics of research in Chinese academia (see for example Zhang, Lu and Huo 2012; Sun 2015). Further to this, the pursuit of heritage economics and model-based tourist development under the ‘new heritage craze’ (Svensson 2006) in China are meanwhile not without their problems. As argued by some scholars, commercial and economic development could be the principal problem for the preservation and management of heritage (Wang and Bramwell 2012; Blumenfield and Silverman 2013). While State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH) and the Ministry of Culture (MOC) are the national administrative agencies, local bureaus under local people’s governments at different levels are taking major responsibility for heritage preservation and management (Huo 2015). Heritage preservation and promotion thus serves the interests of local governments profoundly, and increasingly, heritage is seen as a valuable and basic development resource for local economies and the rapidly expanding domestic tourism industry (Sofield and Li 1998). It has been noted by many scholars (Cros and Lee 2007; Ryan and Huimin 2009; X. Su 2015; Zhang, Fyall and Zheng 2015; Su, Wall and Xu 2016) that commodification of heritage has grown vigorously in different cities and World Heritage sites; with support from local governments and the commercial development of the tourist market, the real estate market and the capital market, while local economics and competitiveness are enhanced, imbalanced power of the wide array of new stakeholders has led to unequal profit distribution, displacement and resettlement of original residents, disruption of livelihoods and relationships of communities. As a joint-effect of the heritage craze and the tourism boom, increasing fake historical environments and theme parks are being built around the country. More ancient villages and old towns are seeing heritage tourism as an opportunity both for the heritage preservation and local development (Luo 2010, Ji 2011, Shi 2015).

Although the development and management of heritage in China are gaining increasing academic attention from inside China and the West, sites and zones that are being discussed are still relatively limited on World Heritage sites and the urban area. Svensson (2006) notes that with the spreading ‘discovery’ of heritage



sites by tourism developers and the growth in tourism, rural heritage has become the scene of new and complex contestations regarding space, memory and identity. As a reflection of and creation for the interest of the public, mass media is now actively discovering and presenting the past and the rural as a treasured memory of the rapidly-changing and urbanizing China; the popular documentary television series about Chinese food culture and cuisine, *A Bite of China*, produced by China Central Television (CCTV) is a typical example. The tremendous success of the recent reality show, *Dad, Where Are We Going* has been the subject of studies on representation of rural historical villages and influence on them as filming locations of the show, which are exposed and discussed intensively when the show is promoting itself to the wide audiences and followers in new media. It has been noted critically that the show has not only represented and constructed the locations as a spectacle for consumption (Chen-yin 2015), but has also provoked a new way of marketing and has created a distinct effect on tourist development with an emphasis on the local character of the place (Yuan 2015).

#### **4. FILLING THE GAP**

In heritage studies, scholars have called into question that heritage, as an institutional practice, is a western invention (Kreps 2003) and that the dominant role of European cultures in shaping the understandings of heritage (Smith 2006; Harrison 2013). The field now sees growing alternative investigations into the conflicts between institutional approaches and the interests of other social groups concerning the ownership and management of heritage, and the legacies of the past that are embedded in people's everyday lives (Esposito 2014). While studies about heritage as the present use of the past, everyday construction of people's identity and sense of place, and increasingly a marketable product in the media and tourist industry have been widely made and simultaneously profoundly based on European cases, there is still a great gap in the current studies on the new heritage craze in China. Heritage in China is being constantly produced under rapid ideological and socio-economic changes, spreading urbanization and globalization, and increasingly exponential growth of heritage economics and tourism. Particularly, the complicated interplay between culture, politics and economics, and the imbalanced power of a wide array of stakeholders (e.g. CCP, governments at different levels, tourist companies, local communities) lead heritage into a field where different identities and cultural, economic, and political interests are negotiated and contested. While the production of heritage is being praised and getting increasingly prevalent in China, it is critical to ask the central question in heritage studies: What and whose cultural heritage is protected in society, for what purposes, and by whom? (Svensson, 2006)

## **Chapter 2 PRODUCTION OF DAD, WHERE ARE WE GOING**

### **1. THE PAST BECOMING POPULAR**

Since the Ming and Qing Dynasty, there has been an interest in the past in Chinese popular culture. In popular literature, novels at that time, lots of writers use the past as the writing background or write fictional history. A new wave of interest in the past has been triggered since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when a series of Time-travel novels became a hit. By time-traveling, the protagonist goes back to the past and sometimes even becomes one of the historical figures, builds relationships and participates in different historical events (X. Li 2013). Of all the historical periods, the Qing Dynasty is the most popular

one. The past is not necessarily real; it could be an imagined time that is based on one historical period or one dynasty. Rooted in internet culture and public taste (Guo 2013), time-travel into the past becomes a popular literature subject in China. The continuing popularity of time-travel theme, later on, found its way into the television industry. Time-travel TV series appeared in China and became one of the most popular television subject-matters around 2010 (L. Zhang 2013). Even now, different time-travel TV series are still being produced by various TV channels and are gaining popularity consistently together with other historical TV series, imperial court dramas in particular, in the country. While the past is being reimagined constantly in pop culture, there is a growing interest in China to connect personal intimacy with the past. Moreover, experience of the past emphasizes more the sense of the past instead of the historical authenticity.

## 2. ORIGINALITY AND LOCALIZATION AS A PATERNITY OUTDOOR REALITY SHOW

Reality shows in China are regarded as starting off and becoming popularized in China with *Super Girl*, a singing contest organized by Hunan TV (Hunan Satellite TV) between 2004 and 2006. The subsequent hit of the reality show saw its new boom in the nation when *Dad, Where Are We Going* was debuted in November 2013. After the popularity of the South Korean show by the same title produced by MBC (Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation), Hunan TV bought the rights of adoption and launched the Chinese version in the same year. The show was an immediate success with audience ratings, keeping its ranking at the first place (excluding CCTV) during the whole season according to CSM's data. Due to its popularity, Hunan TV promoted the serial film of the show for the Chinese New Year holiday market, and continued to produce Season 2 episodes during 2014 and Film 2 in 2015, which both enjoyed the same popularity as Season 1. From Season 2, *My Documentary*, *And Dad Together*, a supporting documentary and a series showing behind-the-scenes and the daily life of the stars started to be aired. Season 3 had just ended in July 2015. While the show continues to be one of the most successful shows out of two hundred new reality show programs on Chinese TV (Chen 2014), Hunan TV, as the most successful provincial TV that aims to be "the most energetic TV entertainment brand in China" (Hunan TV), guaranteed and strengthened its position in Chinese television only after CCTV (China Central Television) (Xiao 2014).

Reality shows in China have been facing problems of originality and localization after a decade of development (Jiang 2014), but *Dad, Where Are We Going* opened up a new reality show category in China as one that features parent-child outdoor activity. Producers usually claim to persist with the documentary and authentic nature of reality show as a selling point. The show presents 'the real life' of celebrities whose personal lives and children are rarely exposed (N. Li 2014). Various original games and activities are set up, and the stars and the audiences are brought to attractive less-known filming locations (Zhang and Li 2014). Besides its entertaining quality, the show is "走心"(heart-catching) as widely described because it presents moving father-child relationships (Q. Zhang 2014) and simple yet sincere interpersonal relationships and life. The display of conflicts and growing intimacy, emotional expression and inner-thoughts of the starring fathers and children triggers the audience's emotional resonance and provokes people's reflection on a wide range of hot issues of the country, from finding its cultural roots, identifying its traditions and traditional values, to Chinese traditional parenting values, fatherhood and father-child relationships in modern society. The show also unprecedentedly made full use of mass media and social media (Weibo,

Wechat and the Baidu Message Forum), contributing to a nation-wide fame and popularity of the show (Y. Li 2014) (C. Wang 2014).

Adopting the South Korean version’s idea of inviting stars to rural areas to experience life, *Dad, Where Are We Going* later found its localization in China and characteristics of its own also to do with engaging with the past, which enjoys a widespread popularity in the TV market. Through reality shows, the imagined personal participation with the past thus becomes tangible. Since *Dad, Where Are We Going*, reality shows are becoming increasingly popular, and engaging the past is employed in the production of different reality shows in various ways: wearing ancient dress, playing roles of historical figures, visiting heritage sites or places where historical events took place, and sometimes, experiencing an imagined space with senses of the past like time-travel novels and TV series. Through reality shows, the past and the popular are interacting in an unprecedented manner in China nowadays.



Figure 2. Running Men show, celebrities dressing up as Jinyiwei (imperial military secret guard in Ming dynasty). (Liu 2015)

## Chapter 3 APPROACHING HERITAGE: XIN-YE VILLAGE BECOMING A FILMING LOCATION

### 1. CHOOSING FILMING LOCATIONS

Season 1 Filming Location	
(1)Ling-Shui Village	Listed National Historical and Cultural Village
(2)Sha-Po-Tou Desert	Desert ecological protection area; Top five ‘Most Beautiful Deserts in China’ listed by <i>Chinese National Geography</i>
(3)Pu-Zhe-Hei Village	National scenic sites; Multi-ethnic residential community
(4)Ji-Ming Island	Original fishery-based economy Island;
(5)Bai-Si Village	Fu-Shou Mountain Forest Park area
(6)Xue-Xiang	National Forest Park area; ‘China’s Best Snow Town’

Table 1. Filming locations of *Dad, Where Are We Going* Season 1.

Season 2 Filming Location	
(1)Wu-Long Sinkhole	UNESCO World Natural Heritage Listed site
(2)Xin-Ye Village	Listed National Historical and Cultural Village; Listed Provincial Historical and Cultural Protection Zone
(3)Di-Sun Miao Ethnic Camp	National Intangible Cultural Heritage Miao Ethnic Song (Teng)

<b>(4)Du-Jiang Weirs Hong-Kou Forest</b>	Primeval forest area in Hong-Kou National Nature Reserve
(5)Hulunbuir Yi-Li natural grazing ground	Hulunbuir Prairie; Birthplace of Genghis Khan
(6)Long-Wan Village	Yellow River Stone Forest National Geological Park area; Loess Plateau village
(7)Hua-Lien Country and Hua-Lien Sugar Factory	Amis aboriginal heartland; Shared Heritage site in Taiwan
(8)Rotorua	Maori heartland in New Zealand

Table 2. Filming locations of *Dad, Where Are We Going* Season 2.

