CHINESE AMERICANS IN CHINA: ETHNICITY, TRANSNATIONALISM,

AND ROOTS TOURISM

A Dissertation

by

NAHO UEDA (MARUYAMA)

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2009

Major Subject: Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences

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Approved by:

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ABSTRACT

Chinese Americans in China: Ethnicity, Transnationalism, and Roots Tourism.

(May 2009)

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Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Amanda Stronza

In the era of advanced communication and transportation technology, immigrants and their descendents can be reunited with their ancestral land from where they or their forebears once were displaced. Visiting the ancestral land as tourists, or "roots tourism," is a major and easily accessible means through which people can recreate and retain the social ties with their ancestral communities. Roots tourism is loosely defined as a type of tourism in which ethnic minorities visit their ancestral lands to discover ethnic roots and culture. Despite the recent popularity of this type of tourism, many gaps remain in the research of roots tourism especially about its influence on ones' identity and sense of home among second generation of immigrants. Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation is to explore the experiences of visiting ancestral land among second generation immigrants. For the purpose of this study, I focus on experiences of roots tourism among Chinese Americans. By investigating their motivation to visit their ancestral land, experiences and encounters in their ancestral land, and feelings toward the ancestral land and toward the United States after the visit, I attempt to explore how

roots tourism influences ways in which second generation define and redefine who they are and where they belong under the transnationalism. Face-to-face, in-depth interviews with forty Chinese Americans revealed that, contrary to the idea that roots tourism generates strong feelings of belonging to one's ancestral land, a majority of the interviewees in this study felt foreign in their ancestral land. Although they felt a certain sense of connection to China or Taiwan, the feeling was overwhelmed by the differences in language, norms, class, culture, upbringing, citizenship, and family and gender composition. Analysis indicated that among forty interviewees, only three interviewees felt a sense of belonging to their ancestral society after their visit, and the rest of the interviewees realized their home is the United States. This study revealed the limitation of roots tourism as a tool to foster an identity and sense of home attached to the tourists' ancestral land. At the same time, the findings also suggest that roots tourism played a significant role to assist the interviewees to develop a positive sense of being Chinese Americans.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the past two decades, we witnessed a worldwide movement of diaspora,

immigrants, and their descendents to return to their ancestral land from where they

or their ancestors once had been displaced. Different from earlier immigrants, who

had only limited access to their ancestral land after their immigration, increasing

number of current immigrants and their descendents take the opportunity to return to

their ancestral home and permanently settle down as a result of changes in economy,

political forms, and technology. For example, between 1993 and 2003, 20,085

Jamaican diaspora returned to their homeland through the effort of the Returning

Resident Facilitation Unit (RRFU) established by the Jamaica government (Horst

2007). In Japan, in 2004, there were an estimated more than 280,000 Japanese

Brazilians (Tsuda 2003). The trend has shifted the focus of research in ethnic

studies, sociology, and anthropology. During most of the twentieth century, scholars

focused on ways in which immigrants and their descendents accepted and became

"assimilated" in the culture, values, and norms of their country of settlement

(Gordon 1964; Spiro 1955). However, recently, scholars (Barcus and Werner 2007;

Oxfeld and Long 2004; Portes 2003) consider returning to the ancestral land as a

possible path of immigration. Studies explored political, economic, social, and

cultural consequences of such a massive return movement on the local community.

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This dissertation follows the style of Annals of Tourism Research.

For example, an increased number of returnees strains existing resources (Phillips 2004). The returnees may also engage in excessive consumption of consumer goods (Gmelch 1980) returnees may also engage in excessive consumption of consumer goods (Gmelch 1980) or introduce a Western concept of gender roles to the local society (Sakka et al. 1999). That is, hosting an increasing number of people who came back from foreign countries may alter the balance of class, power, and gender relations in the ancestral countries. Studies also have explored returnees' success and struggle in readjusting themselves to the country of origin (Horst 2007; Tsuda 2003).

Although the return migration has become a common practice among immigrants and their descendents, it may not for everyone. Many have chosen to stay in a country of settlement, or been considering but have not decided to permanently return to the ancestral country, for various reasons. For them, a temporal return in a form of tourism, or "roots tourism," might be an attractive option. In fact, visiting one's ancestral land as a tourist has recently become popular (Basu 2001; Cole and Timothy 2004; Duval 2004; Hall 2004). For example, the number of visitors to Hungary from the United States was 220,000 in 1990, and by 2000 the number had increased to 356,000; a large portion of these visitors were Hungarian immigrants and their children (Huseby-Darvas 2004). Lew and Wong (2005) also indicated that, at Hong Kong Chek Lap Kok International Airport, approximately 52% of foreign visitors who arrived have a Chinese ethnic background. As King (1994) states,

immigrants and their descendents have become a growing market for many of immigrant sending countries.

Similar to the return movement, the increased volume of the visitors who "return" to their homeland have various impacts on the local society. Studies have explored ways in which the visits influenced the growth of the local economy (Lew and Wang 2002; Oxfeld 2004), ways of presenting history and heritage particularly for roots tourists (Bruner 1996; Maddern 2004), and the relation between those who have left and those who stayed (Louie 2004; Stefansson 2004). Scholars also are concerned with ways in which the visiting home has an influence on tourists themselves. When the tourists visit their ancestral land, they observe and experience, at least partially, the life that they could have had if they or their ancestors had not immigrated. They also interact with people who share the same ethnicity but have a different culture, experience, and citizenship. Do these tourists feel at home in their ancestral land? Why? Why not? In what ways does visiting an ancestral land influence a sense of who they are and where they belong? And, why does it matter? These questions might be better answered when they are examined in the context of mobility, globalization, and transnationalism.

TRANSNATIONALISM, SENSE OF HOME, ETHNIC IDENTITY, AND ROOTS

TOURISM

Transnsationalism represents the various forms of cross-border connections,

including international flow of media, information, capital, and people, that have

become available under globalized economy and political forms (Basch, el al. 1994;

Faist 2000). For immigrants and their descendents, transnationalsim is a vehicle by

which they can recreate and maintain their ties to the ancestral land across spaces

(Faist 2000). Glick-Schiller and Basch (1995) describe transnationalism as "the

process by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of

origin and their country of settlement (p. 48). Portes et al. (1999) identify three

different fields of transnationalism: economic, political, and sociocultural. The three

forms are separated only for analytical purposes, and people participate in more than

one kind of transnationalism. Economic transnationalism is demonstrated by

business people who have access to resources and markets across national borders.

Political transnationalism is practiced by individuals who participate in various

political activities, such as fund raising for political candidates, in their ancestral

country. Sociocultural transnationalism refers to demonstration of the cultural

practices of the ancestral country in the country of settlement. Itzigsohn and

Saucedo (2002) also describe the sociocultural practice as a reconstruction of a

community that includes migrants and people in the place of origin. That is, it

concerns "the emergence of practices of sociability … that pertain to the sense of

belonging and social obligations of immigrants" (p. 768). Transnationalism includes

a range of practices and different levels of participation. For example, Itzegsohn and Saucedo (2002) identify various transnational activities such as participating in hometown associations, sending remittances, traveling to ancestral country, and participating in a local sports club or charity activities that links a person to one's country of origin. Itzigsohn et al. (1999) also differentiate continuous participation in the transnational activities, or "narrow transnationalism," from the occasional participation, or "broad transnationalism." Regarding motivation to participate in transnationalism, Itzigsohn and Saucedo (2002) identify three different theories: linear, resource dependence, and reactive. The linear theory explains the participation in the transnationalism as the continuation of the links between immigrants and their families, friends, and place of origin that they left behind. The theory of resource-dependent transnationalism argues that the emergence of transnationalism is based on the resources that immigrants need to participate in the transnational activities. Even though immigrants hope to maintain the transnational ties, the lack of financial resource may become an obstacle for them to do so, especially for those who newly arrive in the country of settlement. The reactive theory describes transnationalism as a reaction to negative experiences in a country of settlement, such as racial discrimination and downward mobility. The reactive theory is often applied to explain transnationalism not only among the immigrant generation but also among the second and later generation of immigrants. Indeed, Louie (2006) explains that second-generation Dominican Americans, who maintain a strong sense of transnational connection to their ancestral country, are more

optimistic about their educational trajectories and social mobility than are Chinese Americans, who are more associated with the ethnic minority identity.

The transnational ties with the ancestral land have generated debate among scholars who consider the influence of such maintained ties on the traditional "assimilation model." The assimilation model explains that immigrants gradually adopt the culture, language, values, and norm of and political loyalty to a country of settlement while ceasing the connection to their ancestral land. On the contrary, transnationalism concerns immigrants' activities to continue their ties with the ancestral society as a key part of their social life. Scholars have studied ways in which the ties with the ancestral land influence immigrants' and their descendents' choice of citizenship (Ong 1999), patterns of investment (Nyiri 2002), and political loyalty to the country of settlement (Grick-Schiller and Fouron 2001). Their main concern is whether and in what ways the transnationalism weakens the attachment and identification with the country of settlement, thus "national identity," among immigrants and their descendents. However, other scholars maintain that transnationalism and assimilation are not contradictory but rather complementary. That is, having ties with the ancestral land does not necessarily weaken the allegiance to host societies; it simply provides an additional option of identity and behavior (Kibria 2002; Louie 2004; Portes et al. 1999).

The study of roots tourism has been drawing the attention of scholars who are concerned with the influence of transnationalism on immigrants' and their descendants' sense of identity and belonging, because roots tourism is an easily accessible means through which people can create transnational ties with their ancestral land. (Cole and Timothy 2004; Kibria 2002; Lew and Wong 2004; Louie 2004). Through roots tourism, people can enjoy visiting their old neighborhood and meeting with old friends and relatives. Moreover, when visiting their ancestral lands, roots tourists become immersed in others who share the same ethnic background, or who "look like them." The experience of ethnic sameness can be appealing for roots tourists, who tend to be surrounded by ethnic "others" in their everyday life. Lew and Wong (2005) argue that such experience compensates the daily experiences of "othering" and "being othered," and strengthens the identity attached to the ancestral land. Indeed, some scholars explain roots tourism is an expression of longing for a home to which to belong (Ali and Holden 2006; Baldassar 2002; Basu 2004). Cohen (1979), for example, argued that visiting home is a form of "existential tourism." Existential tourists are defined as those who live with a sense of alienation in their everyday life but are fully committed to an "elective center" that locates external to the society in which ones physically live. For them, visiting the elective center is a journey from alienation to belonging or from meaninglessness to meaningfulness, rather than a merely enjoyable or interesting trip. After Cohen's study, some scholars similarly explored roots tourism as an existential activity. For example, Nguyen, King, and Turner (2003) argue that

visiting the ancestral land functions as a coping strategy among Vietnamese immigrants in Australia to solve issues with identity-related concerns and gain a sense of direction. Similarly, Basu (2001) shows that Scotland was conceptualized as a site for "secular pilgrimage" by Scottish Canadian roots tourists. More precisely, by visiting Scotland, the descendents of the Scottish immigrants felt the inherited connection to Scotland, and because of the feeling, the visit becomes symbolized as a quest for self.

PROBLEM OF "HOME COMING"

Visiting the ancestral land is, however, not always straightforward and unproblematic. It can be a complex, multilayered, and ambiguous experience, and may generate social marginalization or "re-diasporization" of diaspora in the ancestral land (Kibria 2002; Louie 2004; Stephenson 2002). First, not all immigrants and descendents may be looking to "belong" to the ancestral land. On the contrary, some may be well grounded in their everyday lives and have less feeling of "not fitting in" the country of settlement. For them, visiting the ancestral land can be simply an enjoyable, leisure activity rather than the existential tourism. Moreover, even when one is hoping to be reconnected with his or her old home, the visit may generate surprise, tension, and disappointment, instead of fulfilling one's desire for "home," because it reveals the consequences of social and cultural displacement from an ancestral land (Kibria 2002; Stefansson 2004). Indeed, studies have illustrated that, in the actual encounter with their ancestral land, roots tourists,

particularly those who left their homeland a long time ago or were born and raised in the country of settlement, the longing for belonging to the ancestral land may be easily conflated by changes from the past to present, gaps between the imagination and reality, and differences between those who have left and those who have remained. For example, Russian-born Jewish travelers who visit Jerusalem had a mental image of Jerusalem with decorative castles and churches based on what they learned from novels and media prior to travel (Epstein and Kheimets 2001). However, the tourists became disappointed because the real architecture was rather plain and simple. Similarly, the second generation of Korean Americans and Chinese Americans learned the difficulties of "blending in" to the ancestral societies, despite the common ethnicity, because of the differences in language and mannerism between the United States and their ancestral countries (Kibria 2002). Moreover, roots tourists, who expected the nostalgic homecoming, may have encounters with locals who perceive the roots tourists as mere tourists (Duval 2003; Oxfeld 2001). For example, Ebron (1999) describes that roots tourists' identity became ambiguous between "returners" to the sacred ancestral land and "consumers" of the Western, tourism products.

PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Accordingly, on one hand, roots tourism can be a vehicle through which immigrants and their descendents create and maintain their ties to their ancestral land. Some studies indeed have shown that, through visiting their ancestral land, people may

feel "home" in their ancestral land and construct a sense of identity attached to the ancestral land. Especially, for ethnic minorities a sense of exclusion or racial disadvantage that they perceive in the country of settlement can be a "push" factor to intensively seek to belong to their ancestral land through roots tourism. At the same time, studies have indicated that roots tourists may feel marginalized in their ancestral land because the tourists encounter more differences than similarities between their imagination and reality and between locals and themselves, and may need to renegotiate who they are and where they belong.

As illustrated, studies have provided researchers with better understanding of the motivation, experiences, and meanings of visiting the ancestral land. However, a majority of studies of roots tourism have focused on visiting the ancestral land among the immigrant generation and for the second and later generations as the same experience (Duval 2004; Lew and Wong 2004; Stephenson 2002). More precisely, studies that focus on ways in which second and later generations respond to roots tourism are relatively scarce except for studies with African Americans (Austin 2000; Bruner 1996; Holsey 2004), with Jewish diaspora (Coles and Timothy 2004; Ioannides and Ioannides 2004), and a few studies with Asian Americans (Kibria 2002; Louie 2001; Tse 1999).

The absence in the studies with the nonimmigrant generation results in a scant understanding of roots tourism and its influence on one's identity and sense of home

among the growing segment of the U.S. population. According to Levitt and Waters (2002), in 2000 approximately 27.5 million individuals, or 10% of the population of the United States, were second-generation immigrants, mainly from Latin America and Asia, who arrived in the 1960s. Unlike immigrants of the early 1900s who had only limited access to their ancestral country, the modern migrants' descendents can easily maintain their political, economic, and social ties to their homeland, as a result of the technological development. However, the ways in which the second-generation immigrants, who were born and raised in the United States, become involved in their ancestral land through transnational ties, including roots tourism remain unknown.

The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the experiences of visiting ancestral land among second-generation immigrants. By focusing on their motivation to visit their ancestral land, experiences and encounters in the ancestral land, and feelings toward the ancestral land as well as to the United States after the visit, I explore ways in which roots tourism plays a role for nonimmigrant generations in defining and redefining the concepts of home and ethnic identity. Does roots tourism generate a sense of attachment and belonging to the ancestral land among second-generation immigrants who have never lived there? If so, why and in what ways? Or, do they instead feel dissociated from the ancestral land? If so, why? These are the general questions guiding this dissertation. For the purpose of this study, I focus on the experiences of Chinese Americans, including descendents both from

mainland China and from Taiwan. Chinese Americans are the fastest growing ethnic group in the United States (Levitt and Waters 2002), and Chinese Americans are the third largest minority group in the United States. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there are 2,422,970 Chinese Americans under the category of "Chinese" alone. Of those, 122,751 people claim Taiwanese origin. These numbers make the United States the largest home of overseas Chinese outside of Asia (Fan 2003).

