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The Revival and Restructuring of a Traditional Folk Festival: Cultural Landscape and Memory in Guangzhou, South China

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Abstract: Landscape is an important object for research on local culture from a cultural geographical perspective. It is the spatial nature of memory that has seen the integrative study of memory and landscape receive increased attention from human geographers. The Qiqiao Festival is a traditional folk festival in the Lingnan region of Southern China. After half a century of suppression, the Qiqiao Festival in Zhucun was publically revitalized as the Guangzhou Qiqiao Cultural Festival, which coincided with the changing structure and significance of the landscape. This paper selected Zhucun, a typical urban village, as its case study and constructed an index system of festival landscapes. Through in-depth interviews, this paper studied the revival and restructure process of the Qiqiao Festival, and the role that landscapes play in the formation mechanism of memory on the part of subjects with different identities. The results showed that the elite and the local government selectively restructure festival landscapes, replacing authentic landscapes with “official” ones. The selection and production of a festival landscape constructed different memories among the subjects, where the festival memory of grassroots villagers was self-constructed and mostly came from traditional festival landscape elements while top-down interventions in the festival landscape constructed a different “official” memory for citizens and migrants to those of the villagers. The contemporary festival deviates from the original, which has weakened the conscious degree of cultural evolution and has had a reaction on the authenticity of memory. This research serves a reference for approaches in planning and conserving intangible cultural heritage in historic villages.

Keywords: cultural landscape; memory; Zhucun; Qiqiao Festival; restructure

1. Introduction

The impact of the cultural turn has been such, that research emphasizing landscapes has been transformed to focus on the forming processes and symbolic significance of landscapes [1]. ‘New’ cultural geography absorbs sociology and cultural theory to explain landscapes, paying attention to the influence of social, cultural and political affairs on the shaping of the landscape as much as the role of the landscape itself during the process [2]. Folk festivals are an important part of the Chinese cultural system, and the Qiqiao Festival is one such example of cultural vitality passed down from generation to generation [3]. Unlike the Lantern Festival and the Mid-Autumn Festival, which are celebrated by everyone regardless of gender and age, in the past, only women were allowed to participate in the Qiqiao Festival. The Qiqiao Festival is an important part of traditional folk customs in the Lingnan region of Southern China, but it vanished for half a century, due to the outbreak of the anti-Japanese war and the Cultural Revolution. In recent years, Zhucun took the lead in reviving the Qiqiao Festival and was crowned as “The First Qiqiao Village in China” for its hard work.

With the acceleration of urbanization, Zhucun has become a typical urban village due to the expansion of Guangzhou's downtown area, the constraint of the urban-rural binary system, as well as governmental acts and actions by developers to avoid economic and social costs [4]. During this process, villagers rented out their residences and ran businesses after losing their land, being forced to change their means of production and lifestyles, which resulted in the breakdown of former settlement patterns and local order, and migrants crowding into the village. The Qiqiao Festival is a product accumulated by the interplay between villagers and place. The landscape is not a mere relic of the past, but rather, it also changes with the environment and social culture [5]. As such, the Qiqiao Festival has a profound regional foundation and an ethnic basis. The variation of physical and social environment, as well as official participation, has had a significant impact on the continuation and transformation of festival culture, where festival landscapes have been reconstructed and have formed their own features. Memory is the source for the presentation of local characteristics and landscape can evoke people's memories of the past [6]. The construction of festival memory in landscape is a complex process embedded in political and economic power [7]. Against a background of globalization and urbanization, Zhucun is faced with an amnesic crisis [8]. For its sociocultural identity and memory storage function, the Qiqiao Festival landscapes play an important role in local construction, and effective bonding between the inhabitants and the place. During the rapid urbanization process, changes taking place in the living environment of Qiqiao culture transformed traditional festival landscapes; one of the most important reasons lies in the organizers' subjective disregard of the memory of traditional festival landscapes.

Our study considered events or objects in Zhucun related to the Qiqiao Festival as landscapes and started with an explanation of the theoretical frameworks concerning landscape and memory that structure the analysis and research methodologies. The paper continues by tracing the changes occurring to festival landscapes within the geographical or historical contexts of Zhucun, and then discusses how the interaction among various social groups (governments, the cultural elite, and grassroots villagers) constantly reshape the cultural meaning of space, which has a profound impact on the cultural memory of the festival. The conclusion interprets the outcomes of memory construction as reflected by the Qiqiao Festival landscape and provides a reference for the planning and conservation of the non-material cultural heritage of historic villages.

2. Literature Review

Cultural landscapes have long occupied a central role in cultural geography research [9]. Saul put forward a classic definition of landscape as the outcome of interactions between cultural and natural forces, namely that "the cultural landscape is fashioned from a natural landscape by a cultural group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape the result" [10]. Since then, cultural landscapes have become, and remained, a central theme of cultural geography. Under the influence of the cultural turn, a term coined in the field of social science in the 1980s, the research of landscapes has signaled a departure from approaching landscapes from an external appearance, definition point of view, and the interpretation of landscapes from a passive object, to viewing landscapes as a visual extension and development of cultural meaning and power [11–14]. New cultural geography conceived the landscape as part of a constructed and circulating system of cultural meaning, encoded in images, texts and discourses [15–17]. Subsequently, the term cultural landscape was developed, with a focus on multifaceted cultural movements, debates and practices where landscape circulates both materially and symbolically [18]. Folk festivals are crucial parts of Chinese culture, are relatively immobile and therefore could be clearly interpreted as a 'festival landscape'. For specificity, the article hereby defines a festival landscape as a vehicle rooted in a specific geographical cultural background, and has recorded the history and culture of festival events ranging from the tangible (such as a building constructed for festivals) to the intangible (such as rituals). From a landscape perspective, this paper explored the visual and socio-historical implications of the Qiqiao Festival and the underlying unequal political and cultural power relationship [19].

Memory is an ordinary individual physiological function and a reaction to things that happened in the past that are constantly being recalled and represented [20]. The assertion that the collective memory of a group helps to underpin its sense of identity was originally proposed by Maurice Halbwachs in 1925 [21]. From the perspective of the theory's origins, memory studies in the field of human geography are deeply influenced by Halbwachs' collective memory theory and Nora's recent work [21,22]. These scholars have set up the sociological analytical framework on sites of memory, which have provided a spatial junction for the cooperation between geography and other disciplines. Their theories have also been used by scholars critically. Legg proposed that the past we commemorate was the result of social choice and geographical construction [23]; Foote believed that in terms of memory studies, the divergence between geography and other disciplines were the types and dynamics of commemorative practice, and geography provided a spatial, regional, and material perspective [24].