Season 3 Filming Location	
(1)Gua-Yuan-Ze-Wan Country, Yu-Lin City	Traditional farming village in Northwest China
(2)Meng-Jing-Lai	Dai Autonomous Prefecture of Xishuangbanna; ‘Number One Stockaded Village in China and Burma’; Buddhist area
(3)He-Keng Village	UNESCO World Heritage Fujian Tulou site
(4)Turpan Depression	Historical region of Silk Road
(5)Sui-Ning Town	Guan-Xia Miao Ethnic Township
(6)Bei-Xia Village	Listed National Historical and Cultural Village; one of the ‘sacred place of the revolution’
(7)Heng-Dian World Studios	Film studio replica of the Forbidden City
(8)Perth	

Table 3. Filming locations of *Dad, Where Are We Going* Season 3.

The filming locations in *Dad, Where Are We Going* cover a wide range of geographical categories, residential areas of different ethnic groups, and regions with different cultural backgrounds (see Table 1&2&3). All 20 domestic filming locations are either sparsely populated natural sites or, in a larger proportion, rural historical (ethnic) cultural villages. Since Season 2, the show has been starting to find its originality and localization, rural historical (ethnic) cultural villages and heritage sites constitute almost all locations, constituting 6 out of 7 domestic locations in Season 2, and 5 of 7 in Season 3 (even Num.7 Heng-Dian is a heritage-relevant site).

The production team set up a specialized Cai-Dian Team (Team for exploration and inspection) to select candidate filming locations that are attractive and then to check their suitability for filming. According to Li’s interview with Yue-Yang from the specialized team, for Season 1, locations without distinguishing features or which have been commercially exploited would be removed from consideration (Q. Li 2013). With regard to the selection of Ling-Shui Village, he said: “It is a delicate village, well preserved in Ming and Qing dynasty style, and it has the historical background of Ju-Ren<sup>2</sup> (Q. Li 2013). The team followed four principles in its selection: distinguishing landscape, unsophisticated folk custom, preference of being within a two-hour drive time of the local airport, and avoiding central scenic spots.

<sup>2</sup> Ju-Ren: Successful candidate in the imperial examinations at the provincial level.

After gaining its fame in Season 1 and popularizing all its filming locations in the tourist industry, the show started to conduct different selecting strategies. Instead of finding filming locations, the show started to select from applicants. On 5 February 2014, the program group released a global levy poster (fig.3) of filming locations for the show, which stirred up the active participation of network users and disseminations from different medias. Peng-Kai, leader of Cai-Dian Team, said in an interview that he received over one thousand emails of recommendation (Hunan TV 2014). Maintaining some principles considered for Season 1, the requirements and criteria for Season 2 filming locations were as written on the poster: “Beautiful scenery with distinguishing features, natural villages that are quaint, with unsophisticated folk customs and quiet life, the place we want would be the Land of Peach Blossom (a haven of peace) in everyone’s heart.” Aside from the filmability, the show is looking for places that are relatively hidden away from modern society, which means that the villages are expected to be somewhere distinguishable with historical and cultural meaningfulness. The historical and natural surroundings need to be well preserved, and then the communities that live within shall reflect the living past, ‘keeping the traditional mode of living and production, the characteristic food, folk custom and traditions’ (Wuhan Morning Post 2014). In this sense, what the show is looking for is a community of living heritage, one that is still bearing its traditions and the heritage of which is still well-preserved and alive.



Figure 3. Global levy poster from Hunan TV. (Chong-Qing Morning 2014)

## 2. XIN-YE VILLAGE: TO BE SELECTED AND TO BECOME A FILMING LOCATION

Taking a closer examination of the filming location of Episodes 3&4 in Season 2, Xin-Ye village stood out from the other 3,000 sites that the show had received shooting invitations from (*Dad, Where Are We Going* 2014), with its rich heritage, the vital characteristics the show was looking for. The village has been listed as a Provincial Historical and Cultural Preservation Site since 2000 and named as a National Historical and Cultural Village in 2010. In 2013, Xin-Ye become a Major Historical and Cultural Site Protected at the National Level (MHCSPL). With a traceable history of almost 800 years, Xin-Ye is a well-preserved village containing over 200 ancient vernacular examples of architecture, including alleys, ancestral temples and pagodas, and subsequently has become the biggest Ming and Qing Dynasty ancient civilian residence architecture museum (Xia 2008). Besides this, Xin-Ye Kunqu Opera and Xin Ye 3<sup>rd</sup> March Ancestor Worship Ceremony are two listed Provincial Intangible Cultural Heritage of Zhejiang province. Together with its rich folk custom, living core spirit of Confucianism “Generating from Farming and Studying” (耕读传家) and

strong characteristic of Chinese kin<sup>3</sup>, Xin-Ye is also known as a typical 'land of fish and rice' in Jiang-Nan region.

From Season 2, while the show was looking for a living representation of heritage, lots of historical and cultural villages or any places with a living past were also actively displaying and promoting themselves to get chosen. Xin-Ye also devoted a lot of energy to the selecting and inspecting process to be able to finally win and be used in the show. In his interview with Wuhan Morning Post (2014), Jin, secretary of the Youth League Committee of Xin-Ye, said that during the preparation, Xin-Ye provided a lot of background information to the show's producers, including an introduction of the history and characteristics of the village, textual and audio descriptions of food, accommodation, transportation, and how much open space there was in the village. Based on the information provided by the village, the Cai-Dian Team of the show would visit the village and inspect the filmability. Not only the surroundings and cultural values were to be evaluated, but also the proposal provided by the village and supporting facilities like safety facilities, medical assistance, and mobile signal as well. When *Dad, Where Are We Going* was evaluating, the village has to unearth, re-organize or even 'upgrade' its resources in every way spontaneously so that it can meet the basic principles of selecting and stand out from other places during the whole process of selection and finally become a filming location for the show.

To achieve what Dicks (2004) would call viewability and visitability, local governments have made great efforts in upgrading the infrastructure of the village, finding local identity and cultural particularism in Xin-Ye, making meaningfulness out of local culture, tradition and heritage, and promoting Xin-Ye as somewhere worthy of visiting. According to the locals, the application and preparations are done by Jiande City government, 'the superiors' as they are called. The Village Committee of Xin-Ye implemented instructions from the city and cooperated with the show in their greatest effort. The Village Committee was responsible for sign construction, making arrangements, negotiating with related households, and preventing disclosure of the shooting plan and schedule. Regarding infrastructures, the local resource is highly limited. As recalled by the locals in my conversations with them, closed-circuit television now used in the village was installed at that time for the shooting. Moreover, during the days of shooting, which lasted around two weeks in total, the village was completely blocked off, and the city government sent hundreds of security guards to guarantee that the shooting would not be disturbed by outsiders. To meet the needs of over one thousand outsiders, including the celebrities, shooting team and other working personnel, 'the superiors sent everything in, like food, and because of that, not many villagers were aware what was happening until the shooting really began and they invited some of us to participate in the shooting'<sup>4</sup>, says one local resident. As the show is placing more emphasis on the cultural richness and local particularity, the history, traditions, customs and heritage of Xin-Ye village have been put under magnifying glass. According to the secretary of the village committee, the main source of local introduction is from the old members of the village, the tourist company that the village has been cooperating with, and studies of some scholars that had been to the village. In the process of self-exploration and making claims, besides from the extraordinary architectural resources that have been highly praised by architectural scholars and experts, they also

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<sup>3</sup> The village is the biggest resident region of Yu-Hua-Ye-clan descendants. Almost all the residents now living in the village (around 3400) are the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> generations of the clan.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Jin, Su-e on March 30, 2015 in Xin-Ye.

concluded some customs like making drinks, straw hats and shoes , as the local characteristics and a reflection of the past of Chinese villages. In the preparation process, the Jiande city government took the role of supervising, and was in charge of the final negotiation with the show’s production team. While the local community was participating in the making of local particularism, it is still under the instruction and control of ‘the superiors’.

## Chapter 4 HERITAGE ON THE SHOW

### 1. DISPLAY OF XIN-YE AND ITS HERITAGE

*Dad, Where Are We Going* Episode 3, Season 2 sets off the new journey of the starring fathers and children with a full length shot of Xin-Ye (fig.4), introducing it as a village hidden in the middle of forests and clouds, far away from the real world. The overall appearance as a historical village with distinguishing Ming and Qing Dynasties architecture surrounding a central pool is shown with shots from different angles, birds-eye ones in particular.



Figure 4. Full-length shot of Xin-Ye Village in *Dad, Where Are We Going*. (Hunan TV 2016)

Moreover, the beautiful and quaint scenery of Xin-Ye is not only used as the background of the show. Like other filming locations in other episodes, scenes of the village are also widely used for scene transitions, intervals between different activities, and most commonly, connecting previous scenes after advertisements. The characteristics of the filming location is also used to correspond with the theme of every episode. Landscapes and distinguishing custom of the village are displayed and frequently reappeared throughout the episode, leaving a strong impression of Xin-Ye on the audience. The show creates a familiar yet refreshing feeling towards historical village for the domestic audience. Nostalgic as well as new feelings and perceptions of history, tradition, culture and the specific location are stirred up.

