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The Clan Life and Traditional Inheritance of Village Surnames: A Miniature of the Zheng Yimen (1099-2023)

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Abstract

China has a vast territory, and the Chinese civilization has lasted for thousands of years, various from districts. The patriarchal consanguinity has gathered living groups, which gradually formed clear internal identities and external boundaries. Based on this, the village and clan life are intertwined. As Mr. Lv Simian described in the chapter on "Family System" in his book "History of Chinese Culture": "The cohabitation first flourished in the north of ancient China, and then flourished in the South in modern times." Obviously, the phenomenon of clan cohabitation in the South is more common today, and the separation, transformation, preservation, and inheritance of clan life presents more characteristics nowadays. Zheng Yimen located in Pujiang County of Jinhua City in the central part of Zhejiang Province. After 925 years, she is still famous for her 168 patriarchal clan rules and regulate a clan under Confucianism. Ancestor of the Zheng surnames' villagers once had lived together for centuries. Folklore activities such as Zheng's ancestral hall, offering sacrifices, loong lights (Large colored lanterns made of Xuan paper and bamboo during the Lunar New Year) and water dragon test (a type of ancient firefighting facility used to introduce flowing water, consisting of pipes connected by multiple bamboo sections.), have been evaluated as intangible cultural heritage projects at city and province levels. Traditional Folk Custom relies on villages as group organizations both in past and recent. Rural clan activities appear with strong regional appeal, cohesion, and appeal. While inheriting the traditional Chinese culture, they realize the current civic education, community governance and rural revitalization.

Keywords: Zheng Yimen, Clan, Clan Regulation, Family Motto, Traditional Folk Custom, Moral Education, Rural Village, Community Governance, Rural Revitalization

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Even during the left-wing Cultural Revolution, family life composed of surnames, clan, and village life never ceased. The ban was only a ritual, or only forbid the rituals. However, the clan identity in the hearts of the villagers was indestructible, with a level of firmness comparable to any state power or organization. The local religion of

Taoism in China, the dominant Confucianism, Imported Buddhism or the diverse forms of religious rituals, all rely on the complex relationships within the clan to reach the believers in rural areas. The large-scale urbanization process in the Chinese Mainland began in the 1990s when the reform and opening began in 1978. Prior to this, Chinese scholars were generous in calling ancient China a rural society. Decades ago, Chinese writers were still more inclined to use "colorful" and "bizarre" to describe urban life without concealing their attachment to being born in the countryside. In the minds of people born between 1910 and 1950, the city was referred to as "foreign flavor," referring to the concessions and commercial port cities. The concept of the city was originally in their minds. It used to be an imperial capital or a provincial capital centuries ago, but at that time it was a "Yangjingbang" that can be rented to other countries. At that time, most people came from rural areas, and people in cities would also say which rural area their hometown was. Rural area is the birthplace of traditional Chinese culture, which was also once considered the most knowledge sacred place.

Zheng Yimen (郑义门 or 鄭義門) (Picture 1 & 2), is the protagonist of this paper. Zheng is the villagers' surname as well as the name of this administrative region. According to the "Pujiang County Annals" published by Zhonghua Book Company in 2005, 16716 people have surnamed Zheng in the entire county, including 8341 people in Zhengzhai Town (He,2005; Xu,2017). The name Zhengzhai Town was obtained after establishing the People's Republic of China, as the Zheng surname has the most village names in this administrative area.



Picture 1: The wooden screen wall behind the main entrance and in front of the courtyard, with the words "Zheng Yimen" written in traditional Chinese characters on it (this image originates from the network)



Picture 2: The stone tablet located at the side gate of Zheng Yimen Ancestral Temple (this image originates from the network)

Zheng Yimen is located in Zhengzhou Town (郑宅镇 or 鄭宅鎮), Pujiang County, Jinhua City, central Zhejiang Province (Picture 3). It is situated northeast of the Pujiang County Basin, 14 kilometers from the downtown. Puyang Bailin Stream (Picture 4) Zheng Clan (浦阳白麟溪郑氏 or 浦陽白麟溪鄭氏) is its former full name. According to the "Pujiang County Annals" published by Zhonghua Book Company in 2005, 16716 people have surnamed Zheng in the entire county, including 8341 people in Zhengzhai Town (He,2005; Xu,2017). The name Zhengzhai Town was obtained after establishing the People's Republic of China, as the Zheng surname has the most village names in this administrative area.



Picture 3: The location of Zheng Yimen (this image originates from the network)



Picture 4: Puyang Bailin Stream Stone Stele (this image originates from the network)

Men (门 or 門), in ancient Chinese, means "door" and can be extended to mean "family," "pedigree," "house" or "clan."

Yimen is a term of praise given by the central government (court) in ancient China to folk families, referring to the loyalty and righteousness of the entire family. Zheng Yimen has another name-- The first clan in the Jiangnan area (awarded at the end of the Yuan Dynasty or the beginning of the Ming Dynasty) or Puyang Bailin Stream Zheng Clan (Puyang Bailin Stream Zheng Clan, 浦阳白麟溪郑氏 or 浦陽白麟溪鄭氏). Jiangnan (江南 or 江南) is an appellation of the South of the Yangtze River. Puyang is the official name of Zheng Yimen's location, and Bailin is a little river or stream across the village (Picture 3). It is more commonly known as Zheng Yimen in the local area for concise expression. The whole paper quotes this title- Zheng Yimen.

A folk saying in China goes, "If you are not a family, do not enter the same door," which best expresses the powerful family meaning of the door or Chinese word "men" in ancient Chinese. Chinese clans encompass a much larger population than the English word for House. House generally represents the core family members with inheritance rights. They all have a chance to become this House's only owner and leader. Clan refers to all individuals with the same surname who have a blood relationship in a specific region and now live together or

nearby. In ancient China, under the direct eldest son inheritance system, other sons of a noble family were known as "Fang" (房) because they most likely inherited only a few houses and fields from this surname.

In ancient western tradition, children not born by the wife are illegal, called bastards by others, cannot use father's surname, let alone inheritance rights. But in ancient China, a man could have a wife and many concubines. The wife's offspring (嫡) are treated as direct line of descent, which certainly not include the concubines' children (庶). In feudal China with strict hierarchy, a concubine's son can only inherit the family's title, property, and all social relationships when his mother become the wife of his father, or he is adopted by his father's legal wife. In the royal family, when the old emperor passes away, his legitimate son inherits the throne, and the other sons must leave the palace to live. In folklore, when the father, the head of the family passes away, the sons would divide up family property and live apart.