The challenge for human geographers producing narratives of landscape and memory has been registered in two closely-related topics, including the landscape study of war memory and the amnesic phenomenon during urban redevelopment [6,25,26]. Many studies have found that due to the design disorder and a lack of collective memory during the landscape construction process, the culture of cities tended to be similar [27]. Recent work has focused on monumental landscape, from grand monuments [28], memorial rituals, places of memory [29] to museums [30]. Till studied the debate in the process of national memory reconstruction in Berlin, and believes that collective memory is built on the basis of personal and socially shared experiences [31]. Human geographers regard memorial spaces as a narrative medium [32] and scrutinize memorial landscapes through three conceptual lenses that may be understood via the metaphors of 'text', 'arena', and 'performance' [33]. The most recent views, such as the research perspectives of physical and performance, are reflected in memory studies. Furthermore, the combination of new ideas and study has brought forth new concepts, such as symbolic accretion, which refers to how different political practitioners attach new or even sometimes conflicting significance and practice to the established monumental landscape. Symbolic marginalization has been put forward from a feminist perspective, which means that there is a phenomenon of gender marginalization in the memorial space, as many statues of memorial space are dominated by men [34].

Zhucun's landscapes are strewn with markers of memory and commemoration for the Qiqiao Festival where the prevailing messages stress the legend and history of the festival. A prominent feature of the Qiqiao Festival revival is the widespread naming of landscape elements (as well as the archway, park, etc.) that links the present spatial structure of the settlement to the festival. Neither the landscape elements nor the memory reproduced through them occur naturally, instead, they exist in a complex authority discourse that inscribes the boundaries of belonging to or being excluded from the festival [35]. They are also indicative of the wider practices that govern festival memory, commemorative traditions, and festival trends in Zhucun. The information we gathered from grassroots villagers differed from the dominant memory of harmony and that of a sense of belonging, exposing both the role of the government and of daily social relationships in constructing "official" and "authentic" memory. The authorities reformed the festival memory through the visible cultural landscape [36], thus, festival memory was interpreted selectively and reflected in the landscape design with cultural identity. Revealing the constructed nature of the memory is important as landscapes, in their materiality, have the power to make this discourse appear naturally and uncontested [37].

The following discussion of the Qiqiao Festival will clarify the connection between memory and landscape, trying to backtrack the social context of traditional festival landscapes to reveal the ways that the festival was jointly transformed by the cultural elites and local government. This paper explored what happened to the folk festival when it was located in an urban village and aimed to illustrate how social relationships in Zhucun were folded into the festival organization and thereby how grassroots villagers were constantly faced with multiple overlapping meanings of the festival. The empirical analysis offered in this paper complements the previous studies of landscape and memory on festivals.

3. Research Design

3.1. Study Area

Our study investigated the historic village of Zhucun which was established by the ancestors of villagers who migrated from the Central Plains, and has existed for over 800 years. Now it is an urban village in Guangzhou, in the People's Republic of China. Zhucun was established during the Song Dynasty (960–1127), enduring from the Yuan Dynasty (1206–1368) to the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) and from the Qing Dynasty (1616–1911) into the new China. It was an administrative village under the jurisdiction of the suburbs before 1985, and today, it falls under the jurisdiction of the Zhuji sub-district office, which belongs to the Tianhe District in Guangzhou City (Figure 1). As of 2017, there are more than 30,000 immigrants renting houses in Zhucun, the population of which has far exceeded the number of local villagers (6000). In Zhucun, the majority of villagers lead a rich life as landlords. In addition, the village possesses rich and colorful folk cultures including the Worship of the North Emperor (an immortal in charge of the water blessing for a good harvest), Sing the Big Drama (local opera), the Lion Dance, Dragon Boat Race, and so on. During the process of urbanization, the impact of commercial culture has injected new ideas into Zhucun, which has undoubtedly sped up their transition pace. Therefore, rural folklore has gradually transformed into urban folklore, developing into a trend of collision and fusion. In the process of historical inheritance and vicissitude of Zhucun's folk customs and festivals, Zhucun serves to some extent as a microcosm of the changes in Chinese history and culture, and the code and issue implied have a general meaning as a Chinese "Urban Village". The features that make this village unique and important as the object of case study are as follows:

- As a historic village, the formation of the spatial pattern of Zhucun is based on the doctrine and customs of the traditional village.
- The Qiqiao Festival in this village is the most well-preserved in China.
- Zhucun is a prototype of an urban village in China and is experiencing the impact of urban development, yet is still a living village for locals and migrants.



Figure 1. The location of Zhucun.

3.2. The Qiqiao Festival

Originating from the fairytale of the love between the Cowherd and the Weaver Maid, the festival consists of customs like “*Qixi Qiqiao*” (blessing girls to have nimble hands) and “*Yaofu*” (inviting blessings to come), which are important parts of folk culture [38]. This is a profile of ancient Chinese agricultural society’s spiritual life. The emergence and formation of the Qiqiao Festival are inseparable from early agricultural society’s need to develop production in China, and especially reflects the ideal life of a peasant family. The Qiqiao Festival was widespread in the Guangdong Province, including cities like Guangzhou, Foshan, and Dongguan. According to older villagers in Zhucun, the customs of the Qiqiao Festival were introduced by ancestors migrating from the Central Plain. A “Weaver Worship Society”, spontaneously formed by girls from the neighborhood could be found in many villages where for two to three months before the festival, girls spent idle time making a variety of handicrafts [39] and would gather together to pray to the Weaver Maid for skills of weaving and embroidery and to marry their Prince Charming when the seventh day of July arrived. Then, the girls would display their own crafts for appreciation, namely “*Bǎi Qi’niáng*”, and at night there would be a ceremony named “*Bài Xian*” (worshiping the immortals) where girls led by older ladies kowtowed to the heavens seven times surrounded by the aroma of burning incense and candlelight [40]. Females who participated in the Qiqiao Festival would dine together that night, namely “*Qi’niáng Fàn*”, which would help them strengthen their bonds of sisterhood, and receive blessings from the Weaver.