DEFINING "ROOTS TOURISM"

Although different terms have been used to describe the practice of visiting the ancestral land among immigrants and descendents, including *diaspora tourism* (Cole and Timothy 2004) and *homeland trip* (Kibria 2002), in this dissertation, I use the term "roots tourism" (Basu 2004). Roots tourism can be broadly defined as a kind of tourism in which immigrants and their descendents visit the communities of their ancestors for such purposes as visiting family and relatives, leisure, and discovering the culture of the ancestral society, without the intention of permanent settlement or other work-related purposes (Feng and Page 2000; Kibria 2002).

The current studies have shown that there are various styles and motivation within roots tourism, including traveling with family (King 1994) or in an organized tour (Ebron 1999; Louie 2004), and participating in cultural, economic, or political activities in the ancestral land (Carter 2004) or enjoying a vacation (Ioannides and Ioannides 2004). In fact, the roots tourists interviewed in this dissertation visited

their ancestral land in various forms and styles. The most popular style was traveling with their families to visit their relatives in China or Taiwan. In some cases, they travel alone to the ancestral land to see their relatives, or travel with their families without visiting relatives in their ancestral hometown. During their visit with their family, they typically toured some famous tourist spots, such as the Great Wall, Tiananmen Square, and the Summer Palace. Six interviewees participated in a summer-long language program. Although their primary purpose was to learn the language, during the stay, they visited their ancestral villages and meet their relatives. Also, six interviewees participated in a group tour organized specifically for Chinese Americans to visit their ancestral village. The program included intensive genealogical research prior to their visit. Only a few interviewees traveled alone throughout their stay. Frequency of the visit also varied among the interviewees. As I will discuss mainly in Chapters II and III, these differences in style and frequency of the visit have some influence on their experiences in China, although the extent of the influence is not fully determined. The geographical site of the visits also varied. Thirty-one interviewees visited mainland China and nine visited Taiwan as their ancestral lands. All interviewees visited at least one urban city, including Beijing, Shanghais, Hong Kong, or Taipei. Some departed from the city to their ancestral villages in rural areas. I include the list of interviewees with detailed information in the Appendix A and B.

STUDY METHODS

The data for this dissertation are derived from interviews that I conducted with 40 Chinese Americans. The interviewees were recruited through quota sampling method. Although this sampling renders generalization of the study unlikely, it enables researchers to choose individuals who rigorously reflect characteristics important for a particular study (Bernard, 2006). Therefore, while the sample is not representative of the entire population, it ensures a theoretical representation. For this study, the interviewees were chosen because of their characteristics in ethnic background (second-generation Chinese Americans), previous experiences (visited China within 12 months prior to the interview), gender, age, and geographical location in which they grew up.

Because the focus of Chapter III is to analyze the influence of a sense of exclusion in everyday life as ethnic minorities on their experiences of visiting China based on Cohen's (1979) phenomenology of tourism and theory of transnationalism (Itzegsohn and Saucedo 2002; Louie 2006), I recruited half of my interviewees from San Francisco in California and the rest from Houston areas in Texas. According to Census 2000, San Francisco has the largest Chinese American population in the United States with 160,947 people, and it reaches 20.72 % of the city population. By contrast, Houston has 26,542 Chinese Americans, or 1.36 % of the total city population (Census 2000). According to studies (Sanders 2002; Zhou 1997) on ethnic groups in the United States, the level of ethnic concentration influences one's

perceived exclusion or discrimination, sense of identity, and attitude toward discrimination and his or her own ethnicity. Because the size and the density of Chinese American populations of the two cities differ significantly, I can compare different everyday lives and examine how they relate to their travel experiences.

I recruited interviewees through the faculty contacts and presentations that I made in classes in some universities in San Francisco, Houston, and surrounding areas. I also posted a message on an Internet listserve used by the universities. The message was disseminated again to various Chinese-related listservs. Among the interviewees from the both locations, I secured an even distribution of men and women. The interviewees were aged 19 to 25 years. I purposefully recruited interviewees from this particular age group because a transnational life, including the visit to one's ancestral land, reaches its peak at college age, when peer groups and ethnic identity become especially salient. As people reach their mid-20s, because of the demands of work and family, freedom to visit ancestral lands lessens. Thirteen of the interviewees in this study were working full-time, and the rest were in 4-year colleges at the time of the interviews. Among those who work full-time, three obtained a master's degree and 10 obtained a bachelor's degree.

Two interviewees from San Francisco and seven interviewees from Houston claimed Taiwan as their ancestral country, and rest identified mainland China as their ancestral country. It is a controversial issue to decide whether to include

Taiwanese Americans in the category of Chinese Americans. On one hand, Taiwanese Americans tend to have a different immigration history and reasons for immigration from the mainland (Kwang and Miscevic 2005). In fact, many of the Taiwanese in the United States immigrated after the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 was enforced, although immigration from mainland China began in the mid nineteenth century (Kwan and Miscevic 2005; Tong 2003). Moreover, Taiwanese Americans tend to be actively involved in politics in Taiwan compared to Chinese Americans from the mainland, partly because of the dual citizenship permitted by the government of Taiwan (Ng 1998). At the same time, however, Ng (1998) argues that Taiwanese Americans' identity, especially for the second generation, is highly flexible, and they can claim their identity as Taiwanese Americans, Chinese Americans, or Asian Americans depending on the context. In this study, the seven interviewees who identified Taiwan as their ancestral land self-claimed as "Chinese Americans whose parent(s) are from Taiwan." Therefore, for the purpose of this study, I apply the term "Chinese Americans" to all interviewees and describe specific ancestral origins in the narratives.

The interviewees in this study were second-generation Chinese Americans. For the purpose of this study, I defined "second generation" as those who have immigrant parent(s) and were born and raised in the United States and those who were born in a country of ancestry but primarily raised in the United States. More specifically, three interviewees (two from the Houston area and one from San Francisco) were

born in Taiwan, and two interviewee from Houston were born in mainland China, but all three immigrated when they were younger than 5 years old. Although those who immigrated before reaching adulthood may be termed as "one-and-a-half generation" (Rumbaut 1991), Zhou and Bankstron (1998) point out that those who immigrated at preschool age can be included in the second generation because their linguistic, cultural, and developmental experiences are similar to those who were born in the country of settlement. In this study, the three interviewees expressed their discomfort to be labeled as "one-and-a-half generation" because it sounds too marginal and, instead, prefer to be called "second generation" since they were primarily raised in the United States.

I collected data using face-to-face, in-depth interviews with each participant, which took place between March 2006 and January 2008. Most interviews lasted 50 to 60 minutes, and some lasted 2 to 3 hours. The interviews took place either in a private room at a library or at a café, depending on each interviewee's convenience. At the beginning of each interview, the interviewee was informed that their confidentiality would be completely secured. I also informed them that the study was purely for academic purpose to learn his or her experiences of visiting China and, therefore, there were no right or wrong answers. I provided a series of open-ended questions to frame the interviews, so the interviewees could articulate their experiences in China, including the following: What made you to decide to visit China? What things were familiar, *foreign,* or *uncomfortable* to you in China? What experience(s) was(were)

unexpected? What was(were) the most significant experience(s) to you? In what

ways did you feel connected/disconnected to China? Where do you feel like "home"

and why? Has and, if so, in what ways, your feeling of belonging changed because

of the visit to China? While the questions provided the outline of the discussion, I

encouraged the interviewees to bring new topics into the conversation. Moreover, to

explore their everyday experience (Chapter II), I asked the interviewees about the

proportion of Chinese Americans to non–Chinese Americans in school, workplaces,

and neighborhood. I also asked about their relative sense of being a minority or a

majority in each situation. In addition, to supplement the narrative data about

feelings of being a minority in their everyday lives, I asked each interviewee to list

15 people with whom the interviewee had a close relationship, and then asked the

interviewee about ethnic background, current location of living, and frequency and

methods of contact (i.e., face-to-face, telephone, Internet, etc.) for each person on

the list. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed later for analysis.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, I used a cross-case approach (Goetz and LeCompte 1981;

Strauss and Corbin 1998), in which social phenomena are observed, recorded,

classified, and then compared. Through the constant comparison of an event with

previous events, "new topological dimensions, as well as new relationships, may be

discovered" (Goetz and LeCompte, 1981, p. 58). More specifically, I followed the

following three steps. First, I coded transcripts and categorized the codes based on

my research questions and emerging patterns. This process was to reduce the complexity of the data and uncovering and categorizing the primary patterns in the data. After creating temporary categories, I compared the categories across the cases to look for patterns and variations. When I found cases different from the patterns, I reevaluated the transcript and refined the patterns. Through continuous refinement, core categories emerged that have a pervasive presence in the data, and the standard for including and excluding interviewees' statements became more accurate. For coding and categorizing, I used Atlas/ti 5.0.

CHINESE AMERICANS IN CHINA: SUMMARY OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation consists of five chapters. In Chapter I, I provide an overview of theoretical background of the study, need for research, and methods employed in the dissertation. Chapters II to IV are presented in the form of a journal article to address different yet interrelated research questions. Each chapter presents detailed theoretical background.

In Chapter II, I address a methodological concern that I experienced as a Japanese graduate researcher who studies Chinese Americans' experiences of visiting their ancestral land. By using an auto-ethnographic method, I attempt to illustrate the methodological assumption that persists in the tourism research, regarding researchers' ethnicity. While conducting my dissertation research, I have been asked numerous times why I study Chinese Americans. The question usually comes with

the second question; why are you not studying Japanese Americans? Moreover, I was often questioned whether her findings can be "reliable" if she is not a Chinese or Chinese American. That is to say, studying the process of Chinese Americans' identity negotiation through visiting China has turned out to be a constant negotiation of my own ethnic identity. Through my own experience, I argue that there still is a strong assumption among scholars in tourism that ethnic minority researchers would conduct research on their own group while white males study ethnic others.

In Chapter III, based on Cohen's (1979) phenomenology of tourism that explained the influence of everyday lives on the significance of tourism, I explore the Chinese Americans' everyday lives as ethnic minorities and the meanings of visit to China. By applying Cohen's (1979) typology, I attempt to learn ways in which modern diaspora relate to the society of settlement and of ancestry and where they feel they ultimately belong. In that chapter, I first briefly review the literature of anthropology of tourism to illustrate its development especially regarding the view of tourists and, then, identify the need for further studies that focus on encounters with co-ethnics, rather than ethnic "others," and its influence on tourists' perception about their own ethnicity, identity, and belonging. Then, I review Cohen's phenomenology of tourism and illustrate ways in roots tourism is illustrated as existential tourism based on the tourists' motivation and significance of the visit. I will also introduce some challenges to the Cohen's typology of roots tourism as existential tourism. Next, I

will introduce three individuals' experiences of visiting China. The three cases represent different everyday lives and travel modes that emerged from the analysis of 40 interviews.

Because the analyses indicate that the majority (35 of 40) of interviewees stated that they did not feel a sense of belonging to China and, instead, confirmed that they belonged to the United States after the visit, in Chapters IV and V, I particularly focus on the 35 interviewees to explore their experiences further in depth. In Chapter IV, I attempt to examine ways in which the Chinese Americans reshape and redefine the concept of "homeland" through visiting the ancestral land. First, I will review the literature to illustrate two different views of diaspora–homeland relations; one focuses on stable relations between diaspora and homeland, while the other view focuses on flexibility and multiplicity. Then, I review research specifically about roots tourism and homeland–diaspora relations. I will also describe the relation to the ancestral homeland particularly among Chinese Americans. Next, I describe the experiences of second generation Chinese Americans who visited China. In what ways were they motivated to visit their ancestral land, and how did their imagination of China influence their motivations to visit China? What was the nature of the encounters in China? In what ways did the concept of "homeland" change as a result of their visit? These are the questions driving this chapter.

In Chapter V, similarly focusing on those who felt a sense of belonging to the United States instead of to China after the visit, I explore the process of ethnic identity construction through roots tourism. I start with a review of scholarly literature on ethnic identity, transnationalism, roots tourism, and Chinese American identity in the context of transnationalism. Then I describe Chinese American roots tourists' narratives about their roots visit and various occasions in which they needed to negotiate and refine their Chinese and American identities.

Finally, in Chapter VI, I provide the overall findings of the dissertation, summary of each chapter, general discussion, and areas that need future studies.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGICAL CONCERN: STUDYING ETHNIC "OTHERS"

INTRODUCTION

This story is about my experience of being a Japanese Ph.D. student who is studying

Chinese Americans' experiences of visiting their ancestral land. In the past five and

half years, I have been asked numerous times why I am studying Chinese

Americans. In several encounters, I was asked why I am not studying Japanese

Americans. Studying the process of Chinese Americans' identity negotiation has

turned out to be constant negotiation and contestation of my own ethnic identity.

Having been born and raised in Japan, a highly homogeneous society, it has been

my first and challenging experience of becoming conscious about what it means to

be a Japanese woman. After five and half years of constant negotiation, both

positive and negative, on one hand, I have come to become proud of being Japanese.

On the other hand, I am still struggling to figure out my position as an ethnic

minority researcher. What ethnic group can I study?

BEING A JAPANESE, STUDYING CHINESE AMERICANS

Beginning of Research with Chinese Americans

I chose my research topic at the first semester of my Ph.D. program mostly based on

my personal experience. To pursue my Ph.D., I moved from San Jose, California,

where nearly 40 % of the city population is Asian, to College Station, Texas, a

white-dominated community. In a first couple of weeks, I felt a strong sense of

insecurity, loneliness, and isolation. I was depressed and seriously longing for Japan or San Jose. It took me a while to realize that the sense of insecurity was partly coming from being constantly surrounded by non-Asian, or ethnic Others. Indeed, I was feeling fairly secure and comfortable as long as I stayed in my department where more than half of the students were from Korea, China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. I "looked" the same as others at least in the department, which strongly mattered to me.

It was my first time in my life to become highly conscious about my ethnicity. I was born and raised in a rural city in Japan. There, it was extremely rare to see someone who did not look Japanese. It was only a couple of times a year I saw foreign tourists or business men on the street. I still remember that, when I was five or six years old, I saw a man with blond hair and blue eyes on the street, and my friends and I approached him and asked him to write an autograph. I believed that all blond men and women were "movie stars." When I attended college in Tokyo, the capital city in Japan, I became acquaintance with some people from China, Canada, and the U.S. But it was still not an everyday occasion to directly interact with non-Japanese individuals. In other words, I was completely immersed in an ethnically homogeneous society. As Rex (1999) stated that ethnicity matters only in a society where ethnic difference exists, I was not even aware of the concept of ethnicity. When I came to the United States and began to attend a school in San Jose, California, ethnicity did still not matter to me. San Jose locates only 50 miles away

from San Francisco where the largest Chinese community in the U.S resides. In addition, San Jose itself has the largest Vietnamese community in the United States. I was quickly immersed into the large Asian population in San Jose. In fact, all students in my ESL class were all from Korea, China, Taiwan, and Vietnam. There were a good number of Japanese students, too. After I entered in the graduate school in San Jose State University, my advisor was from Taiwan. So, for four years in San Jose, I did not have any negative ethnic encounter despite my limited speaking skill of English, a foreign status, and Asian appearance.