1.2 First generation ancestor of Puyang Baili Stream Zheng Clan

During the Northern Song Dynasty, Zheng Ningdao(郑凝道), the 61st grandson of the Zheng family in Xingyang (荥阳), was appointed as the magistrate of She County(歙县), Anhui(安徽) (Mao, 1526). His son, Zheng Ziyou (郑自牖), the imperial censor of the palace(殿中御史), settled in the western mountain of the Fuchun River (富春江). Fan Zhongyan (范仲淹) praised Zheng Ziyou for his upright family conduct and filial piety and wrote the four characters "Zheng Family Treasure" to praise him. Later, Zheng Ziyou was demoted to Sui'an (遂安) (now Chun'an 淳安, Zhejiang) due to direct remonstrance. His 13th son, Zheng Anren(郑安仁), the collation clerk of the Secret Pavilion (秘阁校理), gave birth to sons Wo(渥), Shui(浼), and Huai(淮). In the second year of the Yuanfu era of the Northern Song Dynasty (1099 AD), Huai married and moved to Cheng'en Li (承恩里) in Pujiang (now Zhengzhai Town, 郑宅镇) (Wen He,2010; Xu,2017). Huai's brothers also moved here (He, 2005; Xu, 2017). Huai was rewarded as the first generation of the Puyang Bailin Stream Zheng Clan, the first ancestor. Li (里 or 裡), alley or lane, originally refers to a place of residence and is extended to a place where people gather. Li was also an ancient local administrative organization (Li, 2012).

During the Jingkang period of the Northern Song Dynasty (1126-1127,北宋靖康年间), the situation was turbulent and coincided with famine. Many peasants were starving to death. The then leader of the family, Zheng Huai, united with the clan elders to avoid the displacement of the Zheng's people and made every effort to encourage the entire clan to eat together, work together, and help each other in times of starvation. During the rampant disaster, the Zheng family members could not bear to watch their neighbors starve to death and privately saved their own rations to save their neighbors. Zheng Huai was also generous, benevolent, and righteous. He sold clan fields for food to save the different surnamed villagers and relieve the disaster. The local villagers thanked his virtue (Mao,1526) and renamed the Zheng Clan's residence Cheng'en Li Renyi Li (仁义里) (a place full of benevolence and righteousness). Suffering from the famine, Zheng's cohabitation first emerged in the early years of Jianyan in the Southern Song Dynasty (1127 AD). In the middle of the Qiandao period, Zheng Huai was rewarded a title Chong Su Ju Shi (冲素居士) (Mao, 1526).

1.3 Zheng Clan's history of cohabitation and Clan public ownership among the whole ethnic group

Due to the thousands of clan acres of land sold by Zhe Huai for disaster relief, the Zheng clan suffered a decline since then and lasted for decades. When Zheng Qi (郑绮) (1118-1193), the grandson of Zheng Huai(郑淮), took charge of clan affairs during the Qiandao period of the Southern Song Dynasty (1165-1173). Qi was recorded in History of Song, Biographies, Volume 215, for his proficient in learning and governed a family with solemnity and harmony (History of Song, n.d.).

In 1127 AD, when Qi was a 9-year-old boy, the Jin Dynasty marched south to capture the capital of Northern Song, Bianjing, and abducted Emperors Hui and Qin, leading to the downfall of the Northern Song Dynasty, known as the Jingkang Rebellion (靖康之耻). After the Jingkang Rebellion, the Song Dynasty moved south and

established the Southern Song Dynasty (南宋) in Lin'an (临安) (now Hangzhou, Zhejiang), nearly 150 kilometers from recent map.

Zheng Qi might not have directly involve in wars still he and his family was deeply influenced by wars and conflicts. The deterioration of the family's economic situation and social status shaped Qi's will. Qi was famous for his hard studying since he was a young boy. He hang books on the horns of cows every day when worked in the fields and took books from the horns to recite during breaks. Other clan youth were influenced and followed. Farming and studying became Zheng Clan's name card. The stories of Zheng Qi saving his father, being filial to his mother, valuing integrity, and caring for his clan members were widely spread, earning the Zheng Clan the reputation of filial piety. Therefore, Zheng Qi became the first generation of the Puyang Bailin Sream Zheng Clan (浦阳白麟溪郑氏) to cohabit for generations.

The best way for a family to survive and avoid the displacement and dispersion of its members during times of strong enemies and turbulent times was to unite all its members and defend their homeland. It was impossible to protect one's family, houses, fields, and property just by relying on a few or a dozen male adults in a family, as in the past when peace reigned, only by seeking protection from the lineage and clan. Only the large intertwined clans can protect their people and cope with the unpredictable external environment. Zheng Qi, born in a turbulent era, deeply understands this. Through three generations of inheritance, there had been more differences in kinship and family wealth among the clan members. The offspring, from generation to generation, would have more members, and their thoughts would become more diverse, inevitably each with their plans. Zheng Qi, who became the head of the clan with his reputation, understood that this was the best time to reorganize the Zheng clan: the so-called perfect timing, location, and people. As the clan's leader, Zheng Qi governed the clan with Confucian filial piety. He advocated for sharing all wealth and food within the clan and collecting means of production to revive the clan. An individual's power was extremely insignificant during the war and social chaos. Only by relying on clan support could one survive. The practice of "living together, cooking together and eating together" can ensure the food, clothing, and life safety of the clan members to the greatest extent. The "filial piety" advocated by Zheng was the family and clan cohesion.

According to this revolution, Zheng's cohabitation first emerged in the early years of Jianyan (建炎) in the Southern Song Dynasty (1127 AD). Qi was rewards as the First-generation cohabitation ancestor (同居始祖). The Zheng Clan lived together without dividing their families, and their property was publicly owned. Nowadays, it can be said that they have achieved the goals of communism. The Zheng people began to live a socialist collective life 925 years ago.

Zheng's cohabitation declined after a big fire in the third year of Mingming Shun (1459). The fire destroyed a large area of adjacent houses, except the ancestral hall. Zheng clan dispersed and separated since then. Zheng Yimen lived as a family for more than 10 generations, spanning 332 years. At its peak before the big fire, more than 3000 people lived and ate together (Zheng, n.d.).

Afterward, the 26 brothers of the Yi generation split their families by dismantling their stoves, and the 18th descendants of the Zheng family oncontinued to live together and inherit their family history for 13 generations, lasting 200 years until the end of the Qing Dynasty (Yu, 2015; Xu, 2017).

From Ziyou to Huai told the story of an official class family who had a lot of descendants and went from prosperity to decline due to various factors. Those descendants left their hometown to live. This aristocratic family only had a reputation without a foundation for survival, such as abundant family wealth and social relationship left by ancestors. The marriage of Huai was the best evidence of a considerable decline of his born family. This family could not support or protect his sons and grandsons any more.