After the full-length shot, the show gives a primary intensive introduction of Xin-Ye (Table 1.). This introduction of the village shows images of the landscape like architecture, alleys, a stone plaque, a pool, and features like walking domestic animals, pets, and living scenes of the locals walking, talking, washing clothes by the river side, and making straw sandals. Along with these beautiful images, off-screen narration



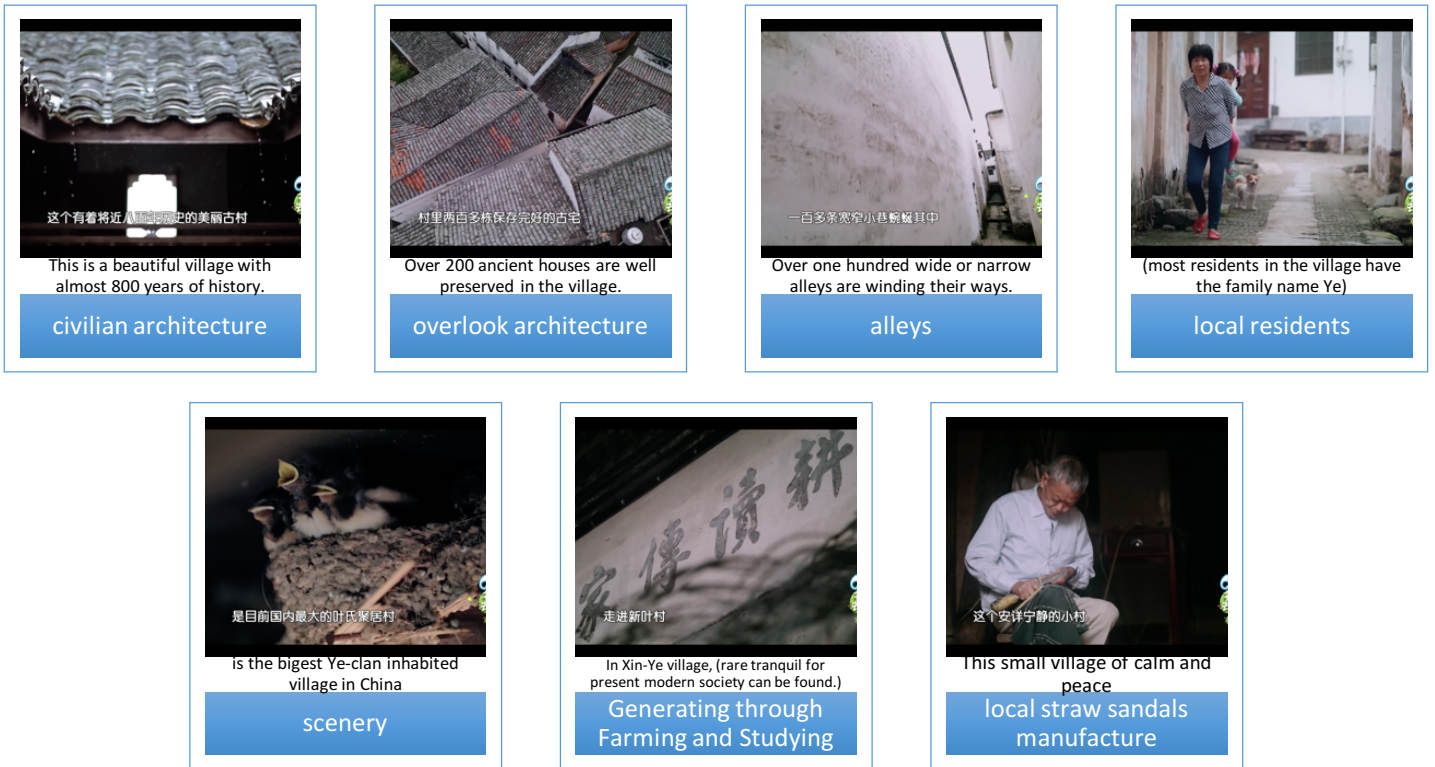


Table 4. Primary introduction of Xin-Ye in Episode 3, Season 2, *Dad, Where Are We Going*.

and Chinese subtitles are added, introducing the history and the present of Xin-Ye. What is mentioned in this first introduction of Xin-Ye is, however, limited. Besides its long history, Chinese kin feature and architectural particularity, traditional lifestyle and tranquil status that is profoundly preserved in the present Xin-Ye are especially emphasized, while various forms of heritage, handicrafts, the arts and folk custom, the culture of this 'fish and rice region' are neglected for explanation in this narration. Looking at the entirety of this primary introduction of Xin-Ye, the cognition about Xin-Ye being a historical and natural village preserving features of Jiang-Nan region in the Ming and Qing dynasties and traditional lifestyle is constructed through a wide range of images shown, but any detailed introduction and explanation of what is shown in the images and the cultural meanings of them are omitted in the narration.

Construction and direct display of Xin-Ye's heritage and culture are also built up with the use of insertion throughout the show. In the show, there are some specific moments that the focus of the lens will move away from the activities of the stars and focus on the filming locations. Insertion of labels indicating introduction is frequently used in *Dad, Where Are We Going*. Following the eyes of the star father Francis Ng Chun-yu, who was amazed by the beautiful and distinctive view from his room when he looked outside,



the camera took a shot of the ancient civilian residences. In the middle of the lens (see fig.5), the label stating, “distinctive Hui-Zhou style architecture in Jiang-Nan region” is inserted. Through the extension of the discovery and appreciation of the stars, as a continuing narration of the show, attention is shifted towards Xin-Ye. However, beyond this conscious inclusion of the place as part of the show, the insertion provides an off-screen voice which is directly from the show itself. While displaying the heritage of the filming location, the show also plays a role of noticing it, labeling it, and making use of it as a part of the show.



Figure 5. Xin-Ye Village in *Dad, Where Are We Going*. (Hunan TV, 2016)

## 2. EXPERIENCING HERITAGE

In *Dad, Where Are We Going*, filming locations and the local heritage are not only engaged by way of display, they are put under the construction of becoming somewhere and something to experience, to become part of personal memory. While living there with the locals, starring fathers and children are not only exposed to the local environment, but are also experiencing the local life, the local culture and heritage of the village through chosen activities that are customized according to local specialty. The relationships between fathers and children are supposed to grow through their intensive interactions with the essence of local life and local culture, which is perpetuated by the show.

Fighting for a house to stay in is always a central task for starring fathers and children. To be competitive and entertaining, accommodation of different comfort levels will be arranged. When they were in Xin-Ye, starring fathers and children lived respectively in Zui-Xian-Ju (Intoxicating immortal abode), Shuang-Mei-Tang (Hall of Double Beauty), Han-Mo-Xuan (House of imperial academic with ink), Shui-Yun-Jian (Between water and cloud), Zhong-De-Tang (Hall of plowing virtue). With the names of the houses only, the atmosphere of Xin-Ye as a historical and Confucian cultural village is created. These five accommodations can be divided into three types. Han-Mo-Xuan and Zhong-De-Tang are civilian residences of the locals, whose owners are still living there and therefore, rooms will be provided for the stars. Zui-Xian-Ju and Shuang-Mei-Tang used to belong to big wealthy families, but later became owned by the village collectively. Both places were uninhabited but specially allocated for the show. All the houses picked for the stars are listed subjects of the MHCSPL. As for Shui-Yun-Jian (fig.6), it was a creation



Figure 6. Shui-Yun-Jian in *Dad, Where Are We Going*. (Hunan TV, 2016)

by the show as a punishment for the last family in the house game. The main housing area is converted from a small wooden storage compartment and a mobile kitchen is deployed, which is actually a stalls trolley. Instead of visiting the historical village, the show creates an opportunity for the stars to live in history. Particularly, besides living in a living history with local residents, for stars who lived in Zui-Xian-Ju and Shuang-Mei-Tang, the history they lived in was a reused one, and for those who lived in Shui-Yun-Jian, it is a converted or even invented one.

Besides the architecture and the surrounding environment, in the show, stars also experienced a series of local cultures, customs and heritage through various of activities. Once the stars arrived at the village, host Rui Li, also known as the “village head” of the show dressed up as an ancient scholar for reception. A sense of history was immediately created for the stars, and this sense corresponds to the feature of Xin-Ye, a village of Ye-clan has been kept up for 800 years through farming and studying. Later in the show, stars were dressed up as ancient scholars (fig.7) for the activity Shei-Mei-Chi (Who did not eat), which is about the virtue of sharing.



Figure 7. Poster of Episode 4. (*Dad, Where Are We Going* 2014)

Starring fathers and children experienced traditional culture like making clay sculptures, learning calligraphy, and reading Confucius literary classics, *Di Zi Gui* and *San Zi Jing*, both of which are classic Chinese children’s texts emphasizing the basic requirements for being a good person. Though not much attention to Xin-Ye’s distinguishing custom of being a richly Confucius-influenced village is particularly given in the show, it has been widely engaged into the design of activities, letting the stars and audiences sense, feel, perceive and experience.

The show has also made full use of the historical and cultural background of Xin-Ye with its heritage of Xin-



Figure 8. Opera and catwalk performance. (Hunan TV, 2016)

Ye Kunqu Opera, which has been listed as Provincial Intangible Cultural Heritage of Zhejiang. The show arranges acting challenges for the stars, giving the fathers the task of preparing and performing an opera and another task for the children to invite friends from the local population to dress up and perform a cat-

walk performance together in the Kunqu opera theatre in the village, as a return treat for the locals (fig.8). The opera performance of the fathers turns out to be a performance of a classic folk legend set on Jiang-Nan region, Bai-She-Zhuan (Legend of the White Snake). What is noteworthy in this section is that in their experiences of Xin-Ye heritage, the stars are interacting with Xin-Ye Kunqu opera in a way arranged and transformed by the show. The opera stage, the traditional instruments, and the performing forms of Kunqu Opera, from singing, dresses to make-up, are employed but used in a new way. The experience of the local heritage is modified by the stars' personal experience and in a larger proportion, by arrangement of the show. Moreover, the locals are invited not just to be audiences, but to be involved into the making of experience as well.

### 3. ENGAGEMENT WITH THE LOCALS

Being in a reality show, the locals are engaged by the show in many ways. While the stars are participating in the local life, the locals are also participating in the shooting and activities of the show. The locals are part of the quaint village image that the show creates. During their participation, the locals always appear as the welcoming hosts and kind helpers, presenting the sincere and unsophisticated folk custom that the show was and the audience will be looking for.

In *Dad, Where Are We going*, the experience activities for the stars are not totally set up by the program team. The local community of Xin-Ye has also engaged in displaying their own heritage and culture, in designing and arranging activities for others to experience. The activity of Packing Zongzi, a traditional festival food of the locals, was first designed by the local community in the proposal for the first round of selection of the show and later on, revised by the program team (Wuhan Morning Post 2014). The final idea as shown in the broadcasting video (fig. 9&10) is the outcome of discussion and cooperation between



Figure 9. Representing Zongzi packing by local people in *Dad, Where Are We Going*. (Hunan TV, 2016)



Figure 10. Fathers Packing Zongzi in central pool of Xin-Ye in *Dad, Where Are We Going*. (Hunan TV, 2016)

the locals and the program team. After learning how to pack Zongzi from a local lady, starring fathers would row to the platform in the middle of the central pool of the village with basins and then finish the packing. The wooden basin is normally used as water transportation by the locals, for picking up and shipping lotus. Zongzi and the wooden basin are especially exploited for the show. At the same time of providing an entertainment activity, food culture and the local water farming production methods have their chances to be displayed and be experienced.