Therefore, when I moved to College Station, that was the major transition for me. In a campus bus, in a grocery store, or in my apartment, I was often only one Asian. Even though others did not say anything negative to me (rather, most of them were very friendly), I still felt insecure. Though my speaking skill of English was better compared to the first time I moved to California, it did not help ease the transition. Then, I started to think about what it is like to be an American of a color in a white-dominated community. I thought that I am an ethnic "majority" at least when I go back to Japan; in other words, I am not a permanent minority. But if one is an American with non-white background, does the one feel insecure and isolated for the entire life? How is it like? Or, do members of a minority group have a coping strategy? If so, what is it?

At that time, I found an article about Chinese Americans' travel experience to visit China. In the study, a group of Chinese Americans living in San Francisco who visited China to seek their roots ended up strengthening a sense of belonging to the United States rather than to China. I thought that the Chinese Americans in San Francisco might be different from other Chinese Americans living in an area with a small Chinese population. In San Francisco, over 20 % of the total population is Chinese, and 40 % is Asian. Indeed, when I walked on the street or took a bus in the city, I was constantly surrounded by Chinese people and heard them speaking in Chinese language. In the community, Chinese Americans in San Francisco may less feel like minority and do not have a strong need to "belong" to their ancestral land. But what about those who live in a white dominated community? They might become more attached to China because it might be their first experience of being surrounded by others who look like them. The idea of conducting comparison study came up to me.

After reading the article, I browsed more about Chinese Americans and tourism as a part of assignment for my independent study project. Then, I realized, while I was doing the assignment, I was feeling hopeful and less lonely, instead of feeling completely isolated from my Asian friends. It had been the first time to feel so hopeful since I moved to College Station. So, I decided to keep working on the topic for, at least, the first semester to feel hopeful. I was not thinking much about

academic value or significance of the study. Rather, I used it as a "coping strategy" for me to adjust my new life.

I did not think of studying Japanese Americans because I was not yet aware of the meanings of my own ethnic background. Rather, studying Chinese Americans sounded right to me because I socialized with a group of second generation of Chinese Americans when I was attending San Jose State University. That was my first experience to interact with people who "look" Chinese but were born and raised in the U.S, speak perfect English, and embedded in the American culture. I became fascinated about how it is like to be such a "bi-cultural."

First Questions About "Why Chinese Americans?"

Soon after I wrote a report about Chinese Americans and their roots tourism, I discussed with my advisor about my idea of doing comparison study with Chinese Americans in Houston and San Francisco. At that time, I was not yet aware of the potential issues of studying about other ethnic group than my own, the problems I would need to negotiate constantly in the following five and half years. I had never paid attention to the ethnic background of researchers and ways it matters. The only concern I had was whether my advisor approved it or not. My advisor, who has a Ph.D. degree in cultural anthropology, did not ask me why I wanted to study Chinese Americans. She perfectly approved my idea, and interestingly enough, did not ask "why" until the end of the third year of my Ph.D. program.

The first time I was asked "why" was from my classmates, mostly Chinese students. They asked, "Why are you studying Chinese Americans?" I jokingly responded, "Because Chinese guys are so much more handsome than Japanese." I never took these questions so serious. I did not think about the issue of "insider" or "outsider" nor did I think about what might be the disadvantage for me to studying Chinese Americans.

Acceptance and Approval

My study went well first two years. I did not experience any obstacle; rather it was going extremely smooth. I participated in the activities organized by a Chinese American organization in Houston to develop a network. The members there were very welcoming and some of them were willing to participate in my study, too. Particularly, the president of the organization graduated from Texas A&M University and was aware how small the Asian American community on campus is. Therefore, he became sympathetic when I said that I would like to study about Chinese Americans. He reacted, "Oh, my god, it should be hard for her to find Chinese Americans in A&M. We need to help her."

Indeed, I was able to conduct several interviews with individuals who belong to the organization, and my abstract was accepted to a national level conference. I also presented the result at the student research week at Texas A&M and won a first prize. Best of all, my application was accepted to participate in a conference in

Beijing, China. The conference, called "China-U.S Conference," is organized jointly

by Texas A&M University, the Bush foundation, and Beijing University, and held

bi-annually. In 2005, it was planned to be held in Beijing, and the Bush Foundation

set a program to take 15 students to China. Here is my application:

> My purpose in applying to this program is to gain essential knowledge for
> my doctoral dissertation research. The goal of my research is to investigate
> travel experiences to China among second and subsequent generations of
> Chinese Americans who were born and raised in the United States. As a
> fundamental step for the research, I am eager to learn about culture, society,
> and international relations in modern China.
> As a Ph.D. student majoring in Recreation, Park, and Tourism Sciences at
> Texas A&M, I have been exploring the ways in which visits to ancestral
> lands influence perceptions ethnic identity among Chinese Americans. In
> what ways do experiences of visiting China change notions of who they are?
> Will visitors' sense of "Chineseness" and "Americanness" be strengthened
> or weakened by such visits? Previous studies have suggested that the
> everyday experiences and ethnic minority status in the U.S society might
> influence the nature of travel experiences and feelings of ethnic identity upon
> return. Past research has also shown that China-U.S relations as well as the
> political and economic conditions of China may influence the social status of
> Chinese Americans. Therefore, becoming familiar with current conditions of
> China, including government policies, social customs, feelings of identity,
> cultural beliefs, and international relations, will serve as a crucial step in my
> research. Moreover, my preliminary research indicated that the attitude of
> local Chinese towards the Chinese American visitors influenced their
> perceptions of ethnic identity and feelings of belonging. With this in mind, I
> hope to learn more about the contemporary context in which local Chinese
> people are developing their views of Chinese Americans.
>
> If given the opportunity to participate in the program and the conference in
> China, I hope to talk with Chinese Americans who also participate in the
> conference and ask them about their perceptions of ethnic identity and the
> ways in which their perceptions change following the visit to China. Also, if
> there are any Chinese American students in the program, I hope to talk with
> them about their experiences in general.

Upon completing the program, my goal is to continue exploring Chinese Americans' experiences of visiting China. To examine the influence of everyday life on such travel experiences and subsequent perceptions of ethnic identity, I will conduct a comparison study in San Francisco, CA, and in Houston, TX, where the size and density of the Chinese American communities differ. The focal point of my dissertation will be to examine whether and how tourism can become a niche for self-discovery of who they are and where they belong. I believe that participating in this program will provide me with the significant knowledge essential to pursue my goal.

By being accepted to the program, I got an opportunity to visit China for the first time and for almost free. The program coordinator, a professor in the Communication Department in Texas A&M University, became supportive to my research and agreed to serve on my committee.

Things were moving forward. I was very confident, probably too much, about my research topic and ability to carry on it. I was never hesitant to talk about my research to other people. I just believed that others were as excited about my research topic as I was. I did not perceive a potential barrier between me, as a researcher, and Chinese Americans. I felt that we were all "Asians," and I became proud of being an Asian person.

Though I was not concerned about my ethnic identity as a researcher, I began to become vague about my social identity as a student researcher. The members of the Chinese American association in Houston asked me only briefly why I study Chinese American. They rather asked me with surprise, why I drove two hours alone from College Station just to join a two-hour meeting and social, and drove again two

hours to go home. After being asked the question several times, I became worried about my approach. To me, many aspects of Chinese Americans' lives were new and fascinating. But they might think that my questions were too personal or too simple, and not reaching the real issues that Chinese Americans would like to address. I was also so afraid to seem exceedingly enthusiastic or aggressive to conduct my research, in turn, scaring people away. I did not want to sound condescending by saying "because Chinese Americans are so important to the society and worth to take time to study." So, I usually said, "I had a lot of Chinese American friends in California. I was really impressed how they keep their Chinese culture. So, I would like to learn why," then added, "There is nothing interesting in College Station. So, it is nice to have an excuse to get away." I am still not certain whether it is convincing enough.

Rejection One: You Don't Understand the Culture

The first clear rejection I experienced was by a Chinese cultural organization in San Francisco, California, who organizes tours for Chinese Americans to visit China. I contacted the tour administrators, who are Chinese American men, through e-mail about a possibility for me to conduct a research with the tour group. It was going well in the beginning. We discussed the framework of my research and modified in some aspects to better fit in the scope of the organization. Although they told me that I was not able to join the tour to conduct a participant observation, they agreed that I can conduct interviews with the tour participant before and after the tour. They

also decided to let me present my research and recruit participants at one of their

meetings with Chinese American youths. But a week before the planned date for the

presentation, a misunderstanding occurred. When I decided to visit San Francisco

for my presentation, I thought I might as well utilize the visit efficiently. Instead of

just giving presentation for future possible interviews and come back, I wanted to

conduct some interviews while I was in San Francisco. To do so, I contacted my

friend who attends a college in the area to ask her Chinese American friends who

might be interested in participating in my study. Some of her friends kindly posted

my message on the web-site targeted for Chinese Americans in the Bay Area. The

response from the on-line message pleased me; within three days I received almost

10 responses from individuals who were willing to participate in the interviews.

But the problem occurred when the on-line message was reached to the tour

organizers. They were offended because the organization serves only those whose

ancestors immigrated from the *Guangdong* province, a south part of the mainland

China. From their perspective, history, experiences, and identity of the immigrants

from the Guangdong province were so unique and cannot be compared with other

Chinese Americans whose ancestors came from different parts of China. I discussed

with my advisor and responded to them:

> Thank you for your thoughtful message and insights. I discussed your ideas
> with my committee, and they confirmed that the scope of my research must
> address broad theoretical issues in the realms of ethnic identity, cultural
> communities, and tourism. Therefore, I am not permitted to limit the scope
> of my study to a report of a single organization.

ANCESTRAL program (Pseudonym) is a truly fascinating and worthy organization, and my hope is to make it a center piece of my research. However, to satisfy the university requirements of a doctoral dissertation in terms of the amount, depth, and range of data, I am not allowed to focus solely on the ANCESTRAL program. This is especially true because I will have only one year for the study and ANCESTRAL program has indicated I am not allowed to accompany the interns to China.

If my putting the message on the list serve was out of your anticipation, I apologize for having not told you about it beforehand. This sampling procedure, which we often call "snowball sampling," is quite common in anthropology and other social sciences. Especially for qualitative studies, we are advised to make multiple contacts to reach a wide and representative range of individuals. In fact, my committee chair encouraged me to talk with other Chinese Americans who had already traveled to China or had considered doing so. We are concerned that you have perceived this as a breach of the understanding I had made with you. Will you please clarify?

With regard to modifying my research question and study population, my committee confirmed that this is something that happens in nearly all field studies. Rarely are our questions or methodologies bullet-proof when we begin the process. As such, an important part of any good research design is adaptability, especially as conditions in field sites and with local collaborators shift.

Again, I am concerned that you and others at ANCESTRAL program have interpreted these changes as purposeful misleading on my part. Again, will you clarify? I want to emphasize that transparency and trust are priorities in all aspects of my research. Also, I would like to be certain that I understand your concerns while also meeting the demands of my committee for a Ph.D.

I continue to look forward to collaborating with your organization. Also, I hope to be able to use my study to contribute some new understanding to your accomplishments thus far. Thank you again for your consideration and time.

As a response to the e-mail message, they cancelled my presentation after I arrived

in San Francisco. It was totally out of my anticipation that recruiting interviewees

could offend them so badly. This was my first time to wish so hard that I had been a

Chinese or Chinese American. Although the organizers did not directly mention my

Japanese background as disadvantage, I thought I could not defend my work

because I am not an insider of the Chinese American culture. I am an outsider,

NON-Chinese. Though I thought I know the history and culture of Chinese

Americans through reading, I may not know the reality. Then, I though if I had been

a Chinese American, at least I would have been able to discuss more with the tour

administrators about my thoughts.

After a while, I found a report written by one of the Chinese American administrator

and learned that he has a strong anti-Japanese attitude. It generated a very mixed

feeling to me. In a way, the issue was caused not because of my research idea, which

released me. In the other way, however, it is because of my ethnic background that I

can never change. What can I do?

Going Well Again: I Am an Asian Graduate Student

Though I was disappointed with the uncomfortable experience with the organization

in San Francisco, I made a trip to San Francisco as I planned and conducted seven

interviews with individuals with whom I was able to contact through the e-mail

message. Fortunately, they were very supportive and willing to share their thoughts

with me. In the interaction with them, I felt like my Japanese background worked as

an asset to develop a positive relationship with them. Though I did not clearly state

my ethnic background in the message on a website, they were able to recognize it

from my name. Therefore, when we met, all interviewees already knew that I am a Japanese person, though they were not sure if I was a Japanese American or an exchange student from Japan. After a brief introduction of myself, interviewees often started conversations about what they knew about Japan, such as "Have you seen *lost in translation*?" and "I like *Anime*(Japanese cartoon)." Some even said Japanese greeting words, "*konichiwa. Ogenkidesuka?*" (Hello, how are you?).

Interestingly enough, though I struggle with my non-Chinese background, I, at the same time, strongly appreciated my Japanese background. Many Asian Americans were familiar with Japanese pop-culture, such as cartoon, music, and soap opera. Some are also fond of Japanese electronic appliances, such as Sony computer and Cannon digital camera, and Japanese cars, such *Honda* and *Toyota*. Their knowledge about the Japanese pop culture and products often became a great icebreaker in many interviews.

My racial identity as an Asian also played a significant role. When we talked about family and gender role, we found out a lot of similarities. My social identity as a graduate student also greatly helped. For example, one interviewee was interested in perusing her Ph.D. So, after we finished the interview, we still talked over an hour about how to choose a good program and good advisor, how it is like to be a Ph.D. student, and how to balance out personal and student lives. Also, the other interviewee, who has a master's degree in psychology, told me that when she saw

my message on the web, it reminded her of her friends' and her own struggle to recruit people for their master's thesis. So, she said, "I thought, on my god, this poor girl is searching for people for her interview. I need to help her."

Rejection Again: You Do Not Speak Chinese

The second rejection to my conducting research with Chinese Americans was by a grant organization. In the method section of my proposal, I stated that I would conduct my interviews in English because Chinese Americans' first language was English and not Chinese. In fact, many of Chinese Americans with whom I interviewed said that they did not speak Chinese, or if they did, they used various dialects rather than *Mandarin*, the official language in China. Although I clearly stated that Chinese Americans' first language was English, one reviewer commented, "The researcher must be fluent in Chinese to understand the phenomenon."

Throughout my research process, the reviewers' comment was typical. When I said that I studied Chinese Americans, people often would ask, "You speak Chinese, then." It was also typical that, when I said that the first language for Chinese Americans was English, many would say, "Oh, really?"

Rejection Again: "You Should or Should Not Study Your Own Group"

The third rejection, or rather an unexpected encounter, came from one professor in my school. One day in the third year of my Ph.D. program, I was attending an

information research session held by a visiting professor. Dr. Jones (pseudonym) was also present at the session with some other faculty members. Each person in the room briefly introduced his or her research topic. At the evening, we were having a reception for the guest lecturer. Dr. Jones approached me and said, "Naho, can I ask you a question?" I said, "Sure." He asked me, as I expected, why I was studying Chinese Americans. I was ready for the typical question. So, I said, "a Chinese American population is much bigger in the U.S. They also still maintain their language, solidarity and culture pretty well. So, I am interested in why. But, if you are wondering why I am not studying Japanese Americans, that is because Japanese Americans tend to be much more assimilated to the United States since the immigration history is much older than Chinese. And, the interracial marriage rate is very high. So, for me it is hard to define and find Japanese Americans." Usually, people would agree with my answer. But, Dr. Jones did not. He did not even let me finish my answer and began taking, "You are Japanese. Why don't you study Japanese Americans? You must study the culture you are embedded in." I told him, "I am not a Japanese American. I am Japanese. These are two different cultures." He continued, "But, you should have knowledge about Japanese Americans more than anybody." I responded, "I doubt it. And, even if I did, there is a flip side of studying the culture I am embedded in. Researchers tend to take things for granted, and hard to find a pattern of behavior thoughts. It is also very difficult to find a Japanese American community. They are so spread out now and a lot of them are half or quarter Japanese." Dr. Jones still insisted, "You MUST use your knowledge for the

society." I wondered whether he was ever listening to me. Then, someone approached to Dr. Jones, and they begun to talk. My conversation with Dr. Jones was over without being settled. It was really my first encounter in which I was clearly told that I "must" study Japanese Americans, or "my group," and not Chinese Americans.