Huai was just an ordinary people or a landlord class of Puyang. When it comes to Qi, it was already a worse situation. However, Zheng's family hardly became a prosperous family like the past.

The best way for a family to survive and avoid the displacement and dispersion of its members during times of strong enemies and turbulent times is to unite all its members and defend their homeland. It was impossible to protect one's own family, houses, fields, and property just by relying on a few people of all ages, as in the past when peace reigned. Only by seeking double protection from the same lineage and clan. Only the intertwined clans have the ability to protect their people and cope with the unpredictable external environment. Zheng Qi, who was born in a turbulent era, deeply understood this truth. Through three generations of inheritance, there had been differences in kinship and family wealth among the members of the tribe. However, the offspring were more lush with branches and leaves, and their thoughts and considerations were diverse, inevitably each with their own plans. Zheng Qi, who became the head of the family with her reputation, naturally understood that this was the best time for him to join the clan. The so-called favorable timing, location, and people.

Including Huai and Qi, Huai's brothers, there were only 3 Zheng surnamed families and three generations with fewer members. It could not be called a big Zheng Clan at that time. Zheng was a surname that migrated from other places. Furthermore, this might be the second reason why Qi decided to promote cohabitation. Landowners or landlords (dizhu,地主) were similar to ordinary villagers as they had no political priority and did not serve in the government. The difference lay in that families had money to support members in studying and participating in the imperial examination.

Marriage was the best way to transfer family risks in ancient agricultural societies. From an extremely utilitarian perspective, it can be seen as everyone getting what he needs. To use a more civilized expression, it was always a strong alliance. So much so that in ancient Chinese fantasy novels, beautiful and kind-hearted female monsters dedicated themselves to poor scholars. Regarding Huai's marriage, it was impossible to know whether his wife's Xuan family was an official family. However, at least only a wealthy family would consider accepting a son-in-law to inherit her. Perhaps it was Huai's talent, the Zheng family's remaining political power, and good reputation in the officialdom that allowed Huai to be named the ancestor of the Zheng family in Bailin Stream, Puyang.

In ancient villages, family reputation and tradition were important for residents' social communication and nearly everything. Filial piety was the best business card of a family, far more useful than family wealth. Since the Han Dynasty, there has been a system of selecting officials by examining their character. Though starting from the Sui Dynasty, the imperial examination system began. Nevertheless, at most times, passing the exam was not the only choice. Becoming an official depends on one's reputation and recommendations and Qi were making optimal plans for the long-term development of their family and Zheng Clan.

1.4 Puyang Bailin Stream Zheng Clan's (浦阳白麟溪郑氏) achievements

Before Zheng Qi's death, he summoned his descendants to the ancestral temple, swore blood as a pledge, "If my descendants have unfilial brotherhood, do not cook and eat together will receive God's punishment." The descendants of the Zheng Clan abided by Qi's last wishes, living and eating together. In ancient China, wars, regional conflicts, famines, epidemics, bandits, bandits, crop failures, floods, corvee labor, taxes, diseases, and accidents easily caused destructive damage to farmers who relied on farming for their livelihood.

During the Jingkan period of the Northern Song Dynasty (1126-1127), the situation was turbulent and coincided with famine. Famine was rampant, and the then head of the family, Zheng Huai, was generous. He exchanged his family's fields for food to relieve the disaster. Due to the thousands of acres of land sold by ancestors for disaster relief, the Zheng family suffered a decline. Zheng Qi, the grandson of Zheng Huai (1118-1193), after taking charge of family affairs in, he governed the family with Confucian filial piety. Qi advocated for the sharing of wealth and food within the clan and the collection of means of production to revive the family business. According to the records, Zheng's cohabitation first emerged in the early years of Jianyan in the Southern Song Dynasty (1127 AD). In the third year of Mingming Shun (1459 AD), Zheng Clan's residence was ravaged by fire, and lots of the houses were destroyed. The Zheng clan dispersed and separated, and cohabitation declined. In the year 332 of the 15th generation, more than 3000 people lived together and ate together during its heyday. Afterwards, the 26 brothers of the Yi Zi generation (义字辈) divided the Zheng Clan. The descendants of the No.18th Zheng brother

continued their cohabitation tradition for the 13 generations and 200 years, until the end of the Qing Dynasty (Editor of cultural and historical research association of the first family in Jiangnan, n.d.).

The Song Dynasty Confucian scholars Fan Zhongyan and Zhu Xi praised the Zheng family. The famous Confucian scholars Huang Jin (黄缙, 1277—1357), Wu Lai (吴莱, 1297—1340), Liu Guan (柳贯, 1270-1342), and Jie Xisi (揭傒斯, 1274—1344) praised the Zheng family in the Yuan Dynasty. Wu Lai and Song Lian (宋濂, 1310—1381) were teaching in Dong Ming Ji She (东明精舍), the private school of the Zheng clan. The Zheng clan, who had already lived together for nine generations during the Yuan Dynasty, received two commendations from the Mongolian Yuan court and was honored as the Yimen ("Filial Piety Gate"). In 1385, Emperor Taizu of the Ming Dynasty (明太祖), Zhu Yuanzhang (朱元璋, 1328—1398), personally pardoned and summoned Zheng Lian (1310-1393) (郑濂), who had been arrested for a separate case, to inquire about the laws of the household. In the 23rd year of the Hongwu reign (1390), he inscribed a "Xiaoyi Family" (孝义家) plaque. Later, Zheng Ji (郑济) was invited to the palace to teach "The Way of Filial Piety and Harmony" to Crown Prince Zhu Yunwen (朱允炆, 1377-?) . In the thirtieth year of the Hongwu reign (1397), the grain chief, Zheng Yi (郑沂), was appointed Minister of Rites (礼部尚书). In the Ming dynasty, Zheng Yimen was appointed as the "first family in Jiangnan" by imperial decree, accumulating court awards and promoting the development and prosperity of the Zheng Clan (Mao, 1526).

The Zheng family continues the model of filial piety and righteousness in feudal society, emphasizes the unity of family and country, values the education of the clan and the people, promotes the construction of behavioral and institutional culture within the clan, and is a model of Confucian governance. During the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, the Zheng family had 173 officials, and none of them had pleaded guilty for their corrupt and lawless. More than 40 specific stories of the Zhengyi Men people in Pujiang, including those recorded in official history such as the Song History Xiaoyi Biography, Yuan History Xiaoyou Biography, Ming History Xiaoyi Biography, Guangxu Pujiang County Chronicle Draft Zhonglie Biography, Famous Officials Biography, Political Affairs Biography, Wenyuan Biography, Yinyi Biography, County Chronicles, Prefecture Chronicles, and Provincial Chronicles, have been recorded.