Under the lens of *Dad, Where Are We Going*, the landscape, local heritage, traditions, the local community and life in Xin-Ye are subjected to display and the image of Xin-Ye as a beautiful and quaint village like a living heaven of the past is constructed. Through the lens and the eyes of the celebrities, the show establishes itself as a discoverer and explorer of Xin-Ye. While the show makes use of the local heritage and culture for the video production and creation of its activities and programs, the show is also laying its definition on what is special about the place, what the culture, tradition and heritage of the place is. Moreover, Heritage and Xin-Ye village as a whole are presented as an authentic experience for the celebrities. The experience of heritage and locality, however, is one that is filtered by the personal experience, and in a greater degree, selected and re-created by the show. While the locals are part of the experience of the past, they also engage in the construction and reconstruction of Xin-Ye heritage, although the power of deciding what will be presented and in what way still lies in the hands of the show. Through the display and the experience of the celebrities, Xin-Ye as a living example of the past with characteristic heritage and culture is presented and constructed. The destination created for the stars to experience becomes somewhere well-worth being seen, visited and consumed for the target audience of the show.

## Chapter 5 THE COMMUNITY AFTER THE SHOW: XIN-YE ON CHANGE

Like what happened to the other filming locations, the boom of tourism immediately befell Xin-Ye Village after the airing of the show. With tourists and different kinds of visitors coming from all around the country, and the ensuing hustle and bustle, the village experienced rapid and radical change in various ways. Logos of the show *Dad, Where Are We Going* appeared everywhere on the sites; houses lived in and things used by the celebrities became tourist attractions (even for those re-invented ones) and were put into display; framing straw hats and rice cakes that are common around the region were sold with logo of Xin-Ye; restaurants and guest houses opened; wide roads and huge parking lots were constructed. However, behind the scenes of the unprecedented boom and seeming prosperity, what was changing on the village was more complicated. The show had become a valuable business card for the village, and a part of what people associate with Xin-Ye when they speak of the place and its uniqueness and attraction. But how have the meanings, values and usages of the local heritage changed? Whose heritage and for whose interest it has become? Furthermore, how has the living community and the life of local residents changed after the show? More concretely, what does the fame of the show and boom of tourism mean for the locals and what influence have the changes brought to their life? What do they think of the changes happening in the place they have been living? While the provincial and local government is promoting the harvesting development on the community, is it the case for the locals? With the multi-layer authorities from different governmental bureaus, the prospect of local identity and local branding being established on cultural property, and development of the tourist industry driven out from the most inviting economic interests of the tourist market interweaving in Xin-Ye, what would the future of the community and especially, the people who grow up, live and have their cultural roots there be?

### 1. THE BOOM OF TOURISM

Development of the tourism industry in Xin-Ye started in 2009, 'but it did not go well because we were doing it by ourselves' said the secretary of the Villagers' Committee, in my interview with him, and who is

also a local resident and descendant of the Yu-Hua Ye clan, ‘Until we have a tourist company.’<sup>5</sup> The new An-Jiang Tourist Development Limited Liability Company set up and owned by Jian-De city government was introduced to the village in 2010. Under the running and management of the tourist company, the village experienced a series of construction projects. Through construction of tourist infrastructure, renewal of residential houses, culture upgrades and other measures, tourism in Xin-Ye began to grow and the number of yearly visitors reached around twenty thousand (Zheng 2015). Even so, the village was still quite tranquil and the changing pace of life for the locals were relatively slight, until *Dad, Where Are We Going* came.

### **Re-experiencing *Dad, Where Are We Going***

‘No one could have seen all these coming, and even after we were on TV, we did not expect so many tourists would be around the village’<sup>6</sup>. Though the Xin-Ye people are familiar with different kinds of visitors since Architecture Professor Zihua Chen came visit and started doing fieldwork in 1989, they never expected their homeland to become nationally famous and to have so many tourists coming and staying. The site was re-opened to the public two months after the show, on July 6. Visitor numbers peaked to their highest immediately, and the continuing high flow of visitors during the second half of the year contributes to a total visitor number of twelve thousand in 2014, according to the information provided by the manager of the site Ms. Zhang. She also told me that, “After closing the shooting event of *Dad, Where Are We Going*, we re-organized some resources, and set up billboards in and around the sites. We also launched a tourist itinerary based on the *Dad, Where Are We Going* theme, which was and still is very popular in the market under promotion. We invested more than three million (RMB) in promotion after the show, and that is rewarding.”<sup>7</sup> After the show, a large amount of visitors in small groups like families, friend groups and tour groups ranging from 20 to 40 people started to flow into this little village from all over the country. During the Golden Week holiday in October 2014, ‘people needed to wait for hours before they could get the entrance ticket, but people still kept coming’<sup>8</sup> as recalled by one employee working on the site. Family groups with children were particularly common, both in cases of independent travel and tour groups. In my conversation with different visitors, most of them got to know Xin-Ye through the show and saw the village as a very good choice for a family one-day trip. One day said, ‘The show reminds me to have more time with our children instead of work. Through visiting here, besides from having fun together, I want to show my child that though I might not be a celebrity dad like who she saw on TV, I love her just like any dad on the show.’<sup>9</sup>

Most tourists stay in the village for half to one whole day, but during the weekends and longer national holidays, some of them, road trip travelers in most cases, stay for one night or two. Father-child relationship or, in a boarder sense, family kinship are not the only tourist experience feature from the show. One segment of the show, celebrities dressing up as ancient scholars studying in Wen-Chang-Ge (Culture/Study Prosperity Temple), is transformed and packaged for student groups organized by primary schools and

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<sup>5</sup> Interview with Ye, Xiangbin, the secretary of the Villager’s Committee, on March 25, 2016 in Xin-Ye.

<sup>6</sup> Conversation with one local resident on March 22, 2016 in Xin-Ye.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Manager Zhang on March 25, 2016 in Xin-Ye.

<sup>8</sup> Conversation with one local resident working at the site.

<sup>9</sup> Conversation with one male visitor in his 30s from Hangzhou City, taking his daughter and his parents for one-day trip in Xin-Ye.



education associations. Since the tour theme and itinerary correspond with the educational programs in school, Xin-Ye has also become a popular and 'rightful' choice for primary schools from Zhejiang and other



Figure 11. Students reading San-Zi-Jing in ancient dress. (Photo by author 2016)

neighboring provinces. It's thus getting common to see groups of students (See fig.11), wearing ancient scholar hats and dresses, chasing around the lanes in the village, and then gathered up by their teachers to read texts from Confucius literary classics, while some parents holding cameras, record this treasured moment of growth of their beloved kids and saying, 'it is like in the show.'<sup>10</sup>

### Visitors of Different Types

Through the presentation of the show, the well-preserved cluster of historical architecture and beautiful landscape of Xin-Ye has also become well-known and attractive to other kinds of visitors. The village has become an education and research base for several universities, and thus has attracted students from architecture department and art schools for internships and training programs. The locals are very welcoming to those students, which is slightly different from most one-day tourists. Art students usually stay in the village for weeks, and architecture students could stay a few months. 'They live with us, and of course we just charge them the most basic price. It's not easy to stay away from home for that long. We treat them like our children, letting them sleep in our children's rooms.'<sup>11</sup> Most of the local youths are away from the village and work in the city. Not being able to see their children very often, and with respect and belief in education, most villagers living in Xin-Ye show sincere care to long-stay students. Other visitors who usually stay longer are those with cameras. Also having a long-term connection with several photographer associations, art festivals and becoming the shooting base of some video websites, newspapers and TV channels, the village is expecting lots of photographers from these associations and

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<sup>10</sup> One expression I overheard from parents accompanying their children on the school trips on March 30, 2016 in Xin-Ye. I heard similar expressions lots of times when I was following various school groups. In spring and autumn, the site could expect around ten school trip groups every day, with 20 to 60 students in each groups.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Ye on March 28, 2016 in their home in Xin-Ye. Owning a three-floor house but having only their grandson living with them, the couple opened two floors of their house and started to run guesthouse business at 2014. In my other interviews and conversations with local residents that open guesthouses, most of them mentioned that they gave special discount to students willingly.

individual photography enthusiasts. Compared with other visitors, photographers usually stay over from two or three days to a week, mostly on weekdays. They also have an inclination towards particular time periods like the canola and lotus seasons, farmland harvesting season, or festival days of the village, most famously, the 3<sup>rd</sup> March Ancestor Worship Ceremony, which is a listed provincial intangible cultural heritage of Xin-Ye.

The reality show *Dad, Where Are We Going* has put Xin-Ye under the spotlight of the booming domestic tourist market of China and has attracted large amounts of tourists from different regions, with various purposes, in different forms. The particularities of Xin-Ye created and shaped by the show have also become what the tourist company promotes to the market and what the tourists seek in their experiences. Heritage preservation in Xin-Ye also goes hand in hand with tourism development in the government's strategy. The Xin-Ye Historical Village Preservation and Utilization Management Committee set up by Jian-De city government co-manages the tourist development of Xin-Ye with the tourist company (Zheng 2015). Preservation on heritage and culture of Xin-Ye is highlighted, yet meanwhile, local heritage and culture are seen and treated as the property of tourism and further the development of the economy. As said by the manager of tourist company, 'We would dip into culture and develop it into industry, making it possible to lead villagers towards gentrification.'<sup>12</sup>

## 2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND GENTRIFICATION

The boom of tourism under the effect of *Dad, Where Are We Going* is considered to have brought a new atmosphere to the village, provoking a promising development in the village and gentrification to the locals. 'Apart from the renovation of historical buildings, Xin-Ye has improved infrastructure and developed its folk culture. Economic income has reached more than two million' (Gan 2016) reported by the party committee secretary of Xin-Ye in Jian-De city conference.

Under the agreement between New An-Jiang Tourist Development LLC. and the villagers' committee, 30 percent of entrance ticket value would be given back to the village. In the secretary's words, 'it is rewarding for the village.'<sup>13</sup> The tourist company creates job opportunities for the locals as well. From ticket officers, to tour guides, to cleaners, security guards, almost all employees working on the site are local residents of Xin-Ye.