The critical issue that I would like to address by illustrating the encounter with Dr. Jones is that, Japanese and Japanese Americans are categorized as one group. There are many studies about the boundary between American-born ethnic minorities and native-born immigrants, such as Chinese Americans/ Chinese or Japanese Americans/ Japanese (Ang 2001; Kibria 2002; Leung 2003). According to the literature, ceasing the boundary between foreign and native born groups might cause involuntary inclusion of those who do not feel any connection to their ancestral countries. For example, many of the second, third, and subsequent generations of overseas Chinese, who were born and raised in a foreign country, have only second-hand information about China; many of them have not been to China and have lost their language proficiency and cultural knowledge. How do they feel about being considered as Chinese? Ang (2001) expresses strong loathing about being considered Chinese as "a prison-house of Chineseness" (p. 45) and "convenient reduction to Chinesness" (p. 50), because it overemphasizes the historical origin and racial essence and disrespect to the geographical places of residence. Lueng (2003) similarly argues that, even though one feels no personal connection to China, "She

cannot escape from being categorized as an identity-carrier of that nation-state, a 'home' that 'Others' ascribe to her" (p. 252). Kibria (2002) also states that Chinese Americans, in fact, are willing to maintain the boundary between new Chinese immigrants and themselves to avoid being seen as foreigners. Consequently, Chinese Americans express the clear distinction between two groups by identifying new immigrants as FOB (Fresh Off Boat) and themselves as ABC (American Born Chinese). Indeed, when I conducted interviews, interviewees often mentioned about the boundary between recent immigrants from China and themselves.

My experience was different from what the scholars (Ang 2001; Kibria 2002; Lueng 2003) describe, because I, a Native-born Japanese, was forcefully categorized with American-born Japanese. Dr. Jones expected me to be inherited with the knowledge about Japanese American culture. However, I felt enough sympathy on how one can feel about being forcefully categorized in a certain group only based on one's ethnic background. I felt that, although Japanese Americans and native born Japanese "looked" the same and had the same ancestral origin, we lived in the two different cultures. I wondered; Are we still the same? I realized that most people may expect me to know the culture of Japanese Americans, as they expect Japanese Americans to know Japanese culture automatically. As Ong (1999) states, belonging to an ethnic group may not always be one's own choice.

Ironically, Dr. Jones has been known in our department for his excellent work in teaching diversity. His lecture emphasizes the importance of an equal participation of females, gays, and ethnic minorities in tourism and outdoor recreation. Traditionally, undergraduate students in our department tend to be so conservative that teaching diversity is considered challenging, and Dr. Jones has acquired a high reputation for dealing with the controversial issues in his class. By knowing the reputation, I anticipated his sensitivity with the ethnic issues. That is to say, it was completely out of my expectation that he "forcefully" labeled me as someone who should know about Japanese American culture. I would not have been so shocked and hurt if someone else, who was known for his conservativeness or white-male-centeredness, said the same thing to me. I would have just laughed about it and let it go.

Although I felt strong resistance to what Dr. Jones told me, at the same time I myself was realizing the various barriers in conducting research with Chinese Americans. For example, the fact that I was neither Chinese nor American put me at a disadvantage in terms of finding a research grant. Some grants that I found applicable for my research topic often required researchers to hold American citizenship, Chinese citizenship, or Chinese language fluency. I was also losing my personal drive for the research topic. Although I began the research with Chinese Americans to cope with the feeling of isolation that I felt when I moved from California to Texas, by the third year of my Ph.D. program I established a good

network with Japanese students and Asian students in town and was not missing

California anymore. That is to say, I did not need to rely on my research as a

"coping strategy" to compensate for a sense of insecurity.

Only a month after the encounter with Dr. Jones, I received completely contrasting

comments from my committee members. When I mentioned about a possibility of

studying Japanese Americans, they said that it would negatively influence the

finding because I was culturally too close to Japanese Americans. I felt, "Great,

which ethnic group can I study, then?"

RESEARCHER'S POSITIONALITY: WHICH ETHNIC GROUPS CAN I

STUDY?

There are articles about the disadvantage of studying your own group. For example,

Etter-Lewis (1996) states:

> As an African woman conducting research on other African American
> women, there is always the risk of being perceived as indulging in self-
> serving research that ultimately will be ghettoized because African American
> women are a group too specific and too disenfranchised to yield widely. (p.
> 116)

Yung (1999), who studies her own ethnic group, identifies several weaknesses of

her study. According to her, while her fluency in the Chinese language allowed her

to reach local Chinese women, the interviewees often omitted details assuming that

Yung knew it. Bernard (2000) similarly states that when a research studies his or her

own culture, objectivity becomes tested because, "it's harder to recognize cultural

patterns that you live everyday and you are likely to take a lot of things for granted that an outsider would pick up right away" (p. 337).

However, I realized that in reality there is a strong assumption among scholars that ethnic minority researchers would conduct research on their own groups. In fact, I needed to explain and justify frequently and explicitly throughout my Ph.D. program why I study about Chinese Americans. I doubt that, if I had been studying Japanese Americans, people would have asked me "Why Japanese?" as much as they asked me "Why Chinese?" Or, what if I were a white male? I also doubt that many people would ask me "Why Chinese?" because, as Spradley (1990) states, while ethnic minorities are supposed to study their own groups, white males are expected to study ethnic "Others." Though Spradley argues that it is an anthropological "tradition" and might not be viable anymore especially in the globalized society where we may not observe clear ethnic boundaries, it seems to me that the tradition is still persistent among scholars.

In addition, I also wonder, in the community of scholars, who has the authority to decide who are and who are not members of an ethnic group. That is to say, I, as a native born Japanese person, may argue that I am not a member of a Japanese American community. Similarly, a Japanese American person may argue that she or he is not a member of a Japanese community; rather, she or he is a member of a Japanese American community. However, as the encounter with Dr. Jones suggests,

in the eyes of others, Japanese and Japanese Americans may be reduced into one group. Then, whose perception can be considered more valid than the other perception? On the same token, I wonder whether I am a complete outsider of the Chinese American group. For the most part, I am an outsider because I have neither Chinese or American background. But, racially Chinese Americans and Japanese can belong to the same category of "Asians."

Before I conclude, I would like to illustrate the contrasting situations that I experienced in China. When I first visited China, I was with a group of American students. I was one of only two Asian students out of 18 white students. Throughout the visit, I was treated as a Chinese by the local people. At a restaurant, hotel, and conference, when someone needed to talk to our group, the person often came to talk to me in Chinese, expecting that I could communicate with him or her on behalf of our group. To respond, I always needed to say, "I don't speak Chinese" or "English please." Then, the person who talked to me seemed puzzled. He or she was probably thinking that "You look Chinese, why do you not speak Chinese?" Soon, I began to feel ashamed of not being able to speak Chinese. I felt that I should have learned Chinese because I "look" Chinese.

One year later, I visited China again to attend a conference for tourism. Different from the first visit, during the second visit I was not treated as Chinese at all. Nobody spoke to me in Chinese. For example, when I got into a taxi, the drivers

immediately played a recorded greeting message in English prepared for foreign visitors. At the conference, where many Chinese and non-Chinese scholars attended, people talked to me either in English or Japanese. The reason behind the difference can be the fact that I was traveling alone for the second visit. In the first visit, I "looked" more Chinese compared to white students. But in the second visit, I was compared against locals and did not look Chinese. This is how ambiguous my position can be as a Japanese person who studies Chinese Americans.

CHAPTER III

ROOTS TOURISM AND EXISTENTIAL EXPERIENCE: CASE OF SECOND-

GENERATION CHINESE AMERICANS

INTRODUCTION

Erik Cohen, anthropologist and sociologist, published his influential work, "A

Phenomenology of Tourist Experiences," in 1979. In the study, he argues that

different people seek different travel experiences and significance depending on a

sense of alienation or meaninglessness in their everyday lives and the degree to

which the travel represents a search for the "center." More precisely, "recreational

tourists" are relatively grounded in their everyday life and seek mere pleasure and

novelty in their travel. By contrast, "existential tourists" are similar to modern

pilgrims who live in the exile in their everyday lives and fully commit to an

"elective center" that locates outside the society in which they currently live. For the

existential tourists, the visit to such an elective center represents a journey from

exclusion to belonging. Cohen further argues that, by exploring the differences in

significance of travel in one's life, researchers can explore a modern man's "world

view." That is, it allows us to learn ways in which one adheres to the society in

which one lives everyday and understand the location of the spiritual center to which

one ultimately belongs.

Although the idea of analyzing tourists' experiences through their everyday life

perspective was not new in the anthropology of tourism, the importance of Cohen's

work is to have shifted the view of tourists from a homogeneous to a heterogeneous group of people. More precisely, in the early studies of anthropology, tourists were perceived as a group of people who seek complete separation from normal life and experience liminality or authentic life in others' society (MacCannell 1973; Turner 1969). However, Cohen argues that there are no "the tourists" as a type; instead, different people have different motivations, behaviors, and experiences of tourism.

 While Cohen's (1979) phenomenology of tourism has been cited in numerous studies, the concept is particularly applicable to present studies of modern diapora and their visits to the ancestral lands, or "roots tourism." Different from old immigrants, current immigrants and their descendents can easily maintain the ties with their ancestral land through advanced communication and transportation systems, while living in the country of settlement. Some scholars (Glick-Schiller and Fouron 2001; Ong 1999) are concerned with ways in which maintained ties with one's ancestral society influences people's identity and a sense of belonging. By applying Cohen's phenomenology of tourism and exploring the meanings and significance of visiting the ancestral land, current researchers can better learn ways in which modern diaspora relate to the society of settlement, and of ancestry and where they feel they ultimately belong.

In light of Cohen's phenomenological typology, in this chapter I explore second-generation Chinese Americans' experiences of visiting their ancestral land. To

examine the relationship with Cohen's existential and other modes of tourism, I investigated, through in-depth interviews, the interviewees' everyday lives as ethnic minorities, the motivations for visiting and actual experience in China, and a feeling of belonging after their visit.

ANTHROPOLOGY OF TOURISM

Studying tourism has allowed anthropologists to learn about political economy, social change, resource management, and representation of cultural and ethnic identity. Although until 1970 many anthropologists were reluctant to investigate tourism, including roots tourism, as a relevant field of anthropological research, starting from the late 1970s, anthropological study of tourism became discernable not only in North America but also in Poland, India, and Croatia (Nash 1996). Stronza (2001) identifies three factors that make tourism relevant to anthropological research. First, with advanced transportation, tourists have gained access to remote areas, and as a result, nearly every society is more or less affected by tourism and experiences cultural changes. Second, tourism brings economic development, and many anthropologists have become interested in ways in which sociopolitical change is brought about by economic development. Third, tourism allows face-to-face encounters to take place between tourists and locals, and through the encounter people learn how others live and how they "look" in the eyes of others. As Nash (1996) similarly argues, concern among anthropologists becomes particularly heightened when the interaction occurs between people of different powers. In fact,

a main concern of anthropological studies of tourism has been ways in which

middle-class, Western tourists affect people and culture in countries with relatively

less political and economic power (Bruner 2001; Greenwood 1989). The political

aspect of tourism, particularly regarding development, conservation, and access to

the resource, has also been drawing attention from scholars (Andriotis 2001; Cohen

2002). For example, Andriotis (2001) illustrates ways in which the regional policies

of development changed in the island of Create, Greece. According to the study, the

early policies were mostly market driven and encouraged to host a large number of

tourists, without considering needs of locals and environmental and cultural

sustainability. However, as negative effects of such development emerged and the

consumers' demand shifted toward the "environmental destination," the regional

law changed its objectives toward development of the local economy and

conservation of environmental and cultural resources. Cohen (2002) also points out

that a policy that restricts visitors to a certain area may achieve environmental

sustainability while also restricting the participation of locals the tourism and

interfering the equal distribution of the benefit from tourism.

As the study of tourism became prevalent in anthropology, perceptions regarding

tourists also became more comprehensive. In the early studies of anthropology of

tourism, tourists were often labeled as those who departed from everyday routines in

a quest for different experiences. For example, Boorstin (1964) argues that tourism

is a deviation from one's everyday life and a search for authenticity, although

tourists experience only inauthentic, "pseudo events." Turner (1974) also describes

tourism as an alternative from ordinary life filled with many roles and obligations.

MacCannell (1976) further argues that modern people look for authenticity and

meanings in others' society because they feel alienated in their own everyday lives.

Cohen (1979), however, in his work on the phenomenology of tourism, criticizes

that these views were valid only for some tourists because not all "tourists" are the

same. Rather, different individuals seek different experiences for their travel

depending on the level to which one adheres to the society where one lives his or her

everyday life, and the degree to which one's journey symbolizes a quest for the

"elective center." The center here represents not merely a geographical location but

rather a spiritual center at which individuals find an ultimate sense of meaning and

belonging. Then, Cohen categorizes tourists into five subgroups depending on the

levels of alienation and groundedness in their everyday lives and intensity in seeking

such an "elective center" in the place the tourists visit. Cohen further maintains that

exploring the different significances of tourism in one's life allows researchers to

understand the relation between a modern man and his society. That is, it allows us

to see whether and how one is committed to, or alienated from, the society in which

one lives, and where the spiritual center, to which one ultimately belongs, is located.

The phenomenology of tourism has been cited in numerous studies up to now (e.g.,

Noy 2004; Prentice 2004; Uriely 2005; Uriely et al. 2002). Uriely et al. (2002), for

example, supports Cohen's idea and maintains that the seriousness of seeking

authenticity varies among backpackers based on the location of psychological

center. Noy (2004) elaborates the phenomenology by illustrating that some tourists who are inclined to recreational and diversionary experiences also perceive their travel experiences as meaningful and self-changing.

Although the field of anthropology of tourism has been growing, scholars identify a scarcity of research in several areas. For example, King (1994) maintains that in the study of "ethnic tourism," a major research area of the anthropology of tourism, much research focuses on the interaction between Westerners and other ethnic groups and less attention has been paid to "ethnic reunions" in which individuals travel with the purpose of reuniting with people of co-ethnicity. Although MacCannell (1976) described tourism as a part of a "double displacement" in which Western tourists travel to remote areas while many of immigrants move from the tourists' destination to the areas from where tourists depart, as Louie (2004) points out, studies have not yet explored what happens when descendants of such immigrants travel "back" to their homeland as tourists. In addition, Stronza (2001) argues that fewer studies of the anthropology of tourism have been conducted on ways in which travel experiences influence tourists themselves. While many studies have focused on ways in which tourism affects local society, economy, and culture, studies are lacking of how tourism experiences transform tourists' perspective, behavior, and awareness.