2. Literature review

2.1. Research Review

John W. Dardess got his paper "The Cheng Communal Family: Social Organization and Neo-Confucianism in Yüan and Early Ming China" published in 1974. The research object, THE CHENG COMMUNAL FAMILY, is named 郑义门 or 鄭義門, with Chinese pinyin (official PRC transcription) Zheng Yimen. DARDESS introduces i-men (Yimen), Pai-lin Greek (Bailin Stream), and main family members, Chi (Qi), Jui (1289-1320), Chu (1300-1356), Hsuan (1295-1364), Wei (1306-1377), Yuan (1326-1373), Shen (1314-1361), Tao, Te-chang, Ta-ho, Lien (1310-1393), Ying, et al. Connect the stories of these characters with the dynastic changes of the Song, Yuan, and Ming dynasties. The current situation profoundly influences the fate of a person or a family. Villagers need to grow into a literato with filial piety and righteousness in order to have the opportunity to enter the officialdom. The interaction between the Ming Zhu regime and the Zheng family reveals from another perspective that feudal monarchy can bring supreme glory to the family and can also be the harshest punishment. What should be the foundation of a family's establishment? The answer of the Zheng clan is a family of filial piety and righteousness, with wise descendants, which is based on and regulated by a strict patriarchal system.

The following paragraphs will express these character names in Chinese Pinyin spelling. Although less spelled than Dardess's translation which are more straightforward to pronounce in English. But it will be easier to cite these character names in future research. As records in ancient Chinese literature use Chinese characters and could have a modern Chinese Pinyin spelling through translation tools or apps.

Dardess illustrates three main dimensions of a communal family in the Yuan and early Ming times and investigates the history and organization of one such family commune. The Zheng family of Pu-chiang County was once a

typical and representative example that contemporary Neo-Confucian scholars and leaders of Zhejiang East literati group including Fang Feng (1241-1322), Huang Jin (1277—1357), Wu Lai (1297—1340), Liu Guan (1270-1342), Song Lian(1310—1381), and Fang Xiaoru (1357—1402) diligently and tirelessly sought to prove as a social model during the foundation era of the Ming (Dardess,1974). THE CHENG COMMUNAL FAMILY, or The Zheng Clan, is a persevered Song Ming Neo Confucianism practitioner, especially Zhu Xi's Family Studies followers.

Japanese scholar Tanaka Kane (檀上宽) wrote "Yimen The Zheng Clan and the Society of the Late Yuan Dynasty in China." Under Tanaka's view, the cohabitation and communal living of the Zheng family, who moved to the Pujiang, took place in the late Northern Song Dynasty. Under the invasion of the Jin Dynasty, the Northern Song court, literati, and state institutions migrated southward on a large scale. After the stability of the Yuan Dynasty's political power, the imperial examination system abolished in the early Yuan Dynasty was restored, and a sinicized policy (汉化政策) was implemented to attract Han officials and maintain political stability (Tanaka, 1982). Based on this background, the Zheng family received two commendations from the court during the Yuan Dynasty. The Zheng family is certainly not the most prominent among the Han families, but it must be within the Han big family. They have never fought against the court with their strong family and local separatist power. The family background is not prominent enough, and the previous dynasty had no solid political influence. The Zheng family, who ruled with filial piety and righteousness, should be considered the most qualified remnants of the previous dynasty among local families.

The majority of villager 's moral education, agricultural experience and social contact was achieved within the family in ancient time. Family centered learning materials, under the strict patriarchal system and the constraints of lease and clan rules, were an important enlightenment content for young people in the clan. The rule of feudal countries was established based on families. This is the core of the Chinese idiom "family, country, world"(家国天下). During the transition of state power, clans can be the vanguard force, the conservative force, or the guardian force of the family itself. The change of state power can destroy inherent family interest groups, support emerging family groups, and participate in national governance. Each family carries a pair of Damocles on its head, which is another Chinese slang saying that "wealth is only three generations." The Zheng Clan survived all the changes in political power. In modern China, which was almost falling apart, it always existed tenaciously on the land where its ancestors lived. Many scholars in China search for the deeds of the Zheng Clan recorded in the Song Dynasty, Yuan Dynasty, Ming Dynasty, Qing Dynasty, Jinhua Prefecture, and Pujiang County Annals. From celebrity manuscripts, epitaphs, genealogies, poems, and writings of the Zheng Clan members. Scholars discuss the reasons for the longevity of the Zheng clan. Almost all introductions to the rise of the Zheng family in Puyang are centered on "Zheng Family Standards"(《郑氏规范》), "Zheng Family Rites" (《郑氏家仪》), and "Jingyi Compilation" (《旌义编》) which are contributed to the Zheng Clan's spirit treasure and a powerful tool for uniting ethnic groups, resisting natural disasters, political turmoil, and accidents and difficulties.

The story of the Zheng clan will prompt readers to consider whether these clan rules constrain personal freedom or whether the whole family uses them to streamline relationships with officials, neighbors, aristocrats, and great scholars. Do Those rules support the Zheng clan dedicates all her resources to supporting the younger generation and seeking the survival and revival of the family?

2.2 Clan and Feudal China

Chinese feudal society was an economic, political, and cultural system composed of a trinity of small-scale farming economy, patriarchal system, and Confucianism. The close combination of the three provided the most solid foundation for the existence and development of feudal society. The patriarchal system, which combines the bloodline clan system with the state power, has achieved the greatest integration and become the foundation for the existence and development of feudal society (Xie, 2017). In ancient China, people's survival relied on all the means of life and production produced by the land under their feet. Therefore, their economic, cultural, and political development always revolved around the land.

The emergence and growth of a clan depend not only on having more children and grandchildren but also on whether the land they rely on for their livelihood is sufficient. In ancient China, where the land was settled and relocated, people would only migrate if they lost the means of livelihood provided by the land they relied on for survival. Therefore, the vast rural areas provide the best conditions for the development of clans. When the clan grows to a certain extent, at least with no worries about food and clothing, the people of the clan begin to pursue participation in the local government system in the name of local elites or enter the national power system through the mechanism of imperial examinations and recommendations.

The essential characteristics of a clan were centered around the land. All members of the same surname resided in nearby areas. Whether the system of shared ownership of all family assets was implemented or not, the system of shared ownership of family assets had been its foundation since the clan's birth. Clans had strong economic security, therefore supporting the education of young people, providing social and economic support for those working outside, and providing living security for widows and orphans. These were all responsibilities undertaken by clans. In ancient China, where the welfare system was far from developed, the clan was the only welfare institution, charity institution, and arbitration institution for the clan's people. The two ultimate pursuits of ancient Chinese officials were honoring their ancestors during their tenure as officials and returning to their hometowns after retiring from old age.