### Guesthouses and Restaurants

The tourist boom has led to self-gentrification of the locals. Restaurants and guest houses are the most thriving. Having only eight before the show was aired, there are now more than 40 guest houses in the village. 'The children are out in the city so the houses are empty anyway. There is barely any cost and the business is promising.'<sup>14</sup> Seeing that Xin-Ye was recommended on some top travel websites like Qunar.com, some villagers put information about their guesthouses online and started to get contacts and booking

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with Manager Zhang on March 25, 2016 in Xin-Ye.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Ye, Xiangbin, the secretary of the Villager's Committee, on March 25, 2016 in Xin-Ye.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Ye on March 28, 2016 in their home in Xin-Ye.

orders from guests. Guichang Ye built an Inn, ‘Geng-Du-Yuan’ (Destiny of Farming and Studying) with eight rooms in total in 2014. A short distance away from the village center, the Inn relies more on online orders.

Restaurant business is flourishing as well. Especially for those family who happened to treat the celebrities in one of the challenge activities of the show, the offer then becomes a money tree afterwards. Restaurant Ru-Meng-Jia (fig.12) was the treating house of Lu-Yi and his daughter, and after the show, the family saw the opportunity to open a home restaurant. Like most home restaurants in the village, what they offer are daily dishes local people have, with food materials mostly grown themselves. With the advertising effect of being a treating house, the family business has been prospering and now, they have earned enough money to redecorate their house and upgrade the kitchen into a well-equipped almost professional standard one.



Figure 12. Ru-Meng-Jia Restaurant with screen shot of Lu-Yi and his daughter eating in the family from *Dad, Where Are We Going*. (Photo by author 2016)

### Selling the ‘Local Specialties’ of Xin-Ye

With the increase of visitors, some villagers opened small shops, or just pulled a stall car out on the street



Figure 13. The locals selling vegetables, toys and food in the street. (Photo by author 2016)

and started doing business, selling food and snacks, agricultural products like home grown vegetables and dehydrated vegetables. Some would also sell toys (fig.13). “I earn more than farming and it’s more relaxing,” said one woman cheerfully selling fried radish cake at the entrance street of the village<sup>16</sup>.

Through the show, and compliments from the celebrities, local home-made drinks and snacks like steamed sweet rice cake, the production methods of which are passed down through generations, become famous and popular as well. As the production ends, the locals are seizing the promotion opportunity by picking up

<sup>16</sup> Interview with one local resident on March 24, 2016 in Xin-Ye.



the connection with the show as one of the selling points. For the first time, what the local people made for daily consumption are for sale and regarded as the specialty of Xin-Ye. Other small snacks and farm-used products like straw hats are sold with the logo of *Dad, Where Are We Going* (fig.14) and the name of Xin-Ye on the package. Traditional customs of drinking, production of drinks and snacks, and farm implements can be commonly found around the region, but now, with the fame of *Dad, Where Are We Going*, Xin-Ye Village has become a logo with added value. Additionally, establishing a name for home-made biological products from the fresh countryside environment, the ‘local specialties’ of Xin-Ye are getting increasingly competitive in the market, especially when the prices are relatively low compared with the average in city. But the net profit can still be quite sizeable for the villagers. One villager told me that ‘we can sell one sweet rice cake for 10 *yuan* to tourists and they are happy about the price. But it costs around 2 *yuan* only if you make a lot at one time. When we want to buy one from each other, we usually spend 5 *yuan* at most.’<sup>17</sup>



Figure 14. Straw hat with logo of *Dad, Where Are We Going*. (Photo by author 2016)

### The Return of the Youth and Family Business

Xiaoning, Ye’s family is now the specialized household making steamed sweet rice cakes in the village, undertaking all the production of rice cake and almost the whole rice cake business of Xin-Ye. After the tourist boom, while most villagers were opening home restaurants and guest houses, Xiaoning, an ex-serviceman of around 30, found out that rice cakes made by his parents were selling very well. Then he decided to convert their old house, which lies at the entrance of the village, into a home workshop: *Xin-Ye Ancient Rhym* which is now known as ‘Xin-Ye rice cake’.



Figure 15. Xiaoning and fresh-made sweet rice cake from Xin-Ye Gu Yun in article in Feng-Shou-Gou E-commerce platform. (Jiande Rural Credit Cooperatives 2016)



Figure 16. Billboard of Xin-Ye sweet rice cake with *Dad, Where Are We Going* logo and scene of celebrities eating the cake from the show. (Photo by author 2016)

<sup>17</sup> Conversation with one local resident on March 25, 2016 in Xin-Ye.

Gradually, the business grew, and other villagers or shops in the village replenished with rice cakes from Xiaoning's family. 'It saves our time to make them, and we are happy to help. We are all Xin-Ye villagers.'<sup>19</sup>, so said the shop owner next to Xiaoning's workshop. Now, Xiaoning has further expanded the family business through different platforms of E-commerce and certificated himself as a manager of agricultural products. On his web-shop 'Xin-Ye Specialty' in Feng-Shou-Gou (Harvest Shopping), a Zhejiang E-shopping platform, 'Xin-Ye Rice Cake' is sold 16 *yuan* per one and has become a star product well-received by customers, being praised for the persistence of traditional craftsmanship and totally hand-made without chemical additives (Jiande Rural Credit Cooperatives 2016). Xiaoning and the customers both highlight the value of tradition and health. The traditional seems to mean the healthy and green.

Young people like Xiaoning are attracted back home from the city under the development in the village<sup>20</sup>. Using their knowledge and being more flexible in adopting different business skills, especially media promotion and E-commerce platforms, they start off and run the business well with the support of family and villagers of Xin-Ye. The Xi-Shan Family (fig.17) would be a good example of how the local residents lead



Figure 17. Xi-Shan Family. (Photo by author 2016)



Figure 18. Exhibition board of Xi-Shan Family. (Photo by author 2016)

themselves to self-gentrification in the wave of the tourist boom. Starting from catering, which is still the main business nowadays, the Xi-Shan Family run by Yunqi Ye has kept expanding. After cooperating with some tour agencies, Xi-Shan received bookings of local cuisines from tour groups. 'Sometimes we prepare around 40 or even 50 tables a day. It is so busy, we hardly have any break in between.'<sup>21</sup> Not only relatives are asked to come help with the family business, but other villagers as well. Further to this, Yunqi renovated

<sup>19</sup> Interview with one home shop owner on March 38, 2016 in Xin-Ye.

<sup>20</sup> No data on the exact number of young people going back to the village for livelihood so far. As I am aware of, however, according to my observation and stories I heard from the locals, there are around 30 of those went out to city for work came back to the village after the show to set up business of their own or help with the family business in different kinds.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Ye, Yunqi and his wife on March 26, 2015 in Xi-Shan Family, Xin-Ye.

the house so guests could stay there as well. Later on, in the doorway, Yunqi opened up a window on the street side to sell the Xin-Ye specialty. What is different about Yunqi's business story is that Yunqi made an exhibition board beside the selling window, showing photos of the shop and specialties of Xin-Ye being on TV shows and complimented by stars (fig.18). Yunqi also introduced bubble tea to the village and provides a takeaway and delivery service within the village; orders can be made through phone and WeChat. Bubble tea is well received by young visitors around the village, children and students in particular. When speaking about the good business of Xi-Shan Family, Yunqi's mother is very happy, though also very busy everyday. But what makes her happier is Yunqi's return. Other women helping the family in Xi-Shan also expressed their wishes to see young people going back home.

After the show, the locals were happy to see the improvement of infrastructure in the village, and the fact that 'we can earn more than just farming and do not have to go out to the city'<sup>22</sup>. More joyful for the older generation living alone at home is the return of their children. With The dramatic impact of the show, establishment of the local brand, development of tourist industry and gentrification of the community in Xin-Ye, have been constantly highlighted by the local government. However, while Xin-Ye is now considered to be a paradigm of innovative preservation and a model for historical village development (M. Wang 2016), pushing forward the development of the cultural tourist industry, in Xin-Ye it is being suggested and supported by the government. However, is what is happening in the village and the tourist boom triggered by the show really problem-free? How does the show and tourist development shade their influence while establishing the concept of heritage and culture of Xin-Ye? How do the local residents feel about all the changes in their birth and living place?

### 3. CHANGING PERCEPTIONS OF HERITAGE

Xin-Ye has become inseparably tied up with *Dad, Where Are We Going*. People get to know Xin-Ye through the show, visit Xin-Ye because of the show, look for show-related elements in Xin-Ye that they can connect their TV experience and memory with. While, at the same time, Xin-Ye is also associating itself with the show, as a way to promote and to establish added value for local products. The New An-Jiang Tourist Development Company has fully used the reputation of Xin-Ye as a filming location of *Dad, Where Are We Going*, integrating different elements of the show into the site and creating experience that tourists can interact with. Like what the celebrity fathers and children do and experience in the show, the Reality Show is on air in Xin-Ye everyday now.

#### **The *Dad, Where Are We Going* Xin-Ye**

After the show, based on the farming and studying cultural tour, a theme that the company regards as the local particularity and local culture of Xin-Ye, a Parent-Child itinerary integrating the local culture and elements from the show was designed and launched out (see Appendix A). The new travel theme of Parent-Child tours swiftly became the priority product that the company aims to promote and a leading sale in the tour market. The itinerary released right after the show contained a series of exhibitions and experiencing and entertaining activities to do with the local culture and heritage. Yet with 'Xin-Ye Ancient Village Celebrity Customized Parent-Child Tour' as it is called, experience of the local custom, heritage and local

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<sup>22</sup> Interview with Ye, Yunqi and his wife on March 26, 2015 in Xi-Shan Family, Xin-Ye.

life is as one with the show. Programs like Traditional Chinese Culture Experience, Basketball Games and Wooden Basin Rowing, which incidentally was designed and created for the show based on Xin-Ye's characteristics are now transformed and set up for tourists. Different historical buildings are threaded through the connection with the show and shown with labels of the stars. Xin-Ye is not simply a place where people can visit, travel and spend a leisure day, nor a place that people can draw cultural experience and memory about the old times from. A visit of Xin-Ye for tourists has also become a physical flashback to the show, an interaction with the show and an imagined replay of the show now.