Study of "roots tourism" may fill some of the gaps in previous studies because it allows researchers to explore ways in which people visit their ancestral land and meet with co-ethnic people, and how the experiences influence a sense of identity and belonging among tourists who are immigrants and their descendents (Basu 2004; Kibria 2002; Louie 2003, 2004; Stephenson 2002). Roots tourism can be broadly defined as a kind of tourism in which immigrants and their descendents visit the communities of their ancestors for purposes such as visiting family and relatives, leisure, and discovering the culture of the ancestral society, without the intent of permanent settlement or other work-related purposes (Feng and Page 2000; Kibria 2002). In response to the current boom of this particular type of tourism, researchers of roots tourism have investigated various aspects of roots tourism, including promotion and marketing of roots tourism (Morgan and Pritchard 2004), management of the tourism sites (Bruner 1996; Maddern 2004), economic and political implications to the local societies, motivations and travel patterns (Hall and Duval 2004; King 1994), locals' view about roots tourists (Louie 2000), and various structures and ideologies of organized roots tours (Ebron 1999; Lehrer 2006; Louie 2001).

In particular, studies of roots tourism and its influence on the tourists' sense of belonging have drawn the attention of scholars who are concerned with the transformation in ethnic identity related to the current transnationalism and globalization (Kibria 2002; Louie 2004). More precisely, due to the current

development of technology in communication and transportation, including tourism, immigrants and their descendents can recreate and maintain ties with their ancestral land while living in a country of settlement. For non-European immigrants and their descendents, the transnational connection can be an attractive alternative because they tend to have only limited access to the resources as ethnic minorities in the country of settlement. By being a part of an ancestral land through transnationalism, they can feel freed from the minority status and enjoy being a part of majority in their country of ancestry (Faist 2000; Verkuyten 2005). Roots tourism is one of the major forces through which people can easily access their ancestral land. Some scholars (Grick-Schiller and Fouron 2001; Itzigsohn and Saucedo 2002) are concerned that leaving the connection with the ancestral land might contrast to the traditional "assimilation model," which assumes immigrants would progressively adopt the culture of and political loyalty to a country of settlement and cease orientation with their ancestral land. The changes in the assimilation process then may lead to a shift in identity (Kibria 2002), choice of citizenship (Ong 1999), patterns of investment (Nyiri 2002), and political loyalty to the country of settlement (Grick-Schiller and Fouron 2001). However, the level to which the second and subsequent generations who were born and raised in the country of settlement become involved in their ancestral land is still not certain. Therefore, by focusing on whether, how, and why roots tourists, particularly descendents of immigrants, feel connected to their ancestral homeland, the study of roots tourism may allow

researchers to explore ways in which they relate to their ancestral land and to a country of settlement during the current globalization.

PHENOMENOLOGY OF TOURISM AND ROOTS TOURISM: SEARCH FOR BELONGING?

In his work on the phenomenology of tourism, Cohen (1979) categorizes tourists into five groups, or five "modes." For example, "existential tourists" are those who feel relatively alienated in their everyday lives and, therefore, are more likely to intensively seek meaning and belonging in an "elective center" that exists external to the society in which they physically and currently live. For them, visiting the elective center is not merely a recreational activity but rather an activity to seek meaning and a sense of belonging to the center. The other extreme is represented by "recreational tourists," the people who are relatively grounded in their everyday lives and would not strive to seek meaning in the sites they visit. Instead, they may enjoy recreational aspects of tourism and then just go back to their everyday lives. There are three categories between the two ends of the spectrum: diversionary mode, experiential mode, and experimental mode. "Diversionary tourists" feel alienated in their everyday life but look for neither recreation nor meaning in the places they visit. Rather, they travel as a mere escape from the meaningless. "Experiential tourists" are also feeling alienated in their everyday life. To compensate, they observe authenticity in the life of others but experience only a vivid part of the authenticity, and remain as "others" at the site they visited. "Experimental tourists"

similarly do not adhere to their own society. While different from the experiential mode of tourists, they are seriously engaged in searching for an alternative lifestyle; they also refuse to be fully committed to the site they visit, and instead, they compare various alternatives and hope to eventually discover a structure of life that fits their needs.

According to Cohen (1979), roots tourists are the "existential tourists" who yearn for a meaningful experience and a sense of belonging at their historical sources. After Cohen, some studies explored roots tourism as an existential mode of tourism. Lew and Wong (2005), for example, explore the practice of overseas Chinese of visiting China as an existential tourism through which they could renew their Chinese values and tradition and, thereby, their "Chineseness." According to Lew and Wong (2005), Chinese physical markers (e.g., skin and hair color) and cultural markers (e.g., values and norms) may represent "minority-ness" in the country of settlement, which may lead one to question his or her own identity and values. However, when visiting China, one can become immersed in racial or ethnic sameness that is not always possible outside Asian regions. This experience of being immersed among people who "look like them" and who share the similar cultural traits may compensate for experiences of "othering" and "being othered" in one's everyday life. Several authors in the literature of roots tourism also maintain that roots travelers' disempowered position in their everyday lives becomes a "push" factor for them to seek legitimate feelings of belonging and a positive sense of self in the place

they visit (Bruner 1996; Lew and Wong 2005; Stephenson 2002). For example, Bruner (1996) states that African Americans who visit Ghana feel a sense of self-esteem and belonging to the ancestral land because, "In Africa, Black people are in control, independent, … as opposed to the condition of being a disempowered minority" in the United States."

However, Cohen's concept of roots tourism as existential tourism can be challenged in several ways. First, recent literature about immigrants has revealed that not all immigrants feel alienated or being "othered" in the country of settlement (Nyiri 2002; Zhou 1997). For example, Nyiri (2002) argues that Chinese immigrants in Hungary established a Chinese enclave and their own economy in which they could do business in the Chinese way, advertise their business in Chinese newspapers, and maintain Chinese patterns of social behavior and consumption. Through such enclave economy, they are well connected with other Chinese in Hungary and in the homeland, and, thus, do not perceive themselves as being in a marginal group but rather being a mobile, global majority. It might also be true for second-generation surrounded by members of co-ethnic group (Sanders 2002; Zhou 1997; Zhou and Bankston 1998). Studies have shown that immigrants' children tend to have a weak feeling of being in a marginal group if they live in areas with high concentration of one's own ethnic group members because the ethnic community can ease the tension between individuals, families, and a larger society. Second, Cohen (1979) himself identifies that the typology is based on the assumption that an individual is attached

to only one spiritual "center" and ignores those who adhere to multiple centers. Some may not feel alienated in one's own society but still travel in the experiential or existential modes; that is, they may feel equally at "home" in two or more "centers." Cohen terms such tourists as "humanist" or "dualists." Another problem that Cohen realizes is that, because the five modes are separated for analytic purposes, it does not acknowledge tourists who may experience several modes on one trip. One can also experience different modes across one's "travel biography." One's mode of travel may differ in each travel.

To sum, the phenomenology of tourism suggests that the meanings and significance of tourism reflect the tourists' relation to their own society and location of the spiritual center. Tourists seek to belong to the site they visit at different intensities depending on the levels to which they adhere to the society where they live their everyday lives. In the typology, roots tourists are categorized as "existential tourists" who strongly seek to belong to a historical home, but the view can be challenged. Roots tourism may have different or more complex meanings for the tourists depending on their everyday lives. However, there are few studies that included roots tourists with various feelings of alienation or "minoritiness" in their everyday life and compared their motivations for and meanings of their visit to their ancestral land. Therefore, this chapter focuses on one ethnic group, Chinese Americans, from two cities: San Francisco, California, and Houston, Texas. Some studies on ethnic groups in the United States have found that one's experience of racial discrimination

and perceived sense of minoritiness is strongly shaped by geographical location of
settlement because ethnic concentration varies depending on the city, region, or state
(Sanders 2002; Zhou 1997). The two cities, San Francisco and Houston, are ideal
locations to compare the influences of everyday lives on feelings of belonging
among roots tourists, because they present contrasts of Chinese American
populations in terms of size and density. According to the 2000 U.S. Census (2000),
San Francisco has the largest Chinese American population in the United States with
160,947 people, and it reaches 20.72% of the city population. On the contrary,
Houston has 26,542 Chinese Americans, or 1.36% of the total city population.
Although the Chinese Americans in the two cities are similar in terms of economic
integration into middle class, the differences in size and density of the Chinese
American populations in San Francisco and Houston may differentiate their patterns
of socialization and, by extension, ways in which they perceive being a minority.

STUDY POPULATION: CHINESE AMERICANS AND THEIR ANCESTRAL
LAND

Since the beginning of the immigration, Chinese immigrants traveled back to the
villages of origin to maintain ties with families, manage properties, and find spouses
(Lew and Wong 2004; Yung 1999). Their ultimate objective was to return to the
villages after retirement, and their number of visits before the retirement improved
their social position in the ancestral village. However, such practice was abruptly
interrupted in 1949, when the Communist Party of China gained power (Kwan and

Miscevic, 2005). The government of the United States prohibited Chinese Americans from traveling to China. Chinese Americans needed to give up their dream of returning to their ancestral villages after retirement and permanently settle in the adopted country. Linkage between the United States and China began to be gradually re-created after the enactment of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (Tong 2003). Political changes coupled with the advancement of technology in transportation allowed Chinese Americans to reconstruct ties with their ancestral land and visit their ancestral lands with their children, although they may not have the hope of returning after retirement (Lew and Wang 2003). For example, according to Lew and Wong's study in 2005, among 123 survey respondents who arrived from the United States at the Hong Kong Chek Lap Kok International Airport, 26% have a Chinese ethnic background. The proportion is higher among respondents from other Western countries. The study also indicated that the visitation rate (percent ethnic Chinese respondents divided by percent ethnic Chinese citizens in country's total population) for Chinese America visitors reaches 31%. It was the highest rate among the six countries included in the survey.

METHODS

Please refer to Chapter I for the procedures of recruiting interviewees, data collection, and data analysis.

FINDINGS

In this chapter, in light of Cohen's (1979) phenomenological experiences, I attempted to explore the interviewees' everyday lives as ethnic minorities, their motivation to visit China, experiences of the visit, and a sense of belonging after the visit. In this section, I mainly introduce three interviewees. These three individuals represent different everyday lives and travel experiences that emerged from the analysis. Interviewee 1, Alice, represents those who did not necessarily feel alienated or excluded in their everyday life. They also did not feel like they belonged China; instead, after the visit, they feel assured that they belong to the United States. The majority of the interviewees in this study, including all 20 interviewees from San Francisco and 15 interviewees from Houston, fell into this group. Interviewee 2, Stacy, represents two individuals, including herself, who felt relatively excluded in their everyday lives. Different from Cohen's (1979) existential tourists, however, they did not feel like they belonged to China because of the various differences between two countries. Instead, after the visit, they felt "homeless." Interviewee 3, Vivian, represents interviewees who felt a sense of belonging both to their homeland and to the United States. There were two other interviewees who fell into this category.

Interviewee 1: Alice

Alice, 25 years old, were born and raised in San Francisco, California, and was working at a local high school as an academic counselor at the time of the interview.

She grew up in the Sunset District, where the Chinese concentration is particularly high within San Francisco. In her middle school and high school, 50% to 60% of her classmates had a Chinese background and, thus, all of her friends were Chinese Americans who were born and raised in the United States. Therefore, she grew up feeling "just like all the others." The first and only time she became conscious about her ethnicity was in her college years. She attended a college in Santa Barbara, California. The predominant student body in the college was European Americans, and less than 10% were Chinese Americans. She recalled, "Before [college], everybody was Asian in San Francisco. So, I didn't really think about it. But when I got Santa Barbara, the first thing I noticed was that I had different background [than others]." To compensate for a feeling of being a minority, she majored in Asian American studies and joined an Asian American sorority. Different from San Francisco, where she could meet Chinese Americans without any effort, she needed to intentionally seek to be connected to other Asian students. She was back in San Francisco at the time of the interview, and stated that, "I am happy to be back…. I feel definitely [to be part of the] majority here [San Francisco]."

She visited China for the first time when she was 21 years old to participate in a summer language program. By becoming conscious about her ethnic background through the college environment, she became interested in excelling in her Chinese language skills. In addition, as a child, Alice grew up listening to her grandmother's stories about China. By constantly listening to such stories, she felt as if she had also

grown up in China, and the imagination encouraged her to visit China. Therefore, while she was taking language classes mainly in Hong Kong, she visited her maternal ancestral village in mainland China and met some of her relatives for the first time.

Alice's first visit to China was filled with surprise and unfamiliarity. For example, while Alice was fluent in a dialect called "Toisan" that her grandmother used, that majority of people in Hong Kong and mainland China currently use different dialects that she can partially understand only. She also recalled that she was shocked by the living condition in the rural areas. Although her grandmother mentioned poverty in China and she was aware of it, actually seeing people living with no running water and electricity was overwhelming for her. She recalled, "I wasn't prepared for it. When you picture the village life in your head, you can picture it. But actually seeing that people really do live like that was different."

Alice also recalled that, during the first visit, she was not absorbed in the meaningful roots-seeking experience. Her visit to the ancestral village was for only a couple of days, and for most of her time in China or Hong Kong, she stayed with other American students who also had joined the language program. Therefore, Alice did not need to adjust herself to the Chinese ways of life. Instead, she and her friends constantly presented American behavior and looked like "very obnoxious, obnoxious Americans," stated Alice. She and her friends spoke and laughed loudly

in public and dressed very casually, and thus, "[the] locals can just tell we are not Chinese-Chinese by just looking at us." She recalled that once the locals found out she was not local, she was charged more for a souvenir or taxi ride.

Alice visited China again when she was 25 years old. For the second time, she participated in an educational tour program specifically designed for Chinese Americans who reside in San Francisco and whose ancestors are from the Guang-dong province in China to search for their roots. The program began 6 months prior to their visit to China with a series of lectures on the history of Chinese immigration to San Francisco. The participants were also required to conduct a thorough genealogical research before their departure. The visit to China took place in July. After landing in Hong Kong, Alice and 11 other participants moved to mainland China to visit each participant's ancestral village(s). During the 2 weeks of stay in China, besides visiting ancestral villages, they also attended some banquets with the government officials in the region.

Her experience in the second visit was completely different from that of the first visit. First, the visit was physically intensive. Because the tour was designed to visit all participants' ancestral villages as a group, Alice and her peers visited 12 or more villages in total. The ancestral villages were often located in the rural areas where roads were not paved. In addition, it was in summer. Therefore, Alice and other participants walked a long distance in the heat and high humidity. The visit was also

intensively emotional because for most of the participants it was the first time to visit their ancestral villages and meet their relatives. Some cried, and some were overwhelmed. Alice stated that it was a fulfilling experience to observe her peers being reunited with their relatives. She also met her relatives and was invited for dinner with her extended families. Alice stated that through meeting her relatives face to face and sharing the meal, she reaffirmed the family and personal connections to China.

Visiting China made Alice proud of her Chinese background. Although she had a sense of ethnic pride before the visit, especially through the experience in college, the two visits definitely made the feeling stronger. She stated that knowing her own history made her competitive with other Americans. However, when it comes to talking about the concept of home, a sense of belonging, and identity, she strongly identified herself as a Chinese "*American.*" Although she felt a strong sense of ancestral connection to China, because of the differences in language and living conditions, she could not think about living in China:

> There are definitely the time I would look out, then, really proud of that the landscape is my home. I thought it's just because my ancestor came from there, my grandmother has a story about it. I could've grown up here, and part of me actually had grown up there. Just like, listening to her story, taking up mannerism that she has, you know? But then, I couldn't pictures of myself living there. This isn't me. This is not me. I couldn't live there. For me, "home" is with a Western toilet, coffee shop, Internet access all over, laptop computer. That's my home.