Due to the Anti-Japanese War from the 1930s to 1940s and the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s, the Qiqiao Festival vanished for nearly half a century until 1998, when it was revived in Zhucun; in 2012, this village was awarded the title of “China’s First Qiqiao Culture Village” [41]. Over time and with government intervention, the Qiqiao Festival landscape changed considerably in many aspects, e.g., the transformation of the ritual landscape, the commercialization of the craft landscape, and the reconstruction of the architectural landscape. Today, the celebration has deviated from the traditional one based on patriarchal clans, into a more recreational festival, with Weaver Maid worship and other entertainment as key components, under the impetus of government.

3.3. Methodology

This paper presents a case study based on Zhucun Village under the National Natural Science Foundation funded Project “Research on the spatial restructure of traditional villages in Lingnan region at the micro level during the rapid urbanization period: From form to society”. The interested parties involved in this study included grassroots villagers, citizens, migrants, the cultural elite, and the government. Fieldwork was conducted with regard to the Qiqiao Festival celebrations. We began to focus on the festival in 2011 by visiting Zhucun to study the local environment, gain basic knowledge on the Qiqiao Festival, and the attitudes of government and cultural elites regarding the festival. In 2013 and 2016, we interviewed key organizers, obtained the required materials, experienced the festival atmosphere on-site, examined the relationship between the festival and the public space in Zhucun for social life (including temples, ancestral halls, Cantonese opera studios), and analyzed the process that transformed the festival from a spontaneously organized feast by the villagers, to the government-sponsored cultural festival. A complementary field survey was also conducted during the 2017 festival period.

In this study, surveys were conducted to ensure the gathering of both qualitative and quantitative information. The fieldwork consisted of participant observation at the Qiqiao Festival, 26 in-depth interviews, one focus group, and a number of informal discussions. To better understand the inheritance of the Qiqiao Festival, we turned to related archival materials, regional newspapers, and oral discourses about the festival to learn the related customs and development of the festival. The in-depth interviews involved administrators at sub-district and district levels ($n = 4$), cultural elites in the village ($n = 3$), grassroots villagers ($n = 6$), Qiqiao Festival-based scholars specializing in ethnic culture ($n = 2$), migrants that lived in Zhucun ($n = 6$), and travelers during the festival ($n = 5$).

Focus group attendants were ‘*Qiao-nv*’ who participated in the ‘*Bài Xian*’ ritual. In addition, four key informants were interviewed twice.

The major purpose of surveying grassroots villagers and immigrants was to reveal the local community impact of restructuring the Qiqiao Festival from the residents’ perspectives, as well as to capture their perception on festival landscapes. The intention behind interviewing cultural elites and officials was to provide first-hand information to enable us to understand the revival process of the Qiqiao Festival and the original intentions of the elites to promote the Qiqiao Festival. The profound knowledge of the cultural elites provided us with insightful and reliable information. In our in-depth interviews, most of the questions related to the impact of the Qiqiao Festival on different stakeholders and their perception of the restructure of the Qiqiao Festival. Participants in the interviews were purposefully sampled, and the interview questions were designed to be open-ended, but addressed in a guided discussion. This paper studied the change and restructure of festival landscapes and also clarified the inherent logic of the relationship between landscape transformation and festival memory in the context of the urban village.

4. The Restructure of Festival Landscape

4.1. The Locally-Driven Traditional Festival

Being “spatially constituted”, memory needs to be attached to material landscape that is concrete and physical, such as certain fields representing the past and characteristic buildings that embody tangible notions of the past. It also needs to be attached to intangible landscapes such as the ritual and celebrations that remind people of the past [36]. Festival landscapes, as the collective representation of the ‘Qiqiao’ culture, tend to disappear, grow and change with time [42]. The selection of landscape elements by the government and elites resulted in differences in memory among the subjects.

Zhucun is a traditional village based on ties of consanguinity and territorial consciousness. The Qiqiao Festival had been favored by the villagers’ due to its representation of ideal life such as “praying for ingenuity”, “praying for love”, and “inviting blessing” [43]. The reasons for the suppression of the Qiqiao Festival were complicated, partly due to the constant political turbulence in China. The Qiqiao Festival had begun to fade in many places of China and even showed signs of decline in the last century. Under the influence of such an environment, decline was inevitable. Then, after the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War and the fall of Guangzhou when the Japanese occupied Zhucun, villagers had no time to concern themselves with such arguably trivial things. After the War, the Qiqiao Festival resumed for some time, but was suspended during the Cultural Revolution as the activity of “*Bǎi Qí’niáng*” was considered as superstitious. After the Cultural Revolution, women in Zhucun were not only busy in production, but also taking care of families. They had no spare time to make preparations for the time-consuming “*Bǎi Qí’niáng*”, therefore, the Qiqiao Festival went quiet.

In 1998, several old ladies came up with the idea of making some dolls and silk stocking flowers and restored the “*Bǎi Qí’niáng*” ritual in a small old temple. However, the Qiqiao Festival had been far removed from people’s lives when Zhucun evolved into an urban village. Furthermore, the festival landscape changed significantly after experiencing the “Rural-to-Urban” transformation and the influx of migrant workers. The mass foundation was fragile and young people in the village knew little about the Qiqiao Festival. From 2001 to 2004, with the help of the Guangzhou Folk Artists Association, cultural elites in Zhucun recognized the importance of the Qiqiao Festival in modern society and began to exploit festival resources. Meanwhile, newspapers also started to report on the “*Bǎi Qí’niáng*” event. In 2005, the government of Tianhe District made efforts to build a platform for cultural exchange and create a cultural brand for the district. As a result, the government worked with the Street Administrative Office and changed the name of the Qiqiao Festival to the Guangzhou Qiqiao Cultural Festival. Combined with the villagers’ memories and government publicity, the Qiqiao Festival received institutional assurance. With a long history of ‘Qiqiao’ culture, Zhucun provides the best place for festival celebrations [44]. As Zeng, the chairman of Guangzhou Folk Artists Association recalled:

“In 2001, we learned that several old ladies guiding a group of young girls in Zhucun built some miniature landscapes such as ‘Magpie Bridge’, using beads, rice and other everyday objects. Then, we organized some staffs to carry out a field survey. We believe that Qiqiao Festival displays villagers’ passion for life and it is a vehicle of their emotions. So, I wrote some articles to introduce the resumption of Qiqiao Festival. They were published in ‘Yangcheng Evening News’ and ‘Guangzhou Daily’, followed by the massive media coverage. When villagers got support from Guangzhou Folk Artists Association and the media, they posted the newspaper on the most eye-catching place of the ancestral temple. It is in this way that Qiqiao Festival revived in Zhucun”.