The show has not only shaped and influenced what is considered to be the culture of Xin-Ye, but become a part of the uniqueness, the past, the culture of Xin-Ye. Things that were used or made by the celebrities, like clay sculptures, the bed they slept on, are kept, labeled and displayed side by side with other material and exhibition objects in the historical buildings, as though they are part of the history of Xin-Ye. Traditional farming implements such as wheelbarrows which serve as a representation of local farming culture, were adopted by the show as filming props, and used in the activity that the star fathers. They arranged to use the barrows to transport their children to targeted destination. The new usage of the wheelbarrow and the activities have now been adapted back by the company to the site. In this way, the show is integrated back into the local context. The multilayer of the local heritage can also be seen on the visitors' perceptions. One visitor writes in her tourist writing that in You-Xu-Tang, the image of a Green Snake and White Snake (roles that celebrities play in the show) emerged when she saw the traditional opera stage (Huzhou 2014). When the local residents<sup>23</sup> speak about Xin-Ye Kunqu Opera, apart from the memory about watching opera plays in the olden days and in the 3<sup>rd</sup> March Ancestor Worship Ceremony, the story of the local Kunqu opera troupe, the show and the performance of the celebrities are also mentioned nowadays. Through the construction of the show, and the consistent reconstruction from the tourist company, the tourists and the locals themselves, the show becomes another layer of the identity of Xin-Ye.

### **Identity in Multilayer**

As time passed and the shooting of the show continued in other places, now, almost two years after the show undertook its filming at Xin-Ye, the butterfly effect of *Dad, Where Are We Going* has started to wane. While the identity of filming location of *Dad, Where Are We Going* and a place of Parent-Child tourism has been and continues to be an indelible brand of Xin-Ye, some people start to look at Xin-Ye behind the glow of the show, and other groups of tourists besides parents and children increased. Since the second half of 2015, Parent-Child Tour itinerary started to shift from the simulated tour experience of the show and the conceptualized Parent-Child relationship. One day or weekend in Xin-Ye village is not only about the show experience. It becomes a chance to enhance the personal relationship between parents and children, which is the essential concept of the show. Therefore, the itinerary and activity arrangements are no longer necessary to be show-orientated. More space, then, is left for the local elements, which have already integrated with those of the show.

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<sup>23</sup> I conducted semi-structured interviews with more than 30 local residents in different length, which depended largely on the schedule of the interviewees, about their perceptions of the heritage of Xin-Ye. The answers differ from each other, but Xin-Ye Kunqu is mentioned by every interviewee and a large proportion of them spoke about the performance of the celebrities before I referred to it.



A group containing eleven families from Shanghai, organized by the Shanghai Happy Parent-Child Activity Camp Company, spent a two-day-and-one-night Parent-Child tour in Xin-Ye from March 26 to 27, 2016. The manager of the group told me that the company has long-term cooperation with the site and brings groups here every weekend. Xin-Ye is having the canola season in March and April and therefore is attracting more visitors. Highlights of the tour pamphlet include: visiting Hui-style historical buildings and appreciating the farming and studying culture, as promoted by the site; enjoying the canola landscape in the village; recalling the childhood of the parents through activities that the parents used to play while experiencing scenes from *Dad, Where Are We Going*; enhancing children's sports skills and English. A Parent-Child Amusement Park (fig.19) was build in the site in 2015, allowing family tourists to engage in interacting activities together. Inside the park, activities provided by the site include Soybean Grinding, Wheelbarrow Games; Group rope jumping; Steel hoop rolling; Simulation Gun Wars. Besides the activities from the show-customized itinerary, other activities have been introduced. Particularly, the idea of nostalgia and enhancing kinship through sharing in the memory of the parents with children are put forward (fig.20). Meanwhile, the culture and heritage of Xin-Ye stand out without priority reference to the show. In a way, name of the Xin-Ye Historical Village is gaining its own symbolic capital.



Figure 19. The Xin-Ye Ancient Village Parent-Child Amusement Park. (Photo by author 2016)



Figure 20. Parents and children from a Parent-Child tour group playing with a wheelbarrow in the Amusement Park. (Photo by author 2016)

After 2016, apart from Parent-Child tours, the New An-Jiang tourist company is taking increasing care in packaging and promoting the landscape and local culture of Xin-Ye. The site sees more and more painters, photographers and senior citizen tour groups. Canola has been one of the frequently planted crops for the locals. After the *Dad, Where Are We Going* craze, the tourist company started to promote Xin-Ye as a destination for appreciating the beauty of an ancient paradise surrounded by canola, 'the most perfect specimen of a Chinese ancient village<sup>24</sup> in spring' as it stated in its WeChat e-pamphlet (New An-Jiang Tourist 2016). While the landscape beauty is well-received by all types of tourists, senior citizens in particular show more interest in the farming and studying culture of Xin-Ye, while photographers are generally more attracted by the architecture and cultural festivals. With this in mind, the tourist company started to promote the intangible heritage of Xin-Ye, Xin-Ye Qunqu Opera and 3<sup>rd</sup> March Ancestor Worship

<sup>24</sup> Title 'The most perfect specimen of Chinese ancient village' is given by Chensheng Xie, honorary president of Chinese Society of Cultural Relics and consultant of State Administration of Cultural Heritage.

Ceremony. Among the component parts of cultural values in the tourism context: aesthetic value, spiritual value, social value, historical value, symbolic value and authenticity value (Throsby 2009), aesthetic value is particularly highlighted by the tourist company. The local government also regards developing Xin-Ye as being a photography creation base as an effective way of local branding and cultural heritage promoting. In You-Xu-Tang, the main and the most sacred ancestor temple of local Ye-Clan, a photography exhibition is held. (see fig.21&22). The photos are from a photography calling competition co-organized by Jiande City Government, Hangzhou City Photographers Association and Jiande City Photographers Association in June 2014.



Figure 21. Photography Exhibition in You-Xu-Tang. (Photo by author 2016)



Figure 22. Photography of 3rd March Ancestor Worship Ceremony with Xin-Ye Kunqu Opera players on stage. (Photo by author 2016)

Countryside Memory is put forward by the local government and used by the tourist company. Xin-Ye was nominated as a Model of Countryside Memory of Zhejiang Province in 2013. The spirit of ‘Generating through Farming and Studying’ has been defined by the village committee as an essential part of Xin-Ye culture, and exhibitions including traditional farming implements, countryside furniture, genealogical tree books are set up in different historical buildings that are owned collectively by the village. These exhibitions, and as a matter of fact, the whole village are now opened for the tourists as a source of countryside memory. Under the context of democratization of travel in China, rather than a process of promoting the self to others, tourism is about promoting the self to oneself (Shepherd and Yu 2013). Old tourists in Xin-Ye present more intensive interaction with Xin-Ye as a way that seeing it as a representation of their own old time, as their memory of the village coming alive again.

The tourism boom triggered by the show and Parent-Child Tour with an orientation of flashback to the show and physical re-experience of the show have added different meanings to Xin-Ye and its heritage. During the process of tourist promotion and creation of imitated experience, Xin-Ye is tied up more closely with this identity as filming location of *Dad, Where Are We Going*. Later on, the show has been re-adopted and re-used by Xin-Ye and has become another part of the local culture. Establishing its own fame through the show, Xin-Ye finds itself becoming a destination of Parent-Child tours in a boarder sense. Meanwhile, with the interest of different types of tourists and different promotion strategies employed by the tourist company and the local government, increasingly exploration and attention are drawn back to local culture and heritage of Xin-Ye. While the logo of the filming location of *Dad, Where Are We Going* has been outstandingly stamped onto Xin-Ye, the name and title ‘Open-air Museum of Ming and Qing Dynasty

Historical Buildings’, ‘The Most Typical Farming Village in Southeast China’, and ‘National Historical and Cultural Famous Village’ that were given by experts and government are gradually put under the spotlight and known by the public.

#### 4. CONFLICTS AND CHALLENGES

With the name of filming location of *Dad, Where Are We Going*, development and gentrification have been brought to Xin-Ye. However, looking into what the locals think is the heritage of Xin-Ye, how they value their heritage, how they view and feel about the tourist development in the village, and their life experience after the show, the strategy of preserving heritage as an economic asset of the village and promoting Parent-Child and historical village tourism development that are applauded as an excellent example of innovative preservation of historical village, is not as perfect as it seems. Exploitation of the influence of the popular show as a way for local branding, tourist development and economic growth casts a shadow on the impact on the meaning and value of heritage in Xin-Ye and the local community. As the importance of the past in promoting economic development has grown, more and more control of what is said and done with the past has been wrested from local communities (Duke 2007). In the process of tourist development in Xin-Ye, conflicts between different stakeholders in multi-levels not only emerge with regards to the interpretation, display and usage of local heritage. Issues of ownership and management of heritage, which is more concrete and down-to-earth, are getting on edge in Xin-Ye, particularly in a situation that people are still and will be living in the village and living with their heritage.

#### The Missing Local Stories

Introduction boards and brochures at the site are mostly about the local connection with the show *Dad, Where Are We Going*. Old buildings can be found across the village, whereas only those show-related ones are included in the tour walk and are supplied with introductory signs. In signs of each sightseeing spot, instead of the historical and cultural background about the historical buildings, information provided is about the activities the celebrities conducted in the place. Even the names of the buildings are followed by another one that indicates the function of the buildings in the show. Shrine Wen-Chang-Ge is also called the School of Chinese cultural studies, while the ancestor temple You-Xu-Tang is also called the Big Theatre.



Figure 23. Sign boards of Wen-Chang-Ge and You-Xu-Tang with new names and introductions about the show activities. (Photo by author 2016)



After being a filming location of *Dad, Where Are We Going* and the tourist development in the village, the gap between the tourist site and the locals in terms of what is being said about the uniqueness and the heritage of Xin-Ye village is getting increasingly wide. When the locals offered me a walk with great enthusiasm, showing me around the village and their houses, many of them took completely different routes. The locals all know the ancestor temples and each other's places well. 'It is not a big village and there is not much to do. So we like walking around and dropping by and chatting a bit with each other.'<sup>25</sup> Besides showing me different ancestor temples and telling me a lot about the clan history and traditional festivals, they led me to different villagers' home. The locals still keep the custom of leaving their doors open when they are at home and welcome others dropping by. Special attention is paid to the woodcarving of the houses and antithetical couplets besides the layout and furniture, and these two elements have never been highlighted in the tourist introduction. Heritage matters when the stories about heritage matter (Holtorf 2010). When speaking about what is the Heritage of Xin-Ye, local people also talk a lot about their ancestor temples, and not just the architecture. A few old citizens sitting or playing chess in front of the temple You-Xu-Tang told me the meaning of and stories about the plaques, designs of the woodcarving and the antithetical couplets<sup>26</sup>. However, in the exhibition video and the tour guide introduction of You-Xu-Tang, the stories and the meanings related to the clan history that the locals told me are unheard and have been replaced by the stories of the show *Dad, Where Are We Going*.