The majority of the interviewees in this study (35 of 40 interviewees) felt similar to Alice. The 35 individuals included all interviewees from San Francisco and 15 from

Houston. The interviewees from San Francisco were, as illustrated in Alice's interview, constantly surrounded by people of co-ethnicity. They stated that at least 40% and up to 90% of their classmates or co-workers had a Chinese background. They celebrate Chinese New Year, Moon Festival, and some other holidays, and were all fluent, or at least able to carry casual conversation, in one or more of Chinese dialects, although they mainly speak English with their friends. In the surroundings, the Chinese American grew up feeling being "the same" as peers around her, and thus less excluded because for them having a Chinese background while being an American was normal. The interviewees from Houston differed from those in San Francisco by being one of only a few Chinese in their school or neighborhood, and they tended to expand their network to a more general group of "Asians," that included different people of ethnicities and generations. The interviewees stated that, although they intend to socialize with people of various racial backgrounds, their close friends were all Asians because of commonalities in values and customs. Therefore, although they were aware of their minority status compared to the dominant European American population, they did not necessarily express perceived exclusion or disadvantage as ethnic minority in their everyday life.

Their experience in China for the interviewees, both those from San Francisco and those from Houston, were also similar to Alice's. In a way, they felt comfortable in China because of the cultural and ethnic commonalities. The interviewees from San

Francisco, who were constantly surrounded by Chinese peers in their everyday lives,

stated that being in China was just like being in Chinatown in San Francisco. The

interviewees in Houston also recalled their excitement to be immersed with people

who "looked like them." At the same time, as Alice stated, they were highly aware

that they appeared as tourists and thus nonlocal in the eyes of locals because of the

differences in language, dress, and ways in which they carry themselves. Also,

similar to Alice, the interviewees were surprised at the economic differences

between the United States and their ancestral land. As a result of being identified,

and identifying themselves, as foreigners, in China, they stated that they did not feel

a sense of belonging to China. Even though they acknowledged China as their

"ancestral homeland" from where their came, they identify the Untied States as their

"real homeland" because that was where they were born and brought up.

Interviewee 2: Stacy

Stacy, 21 years old, a college student, lives in Houston, Texas. Although there are

some Chinese enclaves around Houston area, Stacy and her family live in the

neighborhood where she was the only Asian girl. She recalled her experience of

being excluded because of her ethnic background:

> [People in my school] would be friends with me but if something better came
> along, they would be, I don't want to be friends with you anymore, I want to
> be friends with them. You know? I had the racial disadvantage in a way so it
> wasn't very good because I know that my parents were always picked upon
> because they were really like Asians and they didn't speak very good
> English.

At the time of the interview, she was attending a college where she was also one of a few Asian people in the class rooms, dormitory, or dining room. Being a member of a minority group, she usually looks for an Asian person in each class and, when she finds one, sits next to him or her.

She visited Beijing, China, with her family when she was 5 years old and again when she was 19 years old. Because she did not remember much about her first visit, her stories were primarily based on her second visit to China. Her motivation to visit China was threefold. First, she wanted to meet her relatives whom she had not seen for more than 10 years. Second, she hoped to experience the culture in China. She had celebrated Chinese New Year and other ceremonies in the United States with her family. Such experiences encouraged her to visit China to explore the origin of the ceremonies. In addition, she mentioned that she was interested in shopping in China because "I heard it's cheaper."

During her stay in China, her social position constantly shifted between an "outsider" and an "insider." She felt comfortable and even a sense of "belonging" to China in some occasions, such as when she visited her ancestors' grave sites. She also stated that she felt comfortable with being surrounded by people of the same ethnicity because, in the United States, she was always "the shortest one," while in China she is considered to have a "normal height." At the same time, however, her experience was strongly associated with foreignness. She identified many

differences between Chinese and American societies, including language,

socializing patterns, and available amenities. The reaction by locals, especially by

her relatives, also made her feel being an outsider in her ancestral land. She recalled

that she was criticized for not being able to use chopsticks properly or for having an

accent when speaking Chinese:

> It was mostly my relatives saying that, "she is not from there [China], so look after her. Don't let her wander around."... They kept telling that I am more American than Chinese, which made me feel like I was an outsider. My relatives would point out things like I couldn't hold my chopsticks right, or I spoke with a slight accent.

By being treated as an outsider in her own ancestral country, Stacy as if she did not

belong anywhere:

> I am shifting in between but never really in both of them…. I feel like an outsider both ways. Because if you go in the American culture, you feel like an outsider but if you go into the Chinese culture you still feel like an outsider because people can point out that you are American for some reason … either way, I don't fit in.

The experience of being treated as an American by her relatives in China provided a

strong motivation for Stacy to learn more about the Chinese culture after the visit.

Since she came back from China, she had been more geared toward learning about

the Chinese culture to prove herself to her relatives for the next visit. The reason,

according to her, is that she wants to feel like she belongs to China to compensate

for a sense of exclusion that she felt in the United Sates. Indeed, at the time of the

interview, she was taking Chinese language classes to excel in her reading and

writing skills:

> Next time I go to China, I can say, "See, I can do chopsticks" or show them how much I have improved on my languages…. It was really a motivation

for me [to start learning more about Chinese culture] that I felt like an outsider in China. Because I felt like a big time outsider [in Houston] as being one of a few Asians in my childhood... because you don't belong here, then you want to belong there. So, it made me learn about my own culture.

Interviewee 3: Vivian

Vivian is a 21-year-old college student who grew up in a suburb of Houston, Texas. She was born in Taiwan and immigrated to Texas when she was 3 years old. Although she lives in Houston, where the Chinese population is relatively small, the neighborhood in which she lives hosts a relatively large Asian population. She was mainly socialized with European American peers until the eighth grade, but she began to socialize with Asian peers and by the ninth grade, all of her close friends were Asians, including Japanese, Philippine, and Korean people. At the time of the interview, she was in a college where the predominant student body was European Americans. She was aware of her minority position and expressed anxiety about primarily socializing with Asians and having only limited contact with European American students. Because she believes that she needs to primarily interact with white colleagues once she graduated from college, the difficulty in mingling with them in college makes her feel unprepared for the future. However, she also stated that she felt more comfortable with Asian American peers because of similar values and physical markers.

She visited Taiwan when she was 10 years old for the first time after she migrated. The second visit took place when she was 14, and since then, she visits Taiwan

every summer with her mother and sister. She described her purpose of visiting Taiwan as "to eat and have fun." She usually stays in Taiwan for a month or two at her close relative's house.

Vivian felt comfortable about the ethnic surrounding when she visited Taiwan the first time. Although she has a good number of Asian friends in Houston, European Americans are still the dominant population in her school and community at large. Therefore, being surrounded mainly by Asians outside of her private domain was a notable experience. She said, "It was really exciting. I don't think I feel uncomfortable. I felt like I fit in just because I look like everyone else." At the same time, she realized that some locals could identify her as a "foreigner" because of her attire. She said that while locals dress relatively formally even under the heat and humidity, her sister and she were usually dressed casually, such as a tank top and short pants. Yet, in her all visits, Vivian does not remember any negative encounters in Taiwan. She recalled that people were always friendly to her. This is because, Vivian said, while she is in Taiwan, she is always with her relatives who live in Taiwan and introduce her as their family members to other locals. Therefore, Vivian does not need to deal with strangers.

For Vivian, nothing in Taiwan is surprising or foreign. Rather, she feels "normal" in Taiwan because she speaks and reads the language with no problem, visits there regularly, stays a relatively long time, and, thus, is used to the food and customs.

Moreover, while she is in the United States, she stays in touch with her cousins in Taiwan through e-mail and phone-calls to "just talk about what is going on with my life." Vivian also recalled that, because her mother enforced Chinese values as she grew up, she experienced few conflicts with her relatives and other locals in Taiwan. Moreover, Vivian feels a strong connection to Taiwan because that is where she was born. Because of these reasons, she does not consider herself as a mere foreign tourist or vacationer in Taiwan. Instead, by visiting Taiwan every summer, she feels experiencing the life that she could have had if she did not move to the United States:

> I'm realizing that I'm just visiting for the summer but I don't feel like just a visitor or a foreigner going for vacation. I feel like, you know, I am moving there for a month. I'm seeing my relatives, I am experiencing the culture that I've missed out on by moving here [United States].

At the same time, Vivian does not necessarily feel excluded or disadvantaged as an ethnic minority in the United States. Instead, she feels equally home in Taiwan and the United States. She stated that, "I don't think it has to be just one place, especially if you have roots in some places."

Comparison of Experiences

The interviews with three Chinese American roots tourists, Alice, Stacy, and Vivian, illustrated different everyday lives as ethnic minorities. Alice, an interviewee in San Francisco, grew up in the area with a high Chinese concentration. Because of the surrounding, she was not conscious about her ethnic background. For her, Chinese language, custom, and ethnicity were something normal in both the private and

public domains in her everyday life. By contrast, Stacy from Houston felt a sense of exclusion in her everyday life. In contrast to Alice, Stacy was the only Chinese among a few Asian families in the neighborhood and in school. Therefore, Stacy perceived her Chinese background as "racial disadvantage" based on which she and her parents had been mistreated by others. Vivian is also from Houston but, different from Stacy, did not perceive exclusion or disadvantage in her everyday life. Instead, she has been able to develop an expanded, pan-ethnic network with her Asian peers. She is surrounded by people who have similar cultural and physical markers in her everyday life, while it differs from the Chinese-specific network that Alice has. Interestingly, most of the Chinese interviewees in Houston did not express a strong sense of exclusion or "not fitting in" as ethnic minority. Although they did not have many Chinese peers, they tend to seek an expanded peer network with Asians.

In terms of travel experience to China, however, Alice and Stacy were in many ways similar. Because both of them were born and raised in the United States and visited China only sporadically, they lack the living experience in their ancestral land. In addition, although they have an access to communication technology such as email and phones, Alice and Stacy did not utilize it to become personally acquitted with their relatives prior to their travel. Instead, they knew about China and their relatives mainly through the media or their parents. Therefore, both Alice's and Stacy's motivation to visit China was to see things and people that they had only "heard of," That is, their motivation was not to seek to belong to China, but to fulfill the

curiosity about their ethnic roots. While in China, both Alice and Stacy experienced that their identity was shifting between Chinese and American. On the one hand, they felt a certain sense of affinity to China based on the ethnic and ancestral connection. For example, Alice met her relatives for the first time and felt an assured sense of the family connection to China. Stacy also found that her physical markers based on which she was considered as different in the United States are normal in China. Both Alice and Stacy visited the ancestral villages or grave sites and ensured their inherited connection to China. At the same time, however, their American identity was also apparent to locals and often to themselves. Stacy was identified as a "foreigner" by her relatives because of her inadequate cultural skills, such as ways to hold chopsticks or to speak Chinese. In Alice's case, especially for her first visit, because she was traveling with her American friends who did not necessarily intend to seek the roots in China, she did not make much effort to blend in the local society. As a result, she often presented behavior that looked unusual to the locals.

The feelings after their visit to China somewhat differed between Alice and Stacy. Through visiting China, Alice became proud of her Chinese background. At the same time, her visit to China made her strongly realize her American orientation. Mainly because of the difference in economic classes between the United States and China, she realized her "home" is in the United States where Western, convenient amenities are available. On the contrary, Stacy expressed a sense of "homelessness"

both in the United States and in China. Different from Alice, Stacy feels excluded as an ethnic minority in her everyday life. Therefore, being treated as a foreigner in China made her feel like she did not belong anywhere. For Stacy, the experience of being treated as an American in China generated the strong and explicit willingness to "fit in" the Chinese society for her future visit.

Vivian was in many ways different compared to two other interviewees. First, different from Alice and Stacy who visit China only sporadically, Vivian has visited China every summer since she was 14 years old and on each visit, she stays at least 1 month. This has allowed her to become familiar with Chinese culture and society. In addition, she stays in contact with her relatives while she is in the United States, which makes their yearly reunion smooth. Also, when she visits Taiwan, she stays with her relatives, who introduce Vivian to other locals and make the entrance into the community smooth. This differs both from Alice, who stayed in a hotel and dormitory and did not have much interaction with locals, and from Stacy, who stayed with her relatives but recalled that interaction with the relatives was a source of contention. Another difference was that Vivian has been taught Chinese values as she grew up and become familiar with them, or even more inclined to them compared with American values. Although Alice and Stacy mentioned that their parents taught Chinese values to them, Vivian acknowledged that her Chinese value enhanced a sense of belonging to China more strongly and directly than the other two. She also claimed Taiwan as her home because that is where she was born.

Although she did not have much memory of growing up in Taiwan, the fact that she was born there seemed to give her confidence to claim her identity as a member of the ancestral society. At the same time, she did not necessarily feel being "othered" or excluded as an ethnic minority in her everyday life. Although her network is not Chinese specific, she is well surrounded by Asians, with whom Vivian feels she shares similar values, in her everyday life. Therefore, she stated that she could have a sense of belonging equally in Taiwan and the United States.

What was common to all three interviewees was the fact that they were identified as "Americans" or "foreigners" in China. All three interviewee stated that "locals can tell" that they were not locals based on how they dress and their behavior. Although Vivian did not perceive being marked as an America as a negative experience, for Alice and Stacy, it was associated with a bitter feeling. Stacy was criticized that she is more American than Chinese based on her lack of cultural and language skills, and Alice was charged more for cab rides and in shops once locals discovered she is an American.

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I explored the experiences of Chinese Americans in visiting China. In particular, based on Cohen's phenomenological typology, I examined both the interviewees' feeling of exclusion in their everyday life as an ethnic minorities and the travel "mode," including the motivation to visit, experiences during the visit, and

a feeling of belonging after the visit there. By exploring the interviewees'

experiences and significance of the visit, I attempted to examine ways in which the

interviewees related to the American and Chinese societies and locations of various

"centers."

Overall, roots tourism for the second-generation Chinese Americans in this study

did not strongly correspond to Cohen's (1979) existential mode of tourism.

According to Cohen, existential tourists are those who feel alienated in their

everyday lives and intensively seek a meaningful life, commitment, and a sense of

belonging in the site they visit. Cohen argues that immigrants and their descendents

who visit their historical home fall into this category. In this study, no interviewees

explicitly stated that her motivation and meaning for the visit was to seek real

belonging to China. Moreover, during the visit, 37 interviewees realized the

difficulties involved in fitting into Chinese society because of many gaps between

United States and China. They also became aware that they appear to be

"foreigners" in the eyes of locals based on their language, dress, and mannerism. As

a result, 35 of them stated that they belong to the United States where they currently

live, and not to China. Although Lew and Wong (2005) stated that visiting China

allowed overseas Chinese to be immersed in ethnic sameness and compensate for

being "othered" in their everyday life, it was not the case for the interviewees in this

study. Their visit was also in many ways different from mere recreational mode of

tourism. While the interviewees were not seeking to belong to China, all the

interviewees felt various kinds of connection to their ancestral land rather than merely enjoying superficial activities without thought to their meaning. The interviewees said that visiting the ancestral land was personally meaningful and made them proud of their ethnic background. The roots tourists in this study may also not completely correspond to the other three modes, namely diversionary, experiential, and experimental, in terms of motivation because these modes assume that people travel to escape from perceived alienation or discrimination in their everyday life. The interviewees in this study, including even those who feel excluded in their everyday lives, did not explicitly link such feeling as a "push" factor to decide to visit China. At the same time, two interviewees in this study stated that they felt as if they belonged nowhere after the visit. Such feeling may correspond to the diversionary, experiential, and experimental tourists who felt committed neither to the site they visit nor the society in which they live their everyday life. Moreover, attitudes toward the Chinese society among most of the interviewees in this study were consistent with either the experiential or experimental modes. That is, although they were not completely committed to the Chinese society and, instead, stay in China as outsiders, they experienced certain parts of the culture and compare it to American society, and then consider which society better fits their need.