4.2. The Government-Oriented Modern Festival

The main components of the traditional festival landscapes are the “*Bǎi Qí’niáng*” and “*Bài Xian*”. Today, these landscapes have been restructured (see Table 1). “*Bǎi Qí’niáng*” in the ancestral temple retains its traditional form: there is a table in the front, on which handicrafts like “*Zhaita*” (beans, nuts, and others made into the shape of tower), chopsticks, cups and bowls; behind these is the manual ‘Zhucun archway’; in the middle of the table there is a ‘Magpie Bridge’ where the Cowherd and Weaver Maid meet to highlight the theme. The “*Qí’niáng Pán*” is hung up high, which means the Weaver Maid will come from the heaven. Seven handmade suits and makeup are put in a large disk surrounded by fruit, and flowers, all of which are presented for the Weaver Maid. In addition, the “*Bài Xian*” ritual has been simplified so everyone can participate in the ceremony. To satisfy the needs of a large number of visitors, the “*Bài Xian*” ritual lasts from the first day to the eighth day of the seventh month of the Chinese lunar calendar during the day. Currently, the identity requirements of the participants are not as strict as before, and non-Zhucun could be chosen as “*Yu-nv*”. The organizers asked the girls attending the “*Bài Xian*” ritual to perform in the courtyard of the ancestral temple, hoping everyone could experience the festival culture.

Table 1. A comparison between traditional and modern festival landscapes.

	Festival Landscapes	Classes	Minimal Classes
Traditional festival landscapes	Material landscapes	tributes handicrafts certain fields	Crafts made from nuts and seasonal fruit Artificial flowers, figure dolls, Yue Embroidery, etc. Ancestral temple
	Non-material landscapes	rituals specific characters	Bǎi Qí’niáng, Bǎi Xian, Song Qí’niáng, Qí’niáng Fàn The old ladies and girls who worship the Weaver Maid
Modern festival landscapes	Material landscapes	tributes	Crafts made from nuts and seasonal fruit
		handicrafts	Artificial flowers, figure dolls, Yue Embroidery, etc.
		characteristic building	Qiqiao Culture Museum, Zhucun Paifang Building
	certain fields	Qixi cultural square, Qiqiao garden, the Seventh economic cooperative society building, Meiyin Pan ancestral hall, Pak Tai Temple, Yiliang Pan ancestral hall, Yuande Chen ancestral hall, the Eighth economic cooperative society building, Mingde ancestral hall	
	Non-material landscapes	rituals	Bǎi Qí’niáng, Bǎi Xian, Sòng Qí’niáng, Qí’niáng Fàn
Non-material landscapes	celebrations	Modern cultural activities: Image design contest of Qiqiao ingenue, Qiqiao culture summit, Qixi parade, Qixi matchmaking event, Qixi Carnival, the opening ceremony, the closing ceremony Commercial activities: Qixi Crafts Street, Qixi food street	
	specific characters	The old ladies and girls who worship the Weaver Maid	

In 2009, the district government transformed Zhucun Park into the first Qiqiao-themed park known as the “*Qiqiao Garden*”, located near the East of Zhuji Road and covers an area of 23 acres. Many landscape elements were added, such as the statue of the Cowherd and the Weaver Maid, the Qiqiao handicraft workshop, etc. On the basis of the original Zhucun Park environment, more festival cultural connotations were condensed. Meanwhile, public sites such as “*Qixi Cultural*

Square”, the 120 m “Qixi Culture Wall”, and the arch of Zhucun were constructed to promote the development of cultural resources in order to attract visitors.

In 2011, the Qiqiao Festival was listed as national nonmaterial cultural heritage. Since then, the government of Tianhe District became more enthusiastic and motivated about the Qiqiao Festival and began to select a site in Zhucun for the Qiqiao Cultural Museum. The museum, consisting of five major buildings, was inaugurated in 2013 during the festival period. The events of the 2016 Qiqiao Festival mainly included three parts: the first part had traditional cultural activities in the ancestral hall including “*Bǎi Qí’niáng*”, and “*Bài Xian*”; the second was for modern cultural activities such as the Guangzhou Qiqiao Cultural Festival opening ceremony and the Qiqiao Festival culture seminars; and the third was commercial activities including the ‘Qixi’ Craft Street and Gourmet Street. Zhucun’s spatial form and the distribution of “*Bǎi Qí’niáng*” venues are shown in Figure 2. It should be noted that the government organized the modern cultural and commercial activities during the festival period. Since landscape is important for the formation of ideology and political order [45], the authorities recreated landscapes (such as the festival venue and rituals) based on the festival memory of the cultural elites and historical records, and encouraged the inheritance of such culture by making efforts to combine it into a contemporary festival landscape. Its integration with modern ritual elements make the “*Bài Xian*” performance at the opening ceremony more entertaining, which reflects the determination of the government to reshape the festival landscape. The participation of government and media reports have increased the popularity of the Qiqiao Festival and enhanced the local influence of Zhucun. However, the way in which the government asserted their own understanding of the festival on the landscape representation is a matter worth discussing.

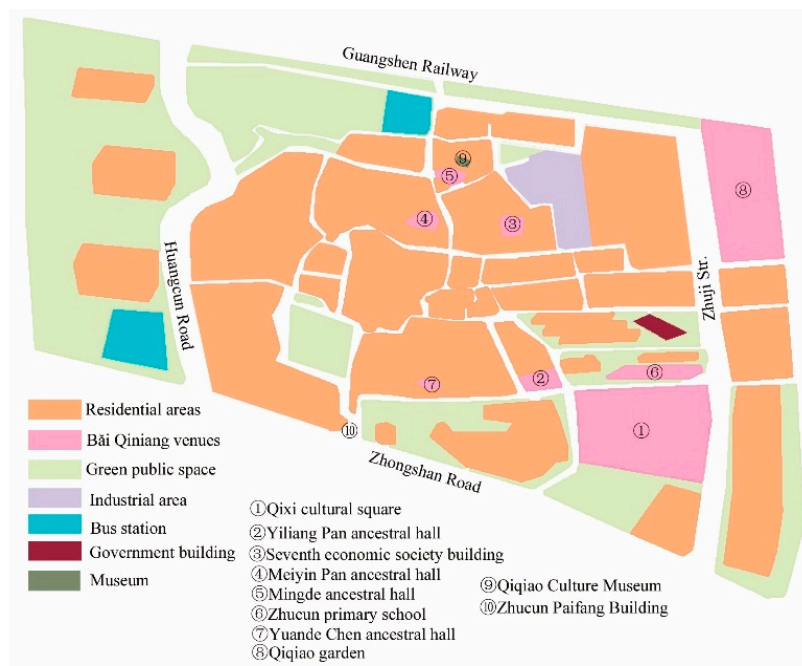


Figure 2. Zhucun’s spatial form and the distribution of “*Bǎi Qí’niáng*” venues.