When implementing strong clan regulations to bind the clan members, it was also the spiritual belonging of the clan members. The kinship system established on the basis of the clan system means that in addition to assuming the responsibility of protecting the clan members, the clan must also take on the education, supervision, and control of each member of the clan. The iconic building of a clan, the ancestral hall, was a ceremonial venue for every person from birth to death. The full moon wine after birth was held in the square of the ancestral hall. The name of the newborn was given by the parents, and the middle name, also known as the generation, indicated that the child's backup name was fixed. Children born in the same generation had the same generation. A clan usually had 12 such middle names, which meant that every 12 generations, the next cycle begins. The surname of each child indicated that they came from a certain family, and their middle name indicated their chronological order. The last character was their first name, which was the most commonly used way to address themselves. There were also many ethnic people whose full names only had two characters. The first character was their surname, and the second character was their first name. Therefore, from the perspective of word formation, the radical of the second character must be the same.

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The way the clan names can quickly provide personal information about newborns. Even if there were several major ethnic groups in the area, all surnamed Zheng, people could still distinguish which Zheng family he came from due to the different name rules of his generation. In fact, there could not be several major ethnic groups in the local area, all surnamed Zheng. Lianzong (联宗 or 聯宗) refers to the mutual recognition of people from the same surname but different clans to belong to the same clan, thus forming a new clan. In this case, people would refer to each other as brothers.

In ancient times, when imperial power was not deeply involved in the countryside, clans were efficient tools for rural governance—no formal officials at the township level (乡). County officials (县令) became the lowest-ranking officials. County officials below are all referred to as li (隶) and did not have a national officer status. This was a tacit political understanding between feudal monarchs and the gentry. Clans had a certain degree of civil decision-making power over their clan members. The clan chief represented the entire clan and participated in communication with the government, responsible for carrying out tasks such as taxation, corvée, distribution, and recruitment.

2.3 Clans and Socialist China

The land revolution brought the transformation of clans, in order to solve the current situation where most of the rural land was concentrated in the hands of large families and landlords, and the vast number of poor people could only serve as tenants, long-term workers, and living in unbearable hardship. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the clans continued to be reformed, with land as the core, and the old appearance of feudalism, ignorance, and confinement of rural productivity development must be removed. Before the reform and opening up, the transformation of traditional clans had already been completed, and the strict hierarchical system and vigilante justice within clans were abolished. Villagers were no longer treated as members of the clan or commune, but as equal citizens, enjoying equal distribution of arable land according to the population of the village. The state owned the land, but the right to use it was granted to the tiller.

In rural China, where the illiteracy rate was extremely high, clan rituals were once seen as remnants of feudalism. Ancestral halls were transformed into schools and cultural venues for villagers, predominantly rural primary schools, to accommodate all eligible children to the greatest extent possible, helping to popularize 9-year compulsory education. In the late 20th century and early 21st century rural areas of southern Zhejiang, ancestral portraits were hung in ancestral halls, and villagers attempted to redraw the murals on both sides of the walls according to their memories. Table tennis tables were placed in the accent hall. Things in the village are discussed in meetings at the table in the ancestral hall, and other villagers often walk around the temple to listen. The simple ceremony of paying respects to ancestors during the Lunar New Year had been restored quietly in remote rural areas in the late 1990s. A pair of candles were lit, incense burners were placed, and delicious food was served on the table below the portrait or photo of the ancestors. The villagers no longer mentioned whether they were of the same clan, but living in the same village with the same surname mainly was a fact in their daily interactions. When the clan dissolved, the clan's surname still existed as a formal surname, serving as a link for villagers to help each other. In the village, a large number of villagers with the same surname means that they have an absolute advantage in voting rights on the village committee and have decision-making power on matters related to core interests such as road construction, land allocation, collective economic construction, and the development of township enterprises.

Whether it is the construction of beautiful rural areas or the revitalization of rural areas, the participation of villagers is indispensable. The same surname and lineage remain a strong bond of relationship and a prerequisite for trust. How to unleash the efficient initiative of village surnames is always the core of rural governance at the grassroots level.

As a model of filial piety and righteousness in ancient times, the Zheng clan is not only a representative of excellent traditional Chinese culture, but also a positive force in rural revitalization and village governance in modern Socialist China.

3. Research Design

3.1. Historical approach

The theoretical core of Toynbee's book *A Study of History* reviews cultural forms and historical views. He advocates "historical morphology". Culture arises through facing challenges and responding to the environment. A few great figures promoted the growth of culture through historical activities. However, the decline of culture comes from the loss of creativity by a few creators and the lack of innovation among the majority. The outcome is that the entire society loses its new competitive ability. The disintegration of civilization lies in social discord and the individuals numb (Toynbee, 2007).

The scope of historical research is neither a nation nor a country nor a society but a civilization that can form its system. The historical research unit is civilization—a specific group with a common culture or way of life. The Zheng clan is a microcosm of the family dominated by Confucianism in ancient Chinese agricultural society. In this sense, the Zheng clan belongs to a branch of Confucian civilization and a sample of traditional Chinese

families. Analyzing the history of the Zheng clan will present a family's struggle from prosperity to decline, then to prosperity and decline, and continue to seek revival. The rise and fall of a family are always linked to whether their descendants are diligent in studying, whether they follow the right path, whether they enter the officialdom, and so on (Toynbee, 2007; Jin, 2015). Meanwhile, the story of the Zheng clan presents the life stories and promotion history of rural elites during the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties.

3.2. Narrative approach

Historical narratives are based on "real events", not fakes or imagination. Since this paper may cannot avoid the necessary "imagination" made by stitched and fractured history, the author should avoid the suspicion of fiction and every word has evidence and supporting materials (Zhu, 2024). The content recorded in historical books and local chronicles is history, and events that are not recorded, even if they seem like actual events, can only be regarded as unofficial history, anecdotes, legends, etc. Its authenticity is always questioned, and how it can be used as evidence to prove a viewpoint can only be considered speculation at most. Blurring the boundary between literary and historical narratives is not a Chinese narrative tradition. The essence of Chinese historiography lies in the pursuit of truth and insightful insights. Therefore, all descriptions of Zheng Yimen in the text are based on historical records, local chronicles, classics passed down by the Zheng family, and other well-documented texts.