These findings suggest that the majority of interviewees in this study have been culturally and emotionally oriented to the United States, rather than to their

homeland, even though they have the access to the communication and transportation technology and opportunity to be reunited to their ancestral land. Scholars (Grick- Schiller and Fouron 2001; Ong 1999) have been concerned that, under the era of globalism, having the connection with the ancestral land may influence the assimilation process and immigrants' orientation to a country of settlement weakens. For immigrants and their descendents who tend to perceive discrimination and downward mobility in their everyday life, the ties with the ancestral land were considered as a means through which they can dissociate themselves from being categorized as mere "minorities" in the country of settlement. In this study, the interviewees stated that visiting China provided them with the opportunities to experience the society where their ancestors lived and imagine the life that they could have had if their ancestors had not immigrated. They also enjoyed being immersed with people who share the same physical markers as the "Chinese." The experiences, however, did not necessarily generate a sense of orientation to their ancestral land. Rather, most of the interviewees assured their American orientation by identifying many differences between the two societies. Even those who live in the city with relatively a small Chinese population tended to seek to belong to a pan-Asian network rather than to their ancestral land where they have never lived before. The study also indicated that most of the interviewees did not use the communication technology to become acquainted with their ancestral country. Therefore, their encounter in China was marked by difference and surprise rather than familiarity.

The analyses further suggested multiple, ambiguous, and changing relationships between the Chinese Americans and China as well as between Chinese Americans and the United States. First, this study included some interviewees who felt attached both to the country of settlement and to the country of ancestor, or can be classified as what Cohen (1979) termed "dualist," although only three of the interviewees expressed such dual centeredness. Vivian stated that she felt equally at home in Taiwan and in the United States. Her annual visit to Taiwan was not to compensate for daily meaninglessness or alienation but to experience the life that she could have had if she had not moved to the United States and to enrich her life. Second, Vivian states that her primarily motivation to visit Taiwan is "for fun." It indicated that seeking fun and feeling a sense of belonging to the travel destination can coexist. Third, the interviews in this study also indicated that the interviewees experienced multiple modes in their travel biography or even in a single visit. This finding suggests the erratic and situational ties to the ancestral land among the interviewees. For example, even though Alice's first visit turned out to be a recreational mode, for the second visit she was deeply involved in searching her historical roots. She began research on her family history prior to her visit, and in China, she was committed to visit her peers' and her own roots under physical and emotional intensity. Moreover, the interviews with Stacy, Alice, and many interviewees revealed that, during a single visit, they felt both connected and disconnected to their ancestral land depending on the occasions. For example, when they visited their ancestors' villages and graves or were surrounded by people of co-ethnicity, they felt like insiders,

while they felt like outsiders when they found differences between the two societies and difficulties involved in fitting into the local society. Third, the interviews with Alice revealed that, as Cohen (1979) stated, the expectation to experience a homecoming was not always fulfilled. Alice was motivated to visit China for her first time to explore her ethnic roots. However, in the actual visit she enjoyed traveling with her American peers and learning the unique language away from her home, and reinforced the American behaviors. Also, her travel experience lacked the interaction with the locals, except for only a few days during the visit to her ancestral village. Therefore, against her initial expectation, the visit did not significantly function as a means of building connection to her ancestral land but rather stood as a mere interesting, enjoyable experience.

Future studies will be needed to further explore the influence of everyday life on the significance of visiting the ancestral land. Although Cohen (1979), as well as scholars in globalization and ethnic identity (Grick-Schiller and Fouron 2001; Itzigsohn and Saucedo 2002), stated that a sense of alienation or perceived racial disadvantage in the everyday life influences the intensity to seek belonging to the ancestral land among immigrants and their descendents, the idea was only partly applicable to the finding of this study. In fact, the comparison of experiences of Alice and Stacy revealed that different feelings of exclusion in their everyday lives did not necessarily correspond to the modes of tourism as Cohen (1979) suggested, especially in terms of motivation and experience during the visit. Although Stacy

felt disadvantaged or excluded as an ethnic minority in her everyday life, she did not explicitly state that she was motivated to visit to China to belong to it. Instead, similar to Alice, she was motivated based on the curiosity about their homeland. In the actual visit, they felt more differences and foreignness than familiarity, and they experienced their Chinese identity and American identity constantly shifting. As a result, both Alice and Stacy did not feel a sense of home in China. However, the feeling after the visit was different between Alice and Stacy. More precisely, Alice stated that, through visiting China, she was reassured that her home was in the United States. On the contrary, Stacy began to seriously learn about Chinese language and other cultural skills after the visit. This indicates that, through the actual visit to China, Stacy became aware of the difficulty of belonging to China but, at the same time, realized her own willingness to belong to China to compensate for the feeling of exclusion that she felt in her everyday life. Therefore, her next visit will better correspond to the existential mode of tourism. This finding suggests that more research is needed to explore ways in which a feeling of alienation in tourists' everyday life influences the significance of the visit to the ancestral lands and how the motivation for the visit changes based on the previous experience.

Future studies also need to consider other reasons that differentiate the experience and significance of roots tourism than a sense of adherence and alienation in everyday life. In this study, three interviewees felt a sense of belonging to China while others did not, and several explanations of such a difference were identified

through the analysis, including language level, familiarity with Chinese culture and values, frequency of visit and length of stay, and existing family ties to China and strength of it. For example, Vivian and other two interviewees who expressed a sense of belonging to her ancestral land were born in Taiwan or China, were competent in Chinese language and cultural mannerism, have close relatives with whom they can stay during their visit and who can help them to enter the local community, and visited China regularly. Moreover, Alice's interview about her two visits revealed that, when one travels in a group or organized tour, the purpose, activities, and peers of the group influenced the modes of visit. Therefore, more rigorous studies of roots tourists will enhance better understanding and classification of the tourists' motivation, experience, and feelings after visiting the ancestral land.

Also, future research of roots tourism needs to pay attention to locals' attitudes toward the roots tourists who "came back" to visit the ancestral land. The interviews in this study indicated that, regardless of the common ethnicity, the roots tourists are identified as "foreigners" and often charged an extra price or criticized for their lack of language skill or cultural mannerism. It may indicate that locals have ambiguous feelings toward overseas Chinese. That is, they may feel proud but, at the same time, jealous of Chinese Americans' financial success. Therefore, they expect financial support and cultural loyalty to China from the Chinese Americans while scorning their "Westernization." Exploring more about locals' feelings will promote a better communication between locals and roots tourists, which will assist in producing,

promoting, and managing roots tourism. Finally, more research on motivation, experience, and feelings after visiting the ancestral land among roots tourists of other ethnic group members and various generations will enhance better understanding of whether and in what ways roots tourism influences the process of developing identity and sense of belonging during the current globalization.

CHAPTER IV

WHERE IS HOME? WHAT IS HOME? ROOTS TOURISM AND CHINESE

AMERICANS

INTRODUCTION

 "Homeland" can be the most powerful unifying symbol for diasporic peoples

(Gupta and Ferguson 1992). Sheffer (1986:3) defines modern diaspora as "ethnic

minority groups of migrant origins residing and acting in host countries but

maintaining strong sentimental and material links with their countries of

origin—their homelands." In this definition, diasporic peoples are conceptually

associated with their original, or ancestral, homeland. One may rely on memory of

the ancestral homeland as a way to gain a sense of solidarity with people who still

live there and to feel a sense of empowerment to succeed in a country of settlement.

However, the notion of homeland as a fixed, durable, and localized place

disintegrates in the increasingly globalized and interconnected world. With

continuous mobility of goods, capital, information, and people, boundaries between

"here" and "there" become vague, and the association between place and people, the

homeland and diaspora, cannot be taken for granted. Tourism, including roots

tourism, is one facet that contributes to these changes.

Visiting one's ancestral land as a roots tourist has recently become popular (Basu

2001; Cole and Timothy 2004; Duval 2004; Hall 2004). Roots tourism can be

broadly defined as a kind of tourism in which immigrants and their descendents visit

the communities of their ancestors for such purposes as visiting family and relatives, leisure, and discovering the culture of the ancestral society, without the intention of permanent settlement or other work-related purposes (Feng and Page 2000; Kibria 2002). Roots tourism is often promoted in ways that seek to appeal to visitors' nostalgia for the ancestral land and to their search for belonging (Cohen 2004). For example, the Wales Tourist Board sent a letter accompanied with a video to Welsh diaspora to encourage them to visit Wales. In the letter it is explicitly stated, "Someone special is waiting to welcome you home to Wales…to remind you of what you're missing and why it's time to come home for a visit" (Morgan and Pritchard 2004:238). However, empirical studies have indicated that in actual roots visits, the desire to belong in one's ancestral land leads people to conflate nostalgic imagination with reality (Kibria 2002; Louie 2003; Oxfeld 2004; Skirbis 2007). Hall (1997:38) states that the homeland is not merely waiting to be discovered but needs to be reconstructed through imagination, negotiation, and re-creation:

> The homeland is not waiting back there for new ethnics to rediscover it. There is a past to be learnt about, but the past is now seen, and has been grasped as a history…it is grasped through memory…it is grasped through reconstruction. It is not just a fact that has been waiting to ground our identity.

In this chapter, I explore the ways in which second-generation Chinese Americans who were born and raised in the United States shape, reshape, define, and redefine the concept of homeland through visiting China as tourists. This chapter particularly focuses on the experiences of those who did not feel a sense of belonging to China and instead felt like they belonged to the United States, because the findings

presented in Chapter III indicated overt majority (35 of 40 interviewees) fall in the category. The narrative accounts with 35 interviewees reveal that the roots tourists in this study often "imagined" the connection to China through interactions with their immigrant parents and peers, and such imaginations became the central motivation for them to visit China. However, the imagined tie to China was in many ways challenged through the actual encounter with the homeland. As a result, roots tourists acknowledged China as their "ancestral home," while distinguishing it from their "homeland." Instead, the United States became signified as their homeland because that is where they were born and raised.

HOMELAND AND DIASPORA

Scholars of migration and diaspora have made significant contributions to our understanding of the motivations, patterns, and meanings of visiting ancestral lands. On the one hand, diasporic peoples are conceptually connected to their ancestral land. They are defined as those who have been dislocated from a place of origin and who continue to cultivate ties with the ancestral land. Based on this concept, visiting the ancestral land has been represented by scholars as secular pilgrimage (Delaney 1990) or as existential tourism (Cohen 1979). On the other hand, the notion that describes diasporic peoples as those who have fixed and stable relations to external homeland is criticized because it overlooks the multiplicity of ways in which the diasporic peoples develop fluid and changing relationships with the ancestral lands (Ang 2001; Douw 1999). In fact, people who visit ancestral lands through "roots

tourism" may find that they need to renegotiate notions of home and belonging once they move between new and ancestral homelands.

Ancestral homelands have been described as central features of diasporic peoples and their identities (Cohen 1997; Safran 1991). Safran (1991), for example, notes the characteristics of diasporic communities. He states that diaspora, or their forebears, have been dislocated from an original "center" to foreign countries but maintain their collective memory about their ancestral land. They may also believe their ancestral land as the "true home" to which they or their descendents dream to return. Diasporic peoples may, therefore, be committed to the prosperity of their ancestral land. Levy (2005) calls this notion of inseparable ties between diasporic peoples and their ancestral land as "the solar system model." Here the diasporic communities are perceived, and thus perceive themselves, as a symbolic satellite "circulating around their cherished 'mother/father-sun' throughout history" (Levy 2005:69). Espiritu and Tran (2002) find that Vietnamese diaspora in the United States continue to instill their traditional values and norms in their children through their home life, and the children have the desire to be involved in the economic and political affairs of Vietnam, even though they are physically disconnected from their ancestral land.

Mitchell (1997), in contrast, argues that scholars should challenge the traditional narratives of diasporic peoples, especially those that emphasize fixity of homeland–

diaspora relations, and instead explore the changing relations. Weingrod and Levy (2006) illustrate that the homeland is differently perceived depending on where one is located. For example, Israeli Moroccans who migrate back from Morocco to their homeland experienced discrimination and reversed culture shock in their ancestral land. As a result, Morocco, the place where they previously lived, became their symbolic homeland to which they were emotionally attached. Consequently, the visit to Morocco becomes their heritage tour. Weingrod and Levy further distinguish "homeland" and "center." More precisely, homeland is one's historical as well as personal home to which one is emotionally attached and obligated to return. On the other hand, center is the place toward which one constructs positive memories and personal attachment but is not obligated to return. Instead, one may simply enjoy visiting. Barcus and Werner (2007) also reveal that the Mongolian Kazakhs are drawn to their homeland differently depending on their economic status, educational attainment, and generation. For example, those who perceive fewer economic opportunities in Mongolia tend to migrate to Kazakh, their homeland, to seek a better future. By contrast, those who are successful in Mongolia's economy tend not to move back to Kazakh. Some of their children, however, consider attending universities in Kazakh for the better economic prospects.

The homeland may even be newly invented depending on political, economic, social, and cultural realities of the primordial homeland. When the primordial homeland does not offer the attribute of home, the diaspora may create an

alternative home in a different territory. For example, Falzon (2003) explains that Hindu Sindhis, who left Sind, do not feel affinity to their primordial homeland because of religious and political hostility and lack of economic viability. Instead, they construct their new homeland in a different territory, namely Bombay, India. Bombay has become a "cultural heart" to where Sindhis diaspora dispersed in the world visit to socialize with their relatives, find marriage partners, celebrate Sindhis identity, extend one's business connections, and make financial investment. As Clifford (1994:306) maintains, the current diasporic experiences are rooted in changing histories and multiple localities across nations and changing history. Therefore, the definition of "homeland" for diaspora needs to focus on ongoing processes of displacement, levels of suffering, adaptation, or resistance rather than overly symbolizing centrality of the primordial homeland.

Globalization has made the relationships between diaspora and their ancestral lands even more dynamic and complex. Technological developments in transportation and communication have enabled diasporic people to create, re-create, and maintain social, economic, political, and emotional ties to ancestral lands. Indeed, Papastergiadia (2000) states that individuals may construct a sense of "home" in various communities even though they are not physically located in the territories. Yet close and frequent contact with the ancestral land may estrange diaspora in their homeland because the contact reveals more essential differences than similarities in class, gender roles, and cultural norms and practices between those who have left

and those who have stayed (Horst 2007; Stefansson 2004). In the following, I will explain roots tourism as exemplary of these trends among diasporic peoples in the era of globalization.

Locating Return Home in Tourism: Is Visiting "Home"?