5. The Influence Mechanism of Landscape Restructure on Festival Memory

While landscape plays an important role in preserving and transferring memory, memory needs to rely on the media to maintain, strengthen, and renew [25,46]. For the residents in Zhucun, a meaningful place can give them unique memories. People’s formation of memory is the transformation from unconsciousness to consciousness. Two questions in the residents’ survey were posed to distinguish between the unconscious and conscious expressions of landscape implication in grassroots villagers and migrants. The first one asked that which part of the Qiqiao Festival impressed them the most to

learn their conscious perception of it. Both villagers and migrants mentioned the ancestral temple and Qiqiao garden. The other question proposed was to learn their unconscious perception of the festival landscape: which part of the Qiqiao Festival related the most to their lives. Most of the villagers' answers were about the festival revival event itself. In contrast, most migrants stated that it was less related to their daily life and they were just irrelevant bystanders. Cultural elites showed more mixed feelings of enthusiasm for the festival compared with grassroots villagers, and focused more on festive handicrafts, a representative of the essence of the Qiqiao Festival. Thus, it could be concluded that the elites placed more emphasis on Qiqiao culture.

5.1. Festival Promotion under the Direction of the Government and Cultural Elites

The representation of memory requires knowledge, capital and other resources. During the revival process, the cultural elite, and the older generations of female embroiderers collected archival literature and information to pass on stories and legends of the Qiqiao Festival to the younger generations and strengthen their handicraft skills. The government has tried to evoke the villagers' memories of the Qiqiao Festival by constructing festival landscape symbols, news coverage, and the narratives of cultural elites. In Zhucun, the Qiqiao Festival memory resources are owned by the cultural elites and the elders, and the festival is manipulated by the government, and together, they decide how to write the history of Qiqiao festival. To revive the Qiqiao Festival, the elites in the village collaborated with Folk Literature and Art Association and the media, and finally gained support from the government.

Pan Jianming is recognized as the major initiator behind the revival process of the Qiqiao Festival, who has been striving for support from the government, media, and associations of folk literature and art. His grandfather, Pan Wenzhi, was the Vice Admiral of the Navy of the Kuomintang during the Republic of China era, but suffered persecution during the Cultural Revolution, falling from hero into an object of criticism. For Pan Jianming, the revival of festival not only brings honor back to his family, but also expands his own social influence. In the meantime, Tianhe District enjoys the best economic conditions across Guangzhou, but lacked a cultural brand. Cultural elites keenly realized that if the Qiqiao Festival of Zhucun could be fostered into the cultural brand of Tianhe District, then it would attract more investment.

The government is the major investor among the interested parties of the Qiqiao Festival. The government sees an improvement opportunity in the "software" aspect of the urban village. In 2005, the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China promulgated documents proposing to organize elaborate representative festival activities. Against such backgrounds, the Guangzhou Qiqiao Cultural Festival was created to enhance the city's cultural image. In the process of organizing the Festival, the government invited entertainers to perform at the opening ceremony. On the basis of preserving the traditional folk custom "*Bǎi Qí'niáng*", the festival added modern activities such as matchmaking parties to meet the cultural needs of the public. During the festival, Qixi Culture Square and other public spaces are turned into temporary commercial spaces. Traders were invited to hire booths to sell goods through a temporary renting agreement. With official powers to supervise and manage the press and publication, the authority arranged for new reports on the festival. Simultaneously, the government invested money annually to cultivate 'Qiqiao' artists, improve the environment of Zhucun, and have published China's first textbook on 'Qiqiao' customs with an attempt to develop the 'Qiqiao' cultural industry.

In the vertical constructed history axis, festival memory exists in the local chronicles, handicrafts, and narratives about the Qiqiao festival from cultural elites. The government selectively reproduces these landscapes and rebuilds festival memory through the vivid statements of the festival participants, the replay of festival ritual scenes and handicraft exhibitions, to create a collective imagination space for citizens and migrants. There is no doubt that the intervention of the government in hosting the Qiqiao Festival has enhanced the integrity of the festival landscape. By doing so, the government and cultural elites have made a lasting impact in the way citizens, villagers and migrants in Zhucun remember the festival by attempting to connect the "official" festival memory with the "traditional"

one. The government, as the main creator of the festival memory today, constructs the memory and perception of a festival landscape for citizens and migrants by reproducing landscape elements and creating festival history. After successive organizations since 2005, the Qiqiao Festival has already become an unconscious cultural practice for citizens and migrants, which gave migrants in Zhucun a unique lifestyle and meaning. For citizens and migrants, the memory of the Qiqiao Festival is selectively represented by the government and cultural elites as well as the news media. As Yang Jing, who works for the culture station in Zhuji sub-district office said:

“From 2005 when Qiqiao Festival turned into “the Guangzhou Qiqiao Cultural Festival”, the government proposed that Qiqiao Festival should last for 11 days. But then came many problems, for example, there were less tourists after the seventh day of the seventh lunar year and some villagers were against the proposal. They said that the tradition festival began at the fourth or fifth day of the month and ended at the eighth day of the month. After negotiation, it was settled for 7 days. The “Bai Xian” ritual adopted the suggestion of villagers. We visited a lot of places and consulted a lot of folklorists. Accordingly, the “Bai Xian” ritual now is not a pseudo-tradition but a development”.