The home-made drinks of the locals, snacks like sweet rice cakes and small Zongzi which appeared on the show are introduced by the tourist company and perceived by the visitors as the local specialty of Xin-Ye. The locals thereafter embrace the perception and sell these well-known specialties with logo of Xin-Ye and with advisement about its connection with the show. Some locals, however, express a different response to these Xin-Ye specialties invented by the show and enforced by the tourist industry. Never having thought of their home-made drinks as specialty of Xin-Ye, they say, 'it is part of our daily life and people make it all around the region. The taste might be different from each household, but that is why we made it for ourselves and the family and friends. We do not make them for sale.'<sup>27</sup> As for the popular sweet rice cake, it is seldom seen, made or consumed by the locals themselves. A lot of old citizens even harshly call it 'stuff made for tourists now'. 'We made it occasionally. We have more delicious and special snacks that you cannot find outside of our village.' During my stay, some local housewives offered me some snacks they made in order to show me what the 'real special snacks of Xin-Ye people' are. As a part of their clan tradition, local people, senior members in particular, show good care about their own tradition and heritage. To keep the history and pass down the inheritance of their clan, some senior members have been devoting themselves to recording the clan tree and local history spontaneously for years. Villager Ye, Guichang opened a website that the community regards as their own in 2009. Under Guichang's effort also, the culture study association of Xin-Ye historical village was founded and has since been running the website. The website introduces the latest news about Xin-Ye, the history and heritage of Xin-Ye from locals and

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<sup>25</sup> Conversation in my walk with local resident Ye, Zhengli on March 16, 2016 in Xin-Ye.

<sup>26</sup> Conversations I had with several senior members of the local community on March 18, 2016. During my stay, I can found people sitting in the public space in front of their ancestor temples every weekday (the village sees more tourists during the weekend). Senior members in the village are generally willing to talk about their ancestor temples.

<sup>27</sup> Group Interview with local residents Ye, Sainian and her neighbors on March 23, 2016 in Xin-Ye.



from academics, discussion of preservation of Xin-Ye, tourist information, and Ye-clan information. While the locals are trying to make their voice about the local heritage, and also participating in reconstructing Xin-Ye in the new context, their stories are still less heard next to the *Dad, Where Are We Going* and the tourist market.

### **Becoming Assets for Tourist Development and Displacement in Process**

People at the site can hardly see that the site is only one part of Xin-Ye, though they are guided to the tourist center to buy an entrance ticket for the village. There is no clear boundary because the buildings now managed by the site and made accessible to the tourists are scattered around the village in and amongst the houses that the locals are still living in. Maps and signs, tourist brochures and guiding leaflets (see Appendix B.) can be seen at the site and all suggest that the site includes all the historical buildings in the village and the surrounding farmland. An agreement between the New An-Jiang tourist company and the village committee clarifies that the company are endorsed with management rights to some public areas and some historical buildings that are collectively own by the village, including the shrine and shrine tower, two ancestor temples, and another two historical resident houses. However, sightseeing spot 04. Han-Mo-Xuan and 09. Zhong-De-Tang shown in the leaflet are still privately owned. House owner of Han-Mo-Xuan runs a calligraphy and clay sculpture workshop in his house and has been opening the house to the public for free while in buildings run by the site now, tickets will be checked for entrance. Zhong-De-Tang's owner is not willing to cooperate with the company and open their houses to the public. However, being one of the accommodation places of two celebrity families, the company includes these two houses on the map of the site still and makes signs for Zhong-De-Tang in another publicly-accessible house.

After Xin-Ye was nominated as the National Historical and Cultural Village in 2009, a group of buildings was separately listed as Major Historical and Cultural Site Protected at the Provincial Level in 2011 and then at the National Level in 2013. Old buildings on list are included into the renovation project run by SACH and its local bureau, which is under the command of the local government. Due to the renovation project and the development plan for the village, the local government mapped out an expanding land, which is on the outlying area of the village, for villagers to build new houses. Meanwhile, the tourist company is hoping to include more buildings into its managing area and the village committee is trying to persuade villagers to agree on the tourist development plan of the village. However, some villagers, whose houses were not picked out for the list or are not under construction, still prefer to live in their old houses. Also, like the owner of Zhong-De-Tang, some villagers are still quite reluctant about putting their own houses into use for tourist exhibition. Still, the new district is expanding rapidly and increasingly villagers are moving out to the new district. Villagers construct new houses in modern style, but the appearance of houses is uniformed in archaistic Hui-style under the regulations of the local government, in order to 'preserve the landscape of Xin-Ye as a Ming-and-Qing architectural historical village (Xin-Ye Historical Village Preservation and Utilization Management Committee 2013)'(see fig.24&25). The younger generation prefers the new houses, which are equipped and decorated in modern style. Motivated by the support of family and the financial preferential policy offered by the government, young people working in the city, where the house prices are generally more than they can afford, also come back and build new houses in the district. The seniors, still in keeping with the old lifestyle and customs, are also settling down now and do not intend to go back even when the renovation is finished for their children.



Figure 24. Landscape of Xin-Ye Village (Photo by author 2016)



Figure 25. Xin-Ye New District. (Photo by author 2016)

Ancestor temples are regarded to be the hardest part to deal with by the government. You-Xu-Tang and Xi-Shan Ancestor Temple are the two main ancestor temples of all the Yu-Hua Ye-clan descendants in the village and there are in total ten sub-ancestor temples on a different scale, which belonged to different branches of Ye-clan (Li and Chen 2011). ‘The temple is about our ancestors, our family, ourselves! It is a matter of descendants!’<sup>28</sup> ‘It is written on the Ancestral Instruction and carved on the temple wall that we shouldn’t bring any destruction to the temple otherwise it would be shameful being a descendant of Ye.’<sup>29</sup> Villagers have more personal intimacy with their own sub-ancestor temples because it is the place they worship their own parents and grandparents, hold their wedding ceremonies and funerals. ‘We are all brothers and sisters of course but if we are from the same branch, we feel closer.’<sup>30</sup>

### Economic Interest

Discontent with the distribution of economic benefits and distrust of the local government are quite widespread among the villagers. Although it was agreed that thirty percent of the entrance ticket income would be returned back to the village, villagers told me (during the time I was in the village, March 14 to April 3, 2016) that they didn’t receive anything from the tourist company in the last two years. The only extra economic reward they received from the village is 50 *yuan* in 2014 and 60 in 2015 of health insurance allowance.

As with the promised entrance profit which did not seem to benefit the locals in reality, preservation of the heritage of Xin-Ye and utilization of it as an asset for the gentrification of the local community turn out to be not being as promising for the locals as pictured by the local government and claimed by the tourist company. With the increase of tourists, opening restaurants, guesthouses and selling local specialties have become the main economic development sources for the locals. However, self-gentrification can succeed when it follows the residents’ own initiative and allows them to draw lines around their own traditionalizing (Herzfeld 2015). In 2016, the tourist company bought historical buildings from the locals and renovated them into guesthouses and hostels. Calling themselves guesthouses still, three hotels run by the company aim to provide a living experience of a Xin-Ye family. Kitchens are equipped so that guests can self-serve

<sup>28</sup> Interview with local resident Ye, Guichang on March 27, 2016 in Xin-Ye. Ye is a former teacher in Jiande City and is respected by the locals as one of the leaders in the clan.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with local resident Ye, Hongfu on March 29, 2016 in Xin-Ye. Ye is the head of Xin-Ye Seniors Association and has been responsible for preserving and the writing of Genealogy Book of Ye-Clan.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with local resident Ye, Zhengli on March 22, 2016 in Xin-Ye.

like the celebrity fathers did in the show, cooking for the kids as a way to enhance family bonding. These self-claimed Xin-Ye guesthouses are equipped with furniture which can be found in local families, yet the whole room is designed in modern style. The price of a room is 800 *yuan*, which is almost ten times that of guesthouses run by the locals. Still, these rooms are always full because as the locals say, 'they have connections. The company recommends their own houses to the tour groups.'<sup>31</sup> The market is gradually being taken over by the tourist company while less room is left for the guesthouses run by the locals. Likewise, while most local villagers are selling local specialties like home-made drinks and snacks, agricultural production with a small stall in the main streets of the village or in their home, with a fair low price, the tourist company is gaining more profit from local specialties with its marketing skills. Local home-made wine has become famous and popular since the show and is getting compliments from the stars. Seeing the opportunity but not being able to produce the drinks, the tourist company buys this home-made wine from the locals, and then re-sells it with a properly designed package. The price is doubled and the main profit goes to the company instead of the locals, despite the wine being called and sold as a specialty of Xin-Ye. Some villagers think that 'putting the village and our home for sale is not right'<sup>32</sup>. Though their own lives are not easy nor rich, most of the villagers living in Xin-Ye think that charging visitors too much is against moral values. 'People come to see what our ancestors gave us. That is an honor. I sell dried bamboo shoots to visitors. They are all very good quality but I never ask for a high price. It is cheating.'<sup>33</sup>, said one local woman setting up a stall in the main street and selling countryside agricultural products.

The tourist boom and the development of the tourist industry that has been eagerly embraced and put forward by the local government has triggered local development and gentrification. However, tourist development with dependence on the show has also brought conflicts and challenges to the sustainability of this. Ownership of the old houses is leading to an uncertain future for the locals under tourist development. Besides, with the brand of 'filming location of *Dad, Where Are We Going*' being stamped on the village, which is constantly re-shaped by the tourist industry, and the growing expansion of the tourist company and its supporting local government, the villagers are losing the power to give voice to their cultural representations, and losing their self-determination on how to use and benefit from their heritage as well. From the perspective of the locals, besides the profit distribution issues and the economic exploitation of the tourist development, senior members are worrying about not being able to keep and pass down their heritage, from the ancestor temples, the wood crafts, Xin-Ye Kunqu Opera, to their ancestors' spirit and their clan activities and traditions. Moreover, tourist development and commodification of the village has put increasing influence on the simple life and intimate social relationship in Xin-Ye, which is cherished with care by the local residents. As said by one local woman working at the site, 'For me, life is good in Xin-Ye because it was easy and people are not competing or

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<sup>31</sup> Interview with one local resident who was working for the tourist company as a cleaning lady on March 23, 2016 in Xin-Ye.