4. The Construction of the Zheng Clan

4.1 Clan Mottos

The Zheng clan is very committed to moral education. Clan members are required to live together and eat together. Everyone wakes up in the morning to listen to clan rules and attend the ancestral hall on the first and fifteenth days of each month, with men and women separated. After beating drums 24 times, children sing the ancestral teachings. Zheng's ancestral teachings were the first to pass down four words of wisdom, which are "loyalty, filial piety, diligence, and frugality." They are interpreted as 18 words of profound meaning: "Obey parents, be friendly with brothers and with the clan, pay respects to mourn and sacrifice, abide by one's own duties, and prohibit in propriate behavior"(Zheng, n.d.-b).

They involve: "Diligently cultivate and study, be filial to relatives, be humble, be rich and not arrogant, pity poor, live with benevolence and righteousness, be harmonious with the clan, wear cloth, eat simple, and endure the anger and enjoy peace. Don't miss the farming season, don't indulge in entertainment, and don't disrupt moral development. Moral construction must continue and cannot be terminated. Inheriting ancestral teachings is the key to the development of a family. The important matter is said over and over again. Listen, listen, and listen" (Editor of cultural and historical research association of the first family in Jiangnan, n.d.).

Clan instruction is divided into male and female editions. After playing the drums 24 times every morning, order children to recite the male and female training, respectively. "The rise and fall of a family are all due to the accumulation of good and evil. What is the accumulation of good? At home, filial piety and compassion are the principles of benevolence and forgiveness in handling affairs, and all those who help others are the same; what is the accumulation of evil? Relying on one's strength to strengthen oneself, occupying other's wealth to enrich oneself, and all those who deceive oneself or others are the same. Therefore, those who can love their descendants leave behind the good, and those who do not love their descendants leave behind the evil." The Women's Training says: "The harmony or disharmony of a family are all the virtues of a woman. What is the virtue? To serve one's parents-in-law with filial piety, to serve one's husband with respect, to treat one's sister-in-law with gentleness, to receive offspring with kindness, and so on. What is not wise? Lust, jealousy, bullying the weak, swaying the drum, indulging in favoritism, etc. The Heavenly Way is very close; good fortune and misfortune are related to women"(Zheng, n.d.). Clan Instructions strongly emphasize human relationships, advocating filial piety, brotherly respect, frugality in household management, and good neighborly friendship. Emphasis should be placed on family upbringing and clan-funded school education and should not be biased.

4.2 Clan funded school education

Dongming Academy (东明书院), formerly known as Dongming Jingshe (东明精舍), was built by Zheng Dezhang, the fifth-generation ancestor of the Yuan Dynasty. It was originally a clan-funded private school for clan youth. Zheng Dahe (郑大和), Zheng Wenrong (郑文融) and Zheng Dezhang (郑德璋), the Sixth Patriarch, built 20 more houses and expanded them into private schools in the village. He hired famous scholars such as Wu Lai and Liu Guan as lecturers and enrolled neighborhood youth. Although Dongming Jingshe was founded with the funding of the Zheng Clan, its students are mainly descendants of the Zheng Clan. Unlike other ordinary private schools, it recruited children of different surnames from the same city to study and welcomes students of other surnames. It was a true private school. For example, in the article about school opening (《开馆记》), the writer wished to "attract the elites of neighboring villages and towns to contribute to the benefits of professionalism and community. The courtyard has dormitories and cooking utensils for the clan's children and scholars of different surnames." Later, Song Lian served as the mountain chief and taught for more than 20 years, attracting scholars such as Fang Xiaoru from afar to come and study. Dongming Jingshe gained fame in the late Yuan and early Ming dynasties (Pan, 1988). According to the Zheng Clan Regulations (《郑氏规范》), school education emphasized the cultivation of humble gentlemen who understand Confucian classics, practice filial piety and righteousness, specialize in learning, cultivate one's character and family, and inherit the will of ancestors. If some could serve, they would be given financial support and encouragement. If their studies were unsuccessful, they would also be taught how to manage their families and finances to rely on themselves and become self-sufficient (Shen, 2015).

Despite the vicissitudes of life, the Dong Ming Jingshe was destroyed in the middle of the Ming Dynasty due to military fire. In the 29th year of the Qianlong reign, descendants of the Zheng family moved the Dongming Jingshe from Dongming Mountain to Zhengzhai Village across the road from the Zheng ancestral hall and renamed it Dongming Academy. During the Republic of China period, Dongming Academy (东明学院) was renamed the Higher Department of Dongming Elementary School. After a renovation in 1927, it resumed education and became the County Substitute Central Primary School (县立代用中心小学), Xuanlu Township Central Primary School (玄鹿乡中心小学), and Xuanlu Central National School (玄鹿中心国民学校). After the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, it was renamed Zhengzhai Township Central Primary School in Pujiang County (浦江县郑宅乡中心小学). By 1960, it had basically maintained its original appearance. Later, due to the expansion of the school, the original building was demolished, leaving only one gatehouse (门楼), which is now protected as a site (Xu, 2017).

4.3 Behavioral culture construction: Zheng Clan Rites

The hereditary family motto "Zheng Clan Rites" (《郑氏家仪》) was compiled by Zheng Yong (郑泳), the eighth-generation ancestor, based on the "Zhou Li" (《周礼》) and referring to the "Zhu Zi Family Rites" (《朱子家仪》), combined with Zheng's traditional family etiquette, in accordance with local customs and habits. It was based on Confucianism and promotes traditional concepts such as "loyalty, filial piety, propriety, righteousness, and integrity," constraining the daily etiquette and folk activities formed by the Zheng clan's cohabitation (Zheng, n.d.-c). It covered five major parts: "general etiquette, coronation ceremony, wedding ceremony, funeral ceremony, and sacrificial ceremony." Today, the Zheng clan's rituals have been mainly based on "ancestor worship, teacher worship, coming of age ceremony, and official warning ceremony," presenting the characteristics of "multi-period activities being perennial, multiple groups participating in a wide range, and large-scale activities in multiple locations." They have added new forms of seeking roots for Zheng descendants domestically and internationally, endowing them with new connotations of loving their hometown and patriotism, becoming a significant cultural and folk activity and cultural exchange activity in Pujiang (Zheng, n.d.-b).

The cultural value and significance of Zheng's Clan etiquette are profound, mainly promoting family traditions, containing filial piety, farming, and hard studying. The main line is to advocate remembering the fundamental traditional virtues. By using admonitions and warnings as the primary educational methods, The Zheng clan aims to enhance moral qualities, regulate the behavior of her clan members, and prevent potential problems. The

admonition of officials to be upright in their rituals, the warning to avoid reading frequently in the coronal ceremony, and the conclusion of closing the coffin during funerals interpret an individual's responsibility to their family, society, and country, ultimately achieving self-cultivation, family harmony, governance, and world peace (Li & Chen, 2018). The cultural connotations contained in the traditional Zheng family's rituals are positive and have significant historical and practical implications regarding academic research, family management, neighborly harmony, and career advancement.