The reshaping of a festival landscape reflects the will of the dominant power group [47]. The government set a goal for the Qiqiao Festival and took many powerful measures to achieve that goal. As a result, the selection of the festival landscape was influenced by political authority [48]. To maintain landscape memory, the government stressed the importance of the history traced back to the Qiqiao Festival cultural communities, renewed festival rituals, handicrafts, and built a museum and memorial arch to create a harmonious environment for the festival. In this way, the festival memory of the villagers was reconstructed or reconciled with the renewal of landscape elements, of which some memories faded away or were even erased. All of these depend on the government and cultural elites' decision on whether it is worthwhile remembering and how to choose a way to remember. As Pan Yaoshan, a cultural elite in Zhucun, commented:

“The municipal government thought every district should have their own folklore symbol back in 2005. Just at that time Qiqiao Festival became famous due to the efforts made by Yang Jing (director of Zhuji Street Cultural Station) and Pan Jianming, so Tianhe District was willing to spend more money in celebrating the Qiqiao Festival in Zhucun”.

5.2. Restructured Landscape Evoking Villagers' Memory

While the function of traditional festival landscapes have changed over time, the villagers still remember its previous name and respond to their original functions. For example, the field survey showed that villagers still use the name “Zhucun Park” instead of “Qiqiao Garden”. To understand what were the most impressive parts for the subjects interviewed, a list of festival landscape elements was designed from which they can choose. Table 2 shows that “Qiqiao Garden” and “ancestral temple” were the two most impressive landscape elements, while the “Bai Qi'niang” and “Bai Xian” ranked third and fourth.

Table 2. The ranking of impressive landscape elements for grassroots villagers.

Landscape Type	Number of Times Selected	Share of the Villagers Interviewed
Qiqiao Garden	26	52%
Ancestral temple	24	48%
Bai Qi'niang	21	42%
Bai Xian	20	40%
Handicrafts	18	36%
Qiqiao Culture Museum	18	36%
Zhucun memorial archway	14	28%
Image design contest of Qiqiao Festival	8	16%
Others	5	10%

Ranking was related to the festival landscape function and the socio-cultural structure of the historic village. “Zhucun Park” maintained its original entertainment function over time, so its implication remained unchanged for the villagers. The ancestral temple is the main gathering place villagers will often visit, despite its various functions over time. “*Bǎi Qí’niáng*” and “*Bài Xian*” are festival rituals which can easily evoke the villagers’ memories, and consequently, they can easily identify these landscapes. In addition to the function of landscape, their location and degree of significance also make a difference. The festival memory of cultural elites and the elders in village is more everlasting as they are aware that the implication of festival is inherited through special ceremony. However, the younger generations’ memories of the Qiqiao Festival are vague, and are mostly from the elders’ oral narratives. As a cultural elite, Pan Yaoshan, whose family has lived in Zhucun for generations and participated in the organization of Qiqiao Festival for years, remarked:

“Our opinions are fully considered in the construction of new landscape elements. The statue of the Weaver Maid would be located in the lotus pond in Qiqiao Garden initially. However, I strongly opposed because the Weaver Maid is the fairy from the heaven. Putting the statue in the lotus pond means we look down at “her”. Finally, the government decided to put the statue at where it is now”.

During the early revival of the Qiqiao Festival, some villagers expressed their dissatisfaction as they believed that the budget for publicity and other arrangements would be drawn from the village finances. However, when they realized that funds would be covered by the government, they had no further objections. Furthermore, villagers began to rely economically on the Qiqiao Festival as the festival has increasingly brought them “dividends” in recent years. With the cultural capital of festival transforming to economic capital, the cultural identity of the villagers has strengthened and pride been increased. Interviewed grassroots villager Zhong remarked:

“Long ago, the festival was women’s business, in which they put some miniatures in the ancestral temple to worship. The form of traditional festival was simple. Now it changes a lot. The size of festival is much bigger and it lasts for a few days. Of course, I prefer the present one because of the bonus”.

Today, the villagers’ commodity consciousness has been reinforced. During the festival, exclusive stalls for crafts located at each “*Bǎi Qí’niáng*” spot. Aside from shoes decorated with sequins made onsite, all works exhibited on the table are for sale, among which Yue embroidery is the most expensive. Selling souvenirs not only benefits the villagers, but arouses their enthusiasm for their creation. Ordinary grassroots villagers are in a relatively weak position in the power structure as well as being represented in Qixi culture; however, villagers are very proud when talking about the phenomenon where many tourists came to Zhucun specifically for the Qiqiao Festival: “You can even see tourists visiting group all around the village during the festival”. This reflects that villagers are very satisfied with the fact that ‘Qiqiao’ customs are receiving attention from the outside world.

As a distinctive lifestyle in Zhucun, “*Bǎi Qí’niáng*” has left a profound imprint on the villagers’ memories, as related to previous Qiqiao Festivals. Festival memories are inscribed in landscape, which are repeatedly displayed in the daily lives of the resident through the practice of “*Bǎi Qí’niáng*”, “*Bài Xian*”, etc. The celebration of the Qiqiao Festival presents opportunities for the villagers to create a celebratory atmosphere collectively. In such an important way for maintaining the continuity of memory, ‘Qiqiao’ culture is able to pass down through the villagers’ memory. With the emergence of various new festival landscape elements, the government and cultural elites manipulated the mainstream discourse to shape the villagers’ festival memory and hoped that villagers would accept the present festival as naturally as the traditional one. Meanwhile, the publicity and reports in major regional newspapers have continuously strengthened this memory over the past 10 years. Festival memory was represented as a stereotype when the Qiqiao Festival in Zhucun was named officially as the Guangzhou Qiqiao Cultural Festival by the authority. The memory reconstructed under the shelter of the local authorities gained public acceptance that Zhucun was the center of the Qiqiao Festival

landscapes. In this way, the whole Zhucun ethnic group was incorporated into the cultural system constructed by the official discourse.

5.3. Contrasting Memory Shaped among Migrants and Citizens

The social and cultural attributes of a festival landscape are critical factors when talking about the continuity of ‘Qiqiao’ culture [49]. To ensure the acceptance and understanding of ‘Qiqiao’ culture by the audience, the elites and local government needed to alter the space-time convention of the original ceremony and take measures to reconcile landscapes in accordance with the performance. As a result, both the Qixi Cultural Square and Qiqiao Garden were used as arenas for “*Bǎi Qí’niáng*” for the occasion, and the time of the “*Bài Xian*” ritual (on July 6 in a lunar year at night) was rescheduled to 10 o’clock in the daytime from the first day to the eighth day of July (Figure 3a,b). Furthermore, the ritual could be performed anytime if necessary as the coherence and structural integrity of the “*Bài Xian*” ritual was broken down due to the different performance situations.