<sup>32</sup> I overheard this statement when I was invited into a group dinner of the villagers in resident Ye, Guichang's house on March 18, 2016. Group dinners are organized quite frequently in the village. Leaders of the clan, mostly educated and senior men in the village, take a major role in public affairs of the village and group dinner is an occasion for them to exchange and discuss ideas and issues.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with one local resident on March 24, 2016 in Xin-Ye.

comparing with each other. We were close. Money was not the most important thing. Less means more happiness and it is true in Xin-Ye.<sup>34</sup>

## CONCLUSION

As one of the most popular and influential reality shows in China, *Dad, Where Are We Going*, has found its establishment of originality from its adaption of the South Korean version and subsequent localization in the Chinese TV industry successfully through entertainment with a focus on heritage and culture. The show brings celebrity fathers and their children from the urban, and with starring guests since Season 2, to different less-known places in China that are chosen by the show with special characteristics. In the show, starring fathers and children are arranged to interact with each other through a series of activities, challenges, and life tasks to enhance their parent-child relationships under a complete exposure to the local life and experience of local culture. Through the lens of the show and the real life experience of the starring celebrities, landscape and the local community, the local tradition and heritage and local customs and culture of the filming locations are portrayed to millions of viewers in China with a sense of authenticity. Filming locations have gained their nation-wide fame immediately after the show, which is aired both through TV broadcast and synchronous online videos. Under the official sites run by the show in various most widely-used media platforms, including Baidu Forum, microblog Sina Weibo, mobile social network Wechat, the name of the filming locations and the local engagement with the show are also transmitted and discussed in massive scale.

Looking into how the filming locations, which is dominantly in the domestic land of China, are found and chosen by the show, besides the consideration of filmability, the show has also highlighted its requirements and the pursuit of uniqueness and magnificence in local landscape and culture. Principles summarized by the location exploration team of the show as reference in its selection include preference of distance to avoid central scenic spots; distinguishing landscape and unsophisticated customs. The selection indicates a high degree of reachability for the filming team, and the tourist market afterwards. The show also aims to unearth quaint and unsophisticated villages that could be the Land of Peach Blossom (a haven of peace) of modern China. Under the idea of escaping from the modern chaos and flashbacking to the past and memory about the traditional mode of living and production with unique characteristics in folk custom and traditions, communities like a living history that is still bearing its traditions and keeping its heritage alive are found, chosen and then displayed by the show. In all filming locations of the three seasons, an increasing proportion have been taken by rural historical (ethnic) cultural villages and heritage sites. Xin-Ye Village is one of the chosen ones. While the show is unearthing and finding suitable filming locations as living representations of heritage, lots of heritage sites, and historical and cultural villages or any places with a loving past are also actively promoting themselves to be chosen, taking the show as an opportunity for local branding. The case study on how Xin-Ye has become a filming location of *Dad, Where Are We Going* shows that local government of Jiande city took great efforts in managing and supporting the village to meet the filmability requirements of the show, and finding the uniqueness and making meaningfulness out of the

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<sup>34</sup> Interview with local resident working for the tourist company as a ticket officer on March 22, 2016 in Xin-Ye.

local culture and heritage to stand out from the thousands of invitations that the show received. Cooperation with the show is treated with great importance by the local government and the Village Committee as a chance to promote Xin-Ye and its heritage, and further on to accelerate tourist development of the village. In the process of preparation, when Jiande city government was taking the leading role in management and supervision and the village committee was implementing instructions from the city and finding the cultural particularism out of the local customs, history and heritage, food and lifestyle, the local villagers were mostly unconscious about what would happen to the village and how their culture and life would be discovered and used by the show.

In the lens of the show, Xin-Ye was displayed and labeled as a living ancient paradise of the southern region of the Yangtze River with unique Hui-Style architectures and ancient Chinese cultural spirit of 'generating through farming and studying'. Starring fathers and children have accommodation arranged in some of the most representative historical buildings in the village, to live and to eat with the locals as a way to experience the living 'traditional' countryside lifestyle, local food, drinks and the folk customs. Local heritage and culture are also employed to be the theme of interacting activities and challenge tasks, which is designed to be entertaining and educational. Farming life, Confucius studying and moral spirits, and the intangible heritage Xin-Ye Kunqu Opera are experienced as the highlights of Xin-Ye culture and local particularism under a sense of authenticity. Local culture is represented to be unearthed and experienced through the eyes and physical encounters of the starring fathers and children. In the seeming authentic representation and experience of Xin-Ye and its living traditional lifestyle, the show has taken a role of classifying, labelling, and making definitions on what Xin-Ye is about, what the local heritage and traditions are and what the treasurable customs in the village are. Meanwhile, the show is making use of the local heritage and culture. One of the selling points of the show is the celebrities' interaction with culture and people from different places. Presenting aesthetic and special elements of different places also satisfy the show's need as a business: attracting and entertaining audiences. The living history that the show is making available for the stars is thus a constructed one. Though represented as a reality, the local heritage and culture has already been concerted or even invented by the show.

The fame and boom of tourism has been brought to Xin-Ye overnight. Development and self-gentrification have been triggered through the business of restaurants, guesthouses and local specialty productions. Younger generations have been attracted back to their hometown and with their talents and support from family and villagers, some of them have set up and run rewarding businesses in various ways, like e-commerce platforms, making full use of resources from the village and the fame Xin-Ye gained from *Dad, Where Are We Going*. However, while the show has become a valuable name card for the village, its influence on the village is continued and re-enforced by the tourists, the New-An-Jiang tourist development company, and also, the locals that are following the needs and the call of the tourist market. Following the lens of the show, the tourists are seeking what they have seen on the show, trying to build their own personal connections with the show through experiencing Xin-Ye. In particular, parents and children are attracted to Xin-Ye as a chance to enhance their own parent-child relationships by way of witnessing and imitating the experiences of the celebrities. The show has been taken as a part of the past of the village and becomes one layer of the heritage and identity of Xin-Ye. Correspondingly, the tourist company is offering a tour itinerary that combines the local cultural elements and programs adopted from the show,

customizing an imagined replay of the show to its customers. Gaining its name as a filming location of *Dad, Where Are We Going*, and retaking the show as a resource for further tourist development, Xin-Ye has now become a destination of Parent-child touring under the construction of the tourist company. After being displayed on the show, food and local agricultural productions became known as specialties of Xin-Ye and became popular goods among visitors in the site and even audiences around the nations. While what is common for local people and in the region becomes a specialty of Xin-Ye, the logo of *Dad, Where Are We Going* is attained upon these Xin-Ye specialties as added value in the market.

Under the support and promotion of the local government, the tourist development which relies upon the fame of the show and the local heritage and cultural assets with cooperation with the tourist company is continuing and is regarded as a bright future for the village, as called 'an outstanding example of innovative development of historical and cultural village'. Yet, how to balance the cultural value and economic value of heritage has increasingly become an issue in Xin-Ye, especially in terms of the values and benefits to the locals. The show approached Xin-Ye for its undisturbed quaint village status with unsophisticated folk customs, but the quiet life being targeted by the show and being cherished by the local residents themselves is now broken. While the local government and the tourist company are justifying themselves as seeking development for the good of the community and the local residents, the economic benefit has not been brought to the villagers. The tourist company's expansion into local specialty business and hotel business is leaving less space for the family businesses run by the locals.

More importantly, for the cultural and the social values of the heritage, which have been cared and nurtured by the locals with a bigger weight than the economic reward, the voice and stories of the Ye-clan descendants are suppressed. Under the heritage preservation project led by the national and the provincial Administration of Cultural Heritage, a renovation project on listed old buildings is carrying on. More and more villagers are moving out to the newly extended district planned and regulated by the local government. The intention of the tourist company and the village committee to expand the tourist development in the village leaves increasing uncertainty on the future of Xin-Ye. The idea of considering local heritage as a cultural commodity for tourist development has not only led to a situation that the local villagers in Xin-Ye are losing their power to give voice to the representations of their heritage, but also to an increasing threat on their rights of owning, and self-determination regarding how to use and benefit from the local heritage and the living environment of their homeland.

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## APPENDICES

### A. Xin-Ye Celebrity Customized Parent-Child Tour Itinerary (Xin Ye Ancient Village Site 2014)

Num.	Location	Program	Program Content
1	Wen-Chang-Ge	Traditional Chinese Culture Experience	1. Dressing ancient scholar dresses, to be ‘Star Father and Cute Child’ 2. Flashback to Traditional Chinese Culture Class in Dad, Where Are We Going, reading San-Zi-Jing and Di-Zi-Gui
		Agricultural Implement Exhibition	Material objects exhibition
2	Jin-Shi-Di	Basketball Game	Basketball playing, close encounter with ‘The most countryside-style basketball stand’ in Yao, Ming’s eyes; Flashback to the basketball playing scene of Dad, Where Are We Going.
3	Square Pond	Wheelbarrow	Dad, Where Are We Going filming prop: Zero-distance contact with wheelbarrow
4	Han-Mo-Xuan	Making Clay Sculpture	1. Visit accommodation of Huang, Lei and his daughter 2. Enjoy clay sculptures made by celebrity children, learning to make clay sculpture 3. Enjoy Xin-Ye calligrapher Shunfu, Ye’s works
5	Zui-Xian-Ju	Tu-Qu Wine (local drinks)	Replay the drink-to-the-fullest scene of the star family and get a taste of Xin-Ye Tu-Qu Wine that complimented by all the stars.
6	South Pond	Aquatic fetching	Rowing wooden basin and aquatic fetching competition
7	You-Xu-Tang	Xin-Ye Kunqu Opera	Intangible Heritage play: Xin-Ye Kunqu Opera performance
8	Shuang-Mei-Tang	Traditional Tofu Making	Soybean Grinding and Tofu Making
		Making Traditional Straw Sandals	Seeing how the local make straw sandals
9	Lotus Picking Cluster	Lotus Picking	Appreciating the beauty of Lotus, picking lotus pod and lotus leaf
10	Xi-Shan Ancestral Temple Pond	Waterwheel Riding	Riding the traditional waterwheel, experiencing agricultural activities

B. Tourist Guiding Leaflet of Xin-Ye Historical Village