4.4 Institutional construction:Zheng Clan Regualaitions

The sixth ancestor initially formulated the Zheng Clan Regulations, Zheng Wenrong (郑文融), with 58 articles, and the seventh ancestor, Zheng Qin (郑钦), wrote 73 continuation articles to supplement their unpreparedness. The eighth ancestor, Zheng Tao (郑涛), led his descendants to revise clan regulations and invited Song Lian to participate (Editor of cultural and historical research association of the first family in Jiangnan, n.d.). The final draft comprised 168 articles cover all aspects of clan running and household management, education for descendants, ceremonies, daily life, and interpersonal relationships. On clan ethics, filial piety and righteousness are the foundation, human ethics are emphasized, filial piety and respect are given, family management is diligent and frugal, aesthetic education is emphasized, and education for youth is highly emphasized. From the perspective of social ethics, it is vital to accumulate virtues and do good deeds, maintain good neighborliness, advocate integrity, and guide officials from a family perspective to "serve the public and be diligent in politics, and not engage in greed and aggression"(Zheng, n.d.)

Zhu Yuanzhang (朱元璋) valued the Zheng Clan Regulation and introduced many contents into the laws of the Ming Dynasty. He included it in the Jingyi Compilation (《旌义编》) in the 11th year of the Hongwu reign (明洪武 11 年, 1378 年). During the reign of Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty (清乾隆年间), the Zheng CLan Regulation was included in the Si Ku Quan Shu (Complete library in the Four Branches of Literature) (四库全书). The key to the Zheng Clan's ability to live together in an orderly and long-lasting manner lay in the revision and improvement of clan regulations, the enhancement of the moral standards of clan members, the restraint of their behavior, and the maintenance of grassroots social stability in the feudal dynasty. It can be regarded as an experimental specimen of the Confucian ideal of saving the world. Jie Jin (1369—1415) (解缙) once submitted a memorial: "In ancient times, good and evil must be remembered by the neighbors. I seek the etiquette of ancient people's governance and the law of neighborly harmony, just like the village agreement of the Lv family in ancient Lantian (蓝田)and the family model of the Zheng family in Yimen, which will spread throughout the whole country. The noble families are the first to honor and learn from them, setting an example for the people"(Zhang,et al, 1974).

The ruling class hoped to lead the education of the entire society and maintain the rule of the feudal dynasty by establishing this model. Under official advocacy, the Zheng Clan Regulation gradually transcended family boundaries and became a model and example of social education in the Ming and Qing dynasties. Clan regulations were mostly reflected in positive guidance and persuasion for family members, which were highly educational. The family rules, similar to the rules of governance, were more reflected in the punishment and punishment after the fact and were mandatory—the completeness of the Zheng Clan Regulation lay in its dual functions of persuasion and punishment. The Zheng Clan Regulation's feasibility lay in its focus on Confucian culture, refining the standards for easy operation and measurement (Chen, 2001). It could be regarded as a rare and complete family code in China's feudal society. From a current perspective, although the Zheng Clan Regulation also has many limitations in the era of authoritarianism, its advocacy of ethical concepts and family practices such as accumulating virtues and doing good, being diligent and frugal in managing the family, building neighborly relationships, valuing education, participate in Charity activities, and maintaining integrity in public service still have significance for establishing civilized family traditions, promoting national spirit, and maintaining social stability(Editor of cultural and historical research association of the first family in Jiangnan, n.d.).

5. The rise of the Zheng clan: a microcosm of social development and changes

5.1 *The emergence of a new type of patriarchal clan*

In the early Song Dynasty, the abolition of the tenant system was replaced by a relatively relaxed personal attachment system, which significantly increased the mobility of various social classes. In order to prevent the unstable impact of relatively loose farmers on the unified society, it was necessary to establish a new and effective grassroots organization, including scattered farmers, to resist the impact of the commodity economy. Through the continuous efforts of Song Confucianism, the traditional form of family organization that only met the needs of aristocratic families gradually penetrated grassroots villages, becoming a common organizational form in rural areas that individual farmers readily accepted the new type of patriarchal family. The new type of family in the Song Dynasty, with the aim of respecting the ancestors and accepting the clans, provided the general public with complete material dependence and ultimate spiritual belonging, which in turn gave rise to the "genealogical system," "clan property system," and "ancestral hall and ancestral son system," ensuring the operation and continuation of the clan system (Liu, 2010).

5.2 *Clan education for courtesy of commoners*

The development of the commodity economy in the Song Dynasty led to the rise of the emerging wealth class, and the emergence of the wealthy class strongly challenged the boundaries of the traditional aristocratic and aristocratic families, which were characterized by the separation of scholars and commoners. The rich were no longer satisfied with only possessing material wealth; instead, they hoped to maintain a certain degree of "equivalence" with the past aristocracy regarding spirit. "Li" (礼) and "Le" (乐) had evolved from being cultural privileges of aristocratic families and the behavioral norms of literati to commoners. This led to a trend of populism, which became a question that Song Confucianism had to consider. The widespread family teachings in the Song Dynasty reflected the practice of Song Confucianism in responding to social reality, advocating "integrity," "morality," and "heavenly principles" to reshape the traditional ethical and moral views of Confucianism (Feng, 1994). In this process, the culture of etiquette had achieved the popularization and development process from the state to aristocrats to scholars and commoners (the whole society), reflecting the traditional knowledge of Confucian aristocratic families in terms of family studies, family traditions, and family laws, to the etiquette and education of aristocratic aristocrats. Then it integrated into the family rules, teachings of scholars and commoners. Ultimately, the Confucian classics as the primary basis for ritual education became the core value of family laws and regulations and an essential feature of traditional Chinese culture (Xu, 1992).

5.3 *Grassroots public education is based on the family as the basic unit*

During the feudal society, the education of the people was based on the family and family as the basic units. "Cultivate oneself, unify the family, govern the country, and pacify the world," achieving "unity of family and country." As the Song Confucian scholar Ouyang Xiu (1007–1072) (欧阳修) said in his article, *On the Three Emperors Setting Words to the People without Violation* (《三皇设言民不违论》): "To subdue the people with morality, and to gradually educate the people with education" (Ouyang, 2010). The founder of cohabitation, Zheng Qi, formulated the "Zheng Family Ancestral Precept": "All descendants of the Zheng family must strive for self-improvement, live in harmony, and not live and eat separately due to poverty, wealth, and status." From then on, the Zheng clan created fifteen generations of cohabitation and cooking together, spanning four dynasties, and becoming a great miracle in the history of Chinese families. Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang of the Ming Dynasty attached great importance to family and clan education in maintaining political stability. In his "Six Edicts to Teach the People" (《教民六谕》), Zhu Yuangzhang (1397) wrote, "Teach your descendants and not to do anything wrong." He praised Zheng Yimen for "living together for nine generations, with filial piety and righteousness renowned throughout the world, making him the first family in Jiangnan."