Figure 3. Photos of the Qiqiao Cultural Festival activities. (a) *Bǎi Qí’niáng* in the ancestral hall; (b) *Bài Xian* in the ancestral hall; (c) Commercial street near the Qiqiao Garden; and (d) Qiqiao Cultural Festival closing ceremony.

In the survey of migrants and citizens, 50 respondents were invited to choose which ones impressed them the most from a list of festival landscapes and to tell a brief story from their personal experience about one or two landscapes of what they had chosen. According to the results of the survey, most respondents preferred to relate the Qiqiao Festival to the Cowherd and the Weaver Maid, and chose a majority of memorable landscapes which happened to be modern festival landscapes. Table 3 shows landscapes that were chosen and the percentage of choosing respondents. Forty-four percent of respondents mentioned *Qiqiao Garden*, and thirty-two percent of which chose *The Opening Ceremony*. *Handicrafts* ranked the third. *The Ancestral temple* (26%) and *Qiqiao Culture Museum* (22%) had similar proportion. *Qixi matchmaking event* and *Bài Xian* were also popular choices among respondents.

Table 3. The ranking of impressive landscape elements for grassroots villagers.

Landscape Type	Number of Times Selected	Share of the Villagers Interviewed
Qiqiao Garden	22	44%
The Opening Ceremony	16	32%
Handicrafts	14	28%
The Ancestral temple	13	26%
Qiqiao Culture Museum	10	22%
Bài Xian	8	20%
Qixi matchmaking event	6	16%
Others	10	20%

The expectations of the migrants and citizens of the Qiqiao Festival comes from a distinctive festival landscape with exquisite handicrafts, the elaborate “*Bài Xian*” ritual, the elegant Han-style clothes performance, and so on. Their festival memory is not only based on cultural understanding, but how the government has defined it, such as the “Qiqiao festival is the national nonmaterial cultural heritage”, “this is the Guangzhou Qiqiao Cultural Festival”, “Zhucun is the Chinese Qiqiao cultural town”, and so on. Figure 3c,d are photos of the government-oriented modern Qiqiao cultural festival activities. Festival landscapes and the urban village that they are attached to differ greatly from modern city life, which results in a kind of cultural otherness. However, what deserves attention is the original implication of ‘Qiqiao’ culture so profound that the government’s efforts cannot be paralleled. As visitors cannot fully comprehend the uniqueness of the Qiqiao Festival, the discrepancy between their cognition and the depth of the culture connotation itself ignites their enthusiasm about travelling to Zhucun. Therefore, festival memories that are extracted and constructed from landscapes might become the motivation for potential visitors to Zhucun, and it is likely to continue to produce new festival memories built on the traditional festival landscape.

A festival landscape is not formed in a short time, and rather, changes over time. Zhucun, a typical urban village provides affordable housing and job opportunities for many migrant workers with different backgrounds and life experiences, therefore migrant perceptions of the festival landscape are different from those of the Zhucun villagers. From the interviews, migrants were not really engaged with the festival activities hosted in clan units. When asked about their attitude and experience of the Qiqiao Festival, migrants tended to hold the opinion that “I feel that everything is entirely new, but I’m not really engaged in it” and only a few surveyed admitted that the Qiqiao Festival was an important influence on their daily lives. According to our survey, most migrants hang out on the modern commercial street located in the Qiqiao Garden during the festival as Zhucun is not their hometown and they have never experienced the Qiqiao Festival before. Their memories of the Qiqiao Festival were mainly derived from sightseeing during the festival or news reports; however, they could feel that the festive atmosphere and a change in the environment in Zhucun after the festival was organized. As Zhong, who has been living in a rented house in Zhucun for many years said:

“There are a lot of news about Qiqiao Festival on the Internet. I browsed them occasionally. During the Qiqiao Festival period, I always wandered around the Qiqiao Garden instead of the ancestral temple because I live near the Garden. At that time there would be many journalists and a lot of delicious food. If you want to know more, go to ask those old ladies in the ancestral hall, since I know little about it”.

The traditional Qiqiao Festival was transformed into the Guangzhou Qiqiao Cultural Festival, and the range of celebrators has expanded from villagers to the wider public. This transformation was completed by the government together with the elites and media who constructed an “official” festival memory that differed from the traditional ones. The modification of memory needs to contribute to current social development as well as advance with the times. Out of curiosity and amusement motivated by the festival landscape and the utilization of the public space at Qiqiao Garden, a festival memory of the citizens and migrants was generated and continually strengthened. The government

selectively reconstructed traditional festival landscapes and created new ones unrelated to the local spirit of Zhucun and the villagers’ own narratives, which weakens self-awareness of the evolution of the ‘Qiqiao’ culture and reduces the authenticity of festival memory. The government has constructed an “official” festival memory successfully through the reshaping of a festival landscape. As this type of cultural practice emerged as a socially approved way to represent traditional culture, the organization of the Qiqiao Festival became formal and official. Such intentions became clearer when the festival tradition was promoted as a national cultural strategy, for example, when the Qiqiao Festival was listed in the National Intangible Cultural Heritage category.

6. Conclusions

With Zhucun evolving into an urban village and experiencing great changes in landscape structure, the local Qiqiao Festival once only celebrated by villagers is now widespread throughout the city, but its traditional festival landscapes have faded or been restructured, and new landscapes have sprung up continuously. Traditional festival landscapes going through the screening and accumulation of history can invoke echoes with the psychological structure of the collective unconsciousness, that is the cultural memory of the villagers. Nevertheless, memories of the modern festival landscape remain a product of the government and elite manipulation. The interaction between the residents’ memories and the restructure of ‘Qiqiao’ landscapes is shown in Figure 4. Landscapes selected by the government for construction have led to different festival memories among the subjects, reflecting the authority’s dominant role in defining the landscape. For grassroots villagers, festival memory, which mostly comes from traditional landscape elements such as “*Bǎi Qì’niáng*” and “*Bài Xian*”, is largely self-constructed. As a specific way of cultural sharing, the landscapes of festival memory are important in forming identity. However, villagers have resigned themselves to the redefinition of Qiqiao culture and festival memory, that is to say, for citizens and migrants, festival memory, which comes from the landscapes selected by government and elites, is passively constructed. With the interplay of “authentic” and “official” festival memories, the Zhucun festival has been resurrected under the manipulation of cultural elites and the government. This commemorative narrative was done through the intervention of the elites, which revealed the agreement reached among the cultural elite, the government, and the grassroots villagers over the need to express the festival memories through the landscape.

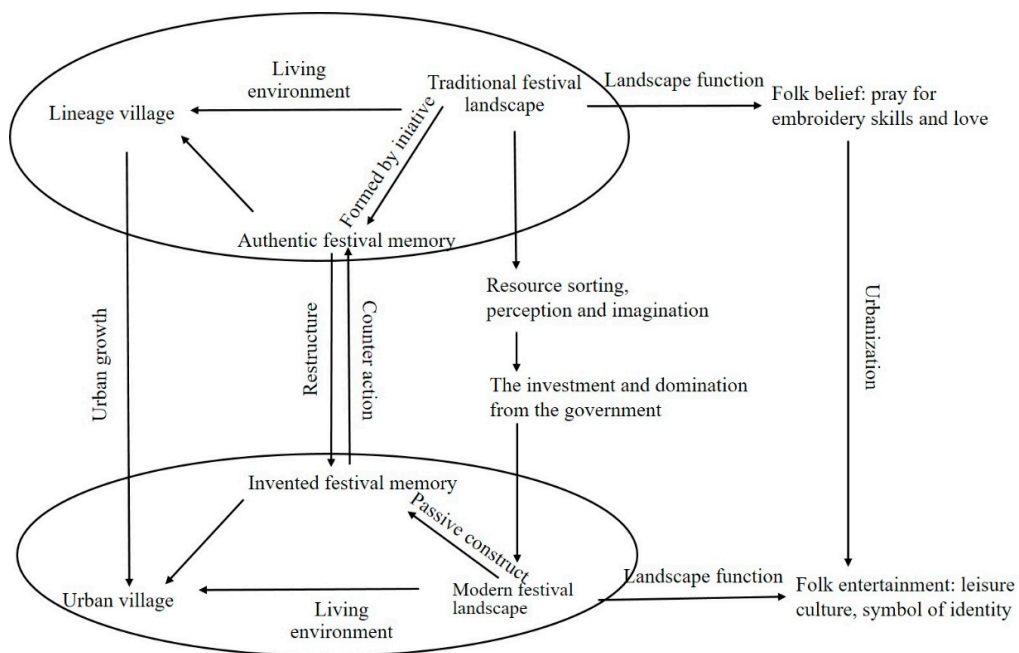


Figure 4. The logic and interaction between memories and the restructure of the ‘Qiqiao’ landscapes.

Collective memory theory holds that memory supports the legalization of social order. The aim of social memory construction is to make people with memory obey the social order [50]. Since migrants and citizens have no previous perception or experience of the Qiqiao Festival, the elites and local government, or other top-down interventions in the festival landscape, constructed a different “official” memory from that of the villagers’. However, these restructured landscapes do not come from the local spirit or the villagers’ own narratives, which weakens the self-awareness of the cultural evolution of the festival and undermines the authenticity of festival memory and affects the construction of the Qiqiao Festival culture. Therefore, we should pay attention to the importance of landscape selection in the process of cultural memory inheritance. The continuity of festival memory needs to be combined with landscape practice, which is conducive to improving the public cognition of the Qiqiao Festival. For example, “*Bǎi Qí’niáng*” and “*Bài Xian*”, as well as the ancestral temple space are important carriers of festival memory which should be valued.

Landscapes nurture the culture and historical identity of a place. To inherit the geographical characteristics and history of the Qiqiao Festival, we need to constantly inspire emotions deep in the hearts of the villagers. This paper has shown how the local authorities have used landscapes to evoke or construct festival memory by presenting an alternative vision of the Qiqiao Festival. Understanding how the elite and non-elite narratives of memory are expressed in the generation process of landscape enables researchers to build a more comprehensive picture of life in urban villages rather than studies of certain phenomena in isolation. This study on the interpretation of festival landscapes and the memories of local residents serves as a threshold to investigate the conservation of traditional festival legacies in historic urban villages. The forms and connotations of traditional festivals are not immutable. Traditional festivals formed in particular social relations and economic structures are constantly adjusted and reconstructed, and their connotations and characteristics will be redefined with the exchange and interaction with the outside world. In the current social environment of market economic system, the government intervention makes a difference in the inheritance of festival objectively. But we should pay more attention to the internal change of festival culture rather than take traditional festivals as simple cultural practices packed for selling. The attraction of traditional festivals to residents determines the form of residents’ landscape practices, and thus affects the continuance of landscape elements. In the government-dominant festival, the main body of practice should be grassroots villagers who incubate cultural growth, while the government should change its role at a proper time to just set a stage for display.

7. Notes

1. An urban village was a village originally. Due to the radial expansion of urban built-up areas, there is neither arable lands nor farmers, but the system of collective ownership of land has remained. Nowadays, it is a new type of urban neighborhood under the rural administration system.
2. *Bǎi Qí’niáng* is a competition among girls where they display all of their offerings, which include flowers, cosmetics, and the most important one, the beautiful miniatures of the Cowherd and the Weaving Maid.
3. *Bài Xian* is a ritual known as “celestial beings worship” where girls who are still single join together to celebrate the annual reunion of the celestial couple and wish for a good husband.
4. *Qiao-nv* refers to women from Zhucun who make handicrafts for “*Bǎi Qí’niáng*”.
5. *Yu-nv* refers to unmarried girls from Zhucun who participate in the “*Bǎi Qí’niáng*” ritual.
6. *Zhucun Paifang* is the memorial gateway. The Memorial Gateway has been set up since the establishment of Zhucun, but was damaged during the Cultural Revolution. A new memorial gateway was set up near Zhongshan Avenue in the 1990s. Since then, miniatures appear in each “*Bǎi Qí’niáng*” as tokens.

7. *Magpie Bridge* is the bridge on which the Cowherd and the Weaver Maid meet. It is accompanied by the Cowherd's cottage, and cowshed. Six sisters of the Weaver Maid stand at both ends of the bridge.
8. *Qí'niáng Pán (Plate)*. Seven sets of clothes and dressing supplies are evenly stuck to a large round plate, and dotted with beads, which are then presented to the Weaver Maid.

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