6. Today's Zheng Clan Life and Cultural Heritage

6.1 Inheritance of tradition

The Zheng Clan Association has designated the eighth day of the second lunar month as the "Zheng Family Ceremony and Ancestral Worship Activity," promoting filial piety and clan culture and setting an example for harmonious and orderly family traditions. The activities of the Zheng Clan Ritual include an opening speech on the memorial archway in the Square, a street walk, the guard of honor, an ancestor worship ceremony in the clan worship hall, a quadrangle dinner, as well as performances of Wu Opera and Yue Opera. Zheng Yimen used the ritual of worshipping ancestors to "chase the distant feeling of time" and revisit the "ritual that cannot be forgotten" in family history.

The Zheng Yimen Water Dragon Test, held on the first day of the eighth lunar month every year, was included in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Jinhua City in 2010. In the 14th year of the Ming Zhengtong reign (1449 AD) and the 3rd year of the Ming Tianshun reign (1459 AD), the Zheng family suffered two major fires, causing their houses and property to be burned down, the entire clan to dismantle their stoves, and their members to disperse. Zheng Chongyue (1501 - 1569) (郑崇岳), the 15th-generation, who once served as Yunnan's inspector, returned home, retired from his official career, and carried out the renovation project of the Bailin Stream. He introduced water sources from the depths of the stream and built "Ten Bridges and Nine Water Gates" (十桥九闸) at the stream flowing through the village to store water, prevent floods and drought, and provided daily drinking and washing services for villagers. In the past, the fire extinguishers in the village were called Shui Loong (水龙) or fire hose, which were often composed of a wooden bucket about 1 meter long, 0.8 meters wide, and about 0.8 meters high, several auxiliary buckets, water hoses, and spray gun heads. The water test activity began since then and gradually became a custom in Zheng's residence, which continues to this day.

2006, the Pujiang Bench Dragon was listed as a representative work of national intangible cultural heritage. Among them, the Zheng clan's Bench Dragon dance required bowing three times, which was said to be a unique custom left by Emperor Jianwen when he sought refuge at Zheng Yimen. Folk activities such as benches and dragons, rated as intangible cultural heritage projects, are mostly organized based on villages and have strong regional appeal, cohesion, and infectious power. While inheriting traditional Chinese culture, they also achieve current civic education and community autonomy.

6.2 Criticizing and inheriting traditional clan motto

Traditional family motto and clan regulations contain the traditional virtues of the Chinese nation and are an essential component of China's traditional culture. Those mottos and regulations are valuable resources for contemporary family education, community environment, and traditional construction. Based on the rationality of their existence, a modern construction of clan regulations needs a critical and active inheritance. When reshaping the expression form of traditional motto culture, more attention should be paid to the modern transformation of its content and the realization of its contemporary value. Eliminating negative factors such as male superiority and female inferiority and the concept of patriarchal hierarchy in traditional family culture makes it a more enduring cultural discourse (Zhang & Qian, 2013). Zheng Yimen is now a 4A-level tourist attraction in China. 2002, it was listed as a national critical cultural relic protection unit and a patriotic education base in Zhejiang Province. In September 2001, the Pujiang County Party Committee and Government named Zheng Yimen an anti-corruption education base. In November 2005, the Jinhua Municipal Commission for Discipline Inspection named it the Jinhua City Anti-Corruption Cultural Education Base. In November 2006, the Zhejiang Provincial Commission for Discipline Inspection officially announced that Zheng Yimen was one of the province's ten anti-corruption cultural and educational bases. The 2012 Zheng Yimen National Anti-Corruption Education Base Project was approved. In August 2015, the first anti-corruption cultural education base in Jiangnan, Huifeng Garden (惠风苑), was established and opened. The official website of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection has launched a column on "Family Rules in Chinese Tradition," promoting the story of "Zheng Yimen's Filial Piety and Inheritance for 900 Years" (*Zheng Yimen: Nine Hundred Years of Filial Piety Inheritance*, 2015). It focuses

on listing the family rules in the "Zheng Family Rules" that warned future generations not to reach out. The anti-corruption animated film "Zheng Yimen" was released on CCTV in 2016. The Zheng Clan Ancestral Hall has successfully become a base for patriotic, moral, and anti-corruption culture education at all levels. Promote excellent family traditions and actively strengthen the construction of family moral education rooted in the national spirit, maintaining national unity, national centripetal force, and cohesion. Provide inexhaustible impetus for the cultivation of socialist core values (Yu, 2015).

6.3 Transformation of Clan Organizations into Contemporary Citizen Societies

Once, the Zheng Clan was famous and praised for public ownership within entire clan in centuries. The Zheng Yimen or called as Zheng family, relying on their loyal and righteous family traditions, has always existed in political power changes.

As a modern civil society organization like Zheng Yimen, the family is a platform and foundation for the benign interaction between the state and individuals. Participate in home construction, regional governance, and national rejuvenation as a legitimate, law-abiding folk community with the same surname. Family relics can be combined with tourism and investment to develop the local economy and cultural industries. Family history and norms can be combined with education on integrity and patriotism. Family skills and folk activities can be excavated and applied for inclusion in intangible cultural heritage at all levels, stimulating people's creativity, enriching rural life, protecting cultural diversity, and promoting national identity (Gao & Xia, 2012).

7. Conclusion

In the last century, clan activities were banned for promoting feudal superstition and fighting against land revolution. Clan was once a banned word. Small nuclear families are more suitable for the development of the country. In rural areas, villagers living in the same village with the same surname always know which people in the village share the same ancestor as themselves. Villagers with the same surname always have more interactions and their own circles. What has been banned are only the family laws that replace national laws, the outdated rules that hinder freedom of marriage, and the extravagant ancestor worship ceremonies. For nearly 50 years, Zheng Yimen has long replaced the former title of the Zheng clan. Zheng Yimen, who had the germ of a shared ownership system based on clans, first entered the perspective of local researchers. There were countless glorious aristocratic families in ancient China. However, very few were able to live in the same place for hundreds of years, preserve family buildings, ancient family books, and traditions, and continuously receive recognition from different political regimes. This is Zheng Yimen, the Zheng family of Puyang Bailin Stream.

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