Parallel to scholarly discussions about diaspora–homeland relations, roots tourism has been examined in primarily two perspectives. Some scholars describe such temporary, touristic returns to the homeland as symbolic expression of both loyalty and desire "to belong" to the ancestral land (Ali and Holden 2006; Baldassar 2002; Basu 2004). In fact, among tourism scholars, roots tourism has been distinguished as a form of "existential tourism" (Cohen 1979; Lew and Wang 2005). According to Cohen (1979), existential tourists are the individuals who live in exile in their everyday life but are fully committed to an "elective center," external to their native society. For them, visiting the elective center is not a mere movement from one place to another, but rather a journey to seek meaning and a sense of belonging. In this way, a return visit is an intermediate type of pilgrimage. Indeed, Dalany (1990) also describes that the annual visits of Turkish migrants living in Belgium to home villages is a "secular pilgrimage." For the immigrants who face difficulty assimilating to the host country, the ancestral village is symbolized as "a vital center out there" (Dalany 1990: 523), and the visit to the center allows them "to touch the foundation of their being … and renew their identity as Turks and gives them dignity" (Dalany 1990:525). Stephenson (2002) also argues that the motivation to

visit the ancestral land among Caribbean islanders living in the United Kingdom is strongly related to a search for belonging. It is true for those born and raised in the United Kingdom and have never lived in their ancestral island. Bruner (1996) describes African American opposition to plans to renovate the Elma castle in Ghana for tourism. Originally built in 1482, the castle was a center of slave trade. African Americans opposed changes to the castle because they saw it as a place to achieve spiritual reunion with their ancestors. In this sense, the ancestral land is, to some extent, romanticized as an unchanged, static place where roots tourists are always welcome and able to easily reactivate their social ties with locals.

Other scholars, on the contrary, have argued that visiting the ancestral land may cause social marginalization or "re-diasporization" of diaspora in their ancestral land (Kibria 2002; Louie 2001; Stephenson 2002). In the actual encounter with the ancestral land, the longing for belonging to the ancestral land may be easily overwhelmed by changes from the past to the present, gaps between the idealized homeland and reality, and differences between those who have left and those who have remained. As a result, visitors may feel foreign, instead of feeling "at home," and they may need to renegotiate the concept of homeland and may construct an alternate, or "surrogate," home (Skirbis 2006). Espiritu and Tran (2004) explain that even though second-generation Vietnamese Americans felt connected to Vietnam through imagination, when they actually visited there, they had a difficult time adjusting to the climate and living conditions. As a result, they came to perceive the

United States as their "home." Skrbis (2007) similarly points out that, when old Croatian immigrants visited their home villages and discovered their homes had been demolished, they painfully confronted the changes from the past and realized that the new reality of the homeland no longer corresponded with their memory. To compensate for the sense of loss, they constructed Medjugorje, a small village also known as an active pilgrimage center, as an alternative home. In the town of Medjugorje, the roots tourists can stay at local accommodations where home cooking and spiritual care are offered. Although the domesticity and intimacy offered are "staged" for all tourists, Croatian diaspora perceived such features not merely as services but rather as true meanings of home. That is, Medjugorje became their "surrogate home" where longing for home could be satisfied without conflicts.

In summary, scholars have described various patterns of homeland–diaspora relations and changing meanings of visiting the homelands. However, most studies of roots tourism have focused on the experiences of visiting the ancestral land among the first generation and for the second and later generations as a single phenomenon (Duval 2004; Lew and Wong 2004; Stephenson 2002). Studies of the ways in which second and later generations respond to roots tourism are relatively absent, except for studies with African Americans (Austin 2000; Bruner 1996; Holsey 2004) and with Jewish diaspora (Coles and Timothy 2004; Ioannides and Joannides 2004) and a few studies with Asian Americans (Kibria 2002; Louie 2001; Tse 1999).

This results in a lack of understanding of homeland–diaspora relations among the growing segment of the U.S population. Levitt and Waters (2002) argue that in 2000 approximately 27.5 million individuals, or 10% of the population of the United States, were second-generation immigrants, mainly from Latin America and Asia, who arrived in the 1960s. Unlike immigrants of the early 1900s who had only limited means to stay in touch with their ancestral country, contemporary migrants can easily maintain their political, economic, and social ties to homeland, owing to the technological development and globalization. However, the level to which the second generation of diaspora becomes involved in their primordial homeland still remains unknown.

Louie (2004), whose study is a notable exception that focuses specifically on second and later generations, argues that these people have different relationships primordial homelands compared to the first generation. Based on interviews and ethnographic observations of Chinese American roots tourists who participated in a government-sponsored program to visit China, she maintained that, unlike the first generation of Chinese Americans who once lived in China, second generations know China only through secondary information (e.g., media, parents' story). Therefore, when they visit China, they may feel familiarity and a sense of meaningful connection only to what they have experienced in the United States with their friends and family (e.g., Chinese food, language, and physical features in the village that look like Chinatown). As a result, even though the sponsors of the tours

may expect that such visits will evoke a sense of loyalty to the contemporary nation-state of China and ultimately enhance future financial investment, Chinese Americans may become more active in the Chinese *American* activities primarily based on the United States and removed from direct ties to China.

STUDY POPULATION: CHINESE AMERICANS AND THEIR "HOMELAND"

The Chinese immigration to the United States began around 1840, when gold was discovered in California (Kwan and Miscevic 2005; Tong 2003). An estimated 34,000 Chinese laborers, almost all young male peasants from rural areas in the Guangdong province in the mainland China, came to the United States to fulfill the demand for cheap laborers (Douw 1999). As the number of Chinese workers increased, prejudice toward them became harsh. In 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act was enforced by the U.S. government. It prohibited the entry of new Chinese immigrants, to control the labor competition and reshape the patterns of family formation (Louie 2003). The act also took away some rights and privileges of Chinese immigrants who had already been in the United States. As a result of the act, the size of the Chinese population dropped dramatically dropped to around 60,000 (Fan 2003).

Chinese diaspora have long been conceptually connected to China even though they were physically dislocated from it. Since the beginning of the immigration, they sent remittances and traveled back to the villages of origin to maintain ties with families,

manage properties, and find spouses (Lew and Wong 2004; Yung 1999). Their ultimate objective was to improve the economic status of their families whom they left in their home villages and to return to the villages after retirement. However, the connection between Chinese Americans and China was terminated in 1949, when the Communist Party of China gained power (Kwan and Miscevic 2005). The government of the United States prohibited Chinese Americans from contacting, sending remittances, or traveling to China. Chinese Americans needed to relinquish their dream of returning to their ancestral villages after retirement and, instead, had only limited access to China until the late 1960s. Linkage with China began to be gradually reestablished following the enactment of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (Tong 2003). The new policy of immigration encouraged a large number of intellectuals and skilled workers to immigrate from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and mainland China to the United States. The normalization of the United States–China diplomatic relationship as well as anti-Chinese discrimination in South Asia and Latin America in the 1970s led to a further influx of affluent overseas Chinese to the United States.

Political changes coupled with the advancement of technology in communication and transportation allowed Chinese Americans to reconstruct ties with their ancestral land. At the same time, the changes led to new dynamics in diaspora–homeland relations. In fact, there is tension in conceptualizing Chinese Americans and their relation to the "homeland." On the one hand, scholars and policy makers

attempt to encompass Chinese Americans as a part of Chinese diasporic community that retains a strong tie to the ancestral land (Lew and Wang 2003; Pan 1990; Tu 2005). For example, government officials in the Guangdong province, a major source of Chinese immigrants to North America, attempt to strengthen the network with overseas Chinese (Lew and Wang 2003). Their ultimate goal of doing so is to enhance future business partnership and financial investment. Tu (2005) also maintains that China symbolizes the trunk of a tree, and diaspora are like branches that need the trunk to stay alive. However, some scholars (Ang 2001; Skeldon 2003; Wai-Ming 2003) opposes the idea that strongly value ties to China, because it ignores experiences, sense of belonging and identity, and social ties that may be rooted in the nation-state in which the overseas Chinese currently reside as citizens. Wang (1994) similarly argues that overly emphasizing the ancestral origins may imply the temporariness in the status in the country of settlement and create a suspicion of disloyalty to the host countries.

METHODS

Please refer to Chapter I for the procedures of recruiting interviewees, data collection, and data analysis.

FINDINGS

Motivation: Homeland Imagination

The interviewees' narratives indicated that the Chinese Americans in this study were constantly exposed to the Chinese culture in their everyday life with their immigrant parents, and such exposure allowed them to imagine their ancestral ties to China. The imagined tie to China, then, appeared to be the central motivation for them to visit China. For example, all of the interviewees recalled that they participated in celebrating ethnic holidays and festivals, such as Chinese New Year and Moon Festivals, prepared by their mothers or grandmothers. As indicated in Louie's (2006) study, the Chinese Americans did not necessarily have much knowledge about the meaning of the practices and, instead, enjoyed the ceremonies as special occasions where they ate ethnic food and were given gifts. However, observing the practices allowed them, at least, to imagine the connection to their external homeland and foster the curiosity to their ethnic background. One interviewee stated, "Seeing the culture from here [United States], like from eyes over there but not actually being over there. It makes you feel that you want to go and join them." The interviewees also became interested in visiting China through their immigrant parents' and grandparents' stories about their childhood. Clara said, "My initial reason [to visit China] is my grandmother…she always talks about China, how she grew up. So, I always thought, you live in American most of your life and what's so great about China. You know?"

The other common motivation appeared was visiting relatives. Thirty-two interviewees in this study visited their relatives in the mainland China or Taiwan. Seventeen of them stated that seeing their relative was their primary reason to visit China, while others visited their distant relatives when they were touring other places in China. Sam stated, "My grandmother was over there, and a lot of relatives that I have never seen in my life before…. So, I decide to go to China."

In many accounts of tourism, researchers have argued that modern tourists are inclined to travel to escape from the alienation in their everyday life (Cohen 1979; Maccanell 1976). The accounts of diaspora and their return visit in particular also emphasize that people in diaspora are motivated to visit their ancestral land because of a sense of displacement from their ancestral land and various difficulties involved in assimilation into the country of settlement (Bruner 1996; Lew and Wong 2005; Stephenson 2002). The interviewees of this study were those who were born and raised in the United States and, thus, did not directly experience dislocation from their homeland, as did the first generation. In addition, they had adopted more of the language and culture in the United State than had their immigrant parents. Yet, some interviewees, especially those who grew up in neighborhood with a small Asian population, were conscious that they were nonetheless "different" from their white peers in terms of ethnicity as well as culture and norms in their family. The visit, then, was expected to be an opportunity to explore the origin of such differences and perhaps validate them. Tim said, "You live in a Western culture, you want to know

more about your roots and why you are so different." Clara also described that even

prior to the visit she expected that visiting China would be a distinct experience for

her because she may "blend in" the local society owing to her physical

characteristics as Chinese and family connections:

> [Before the visit] I was very aware that visiting China would be very different from visiting any other foreign country…in a sense that if I went there, people would look at me as if I was from there because I look like them, and because of the historical ties that my family has with China. So, I wanted to visit, in a way that was conscious of those linkages between my family and there [China].

Therefore, as Stephenson (2002) argues, the desire to visit the ancestral land is not

merely based on an impulsive and spontaneous pursuit. Rather, it is a deliberate

activity grounded in kinship, ancestors, ethnic histories, and homeland imaginary.

At the same time, however, Cohen (1974) states that when second and later

generations visit their ancestral land, the recreational aspects were more pronounced

than the purpose of reuniting with their roots. In fact, the itineraries of the

interviewees in this study often include leisure aspects, such as visiting landmarks in

China. The interviewees recalled that they decided to visit these spots not because

they felt a connection to Chinese history but because they had seen pictures of them

in general promotion material, such as travel magazines, television, and the Internet.

One interviewee, who visited her relatives in China and then took a tour in Beijing,

said, "I wanted to climb the Great Wall of China because it's one of the Great

Wonders of the World."

The Encounter

When they talked about their actual encounter with China, one of common themes

was a sense of affinity that they felt to their ancestral land. To fulfill the purpose of

exploring the personal heritage and "home," the interviewees visited their ancestral

village and grave sites, and met their relatives at whose homes they found pictures,

letters, and gifts their parents or grandparents had sent from the United States. Some

also visited long-term residents in the community to seek more information about

their ancestors, and some were able to find relatives with whom their parents had

lost the contact. Those who immigrated as a child visited places where they used to

live. These activities helped them build more personal connections to China. The

interviewees often described in emotional terms the experiences of visiting their

ancestral town. Sarah, who visited her paternal ancestral village, stated that even

though she found her grandfather's house was collapsed, just being there made her

feel connected to her ancestors:

> I went back… And, the one thing was, in my father's village, the house, my
> grandfather's house was collapsed. I didn't know that. I don't think anybody
> in my family knew that. So, there was nothing left. Just a part of wall or
> something. It didn't make me feel empty knowing that it collapsed because I
> was just so happy knowing the place. I could feel that the wall was there, just
> being there. It didn't matter the structure wasn't standing.

Jonathan, who was motivated to visit China to seek the origin of differences, stated

that the visit satisfied him because it allowed him to learn where the "weird cultural

trajectory of mine" was formed. He stated:

> Going there, it's a little bit comforting because I get to experience little
> things that I experienced in my family as well, like eating with chopsticks.
> Or people understanding what you are talking about like the autumn festival

> or passing the New Year, stuff like that. Basically, I am looking for what shapes this weird cultural trajectory of mine.

At the same time, a sense of connection that they felt was limited mostly toward the past and ancestors. In other words, the sense of connection to their ancestor was not translated into a sense of connection to contemporary Chinese society. Rather, the visit allowed interviewees to find more differences than similarities between the two countries. The economic difference between the United States and China was a common attribute that prevented them from constructing a sense of home in China. The interviewees, particularly those who traveled to the rural areas, recalled their shock to see the inadequate living conditions, such as houses with no electricity, no running water, and no Western-style bathroom. Those who visited large cities, such as Beijing and Shanghais, were also shaken by orphans begging for money on the street. The interviewees in this study often heard the stories about the poverty in China from their parents prior to the visit, and thus they were aware that living conditions in China were not the same as the conditions in the United States. However, actually seeing the poverty seemed overwhelming for them. Indeed, the narratives revealed strong and mixed emotion. Some explained they felt the poverty at a personal level because they could directly relate it to through imagining the experiences of their relatives, immigrant parents, and grandparents. One interviewee said that seeing the poverty reminded her of her grandmother, who always talked about the poor living condition in China to reinforce the importance of being humble. She stated:

My grandmother always reminded me that we are so lucky to be in America. Before [I visited China], I was just like, "oh, whatever." … When I really saw [the life in China], I was like yeah, I really am lucky. I got food on my table. It's lucky.

Some interviewees mentioned the economic difference that they observed within their family, although it was less explicitly and frequently stated compared to the economic differences between the two countries in general. For example, one interviewee recalled her surprise to see the size and amenity of her grandmother's house:

When I went to to my grandmother's house, I was like "wow." It was like an old country. [I wondered] how you guys live like this. You see these visual air conditioning units. You are just used to having buildings being integrated with…. I could say that my grandmother's living room and bedroom together is as big as my room…. And you feel guilty because you are living in a really big house [in the United States."

Observing the poverty also made them imagine the possible life that they could have had if their ancestors had not immigrated to the United States. Indeed, the interviewees noted that, when they saw the inferior living conditions, the first thought that came to their mind was, "I could have been here if my family had not immigrated." Through their imagination, they became acutely aware of their privilege and importance of appreciating it. On the other hand, they stated that in a practical sense they could not think about moving to China to live because they were too used to the convenient and prosperous life in the United States. Karen, who struggled with adjustments to food and amenities in China, recalled that, even

though she felt a certain affinity to China owing to her ancestral connection, she continues, "China isn't my home. How can I call it 'home' when I cannot even eat the food or use the bathroom over there?"

The interviewees' hope to blend in with local society in China was also challenged in the actual encounters. Despite the common ethnicity, the Chinese Americans quickly learned that "locals can tell" that Chinese Americans are not native Chinese. The interviewees named numerous markers that allowed local Chinese to identify them as foreigners, including dress, facial expressions, behavior, and language. For example, Karen observed that Chinese women step smaller and seemed hesitant when they walked, while Chinese Americans walk with "our chest sticking up and heads up." Also, Chinese Americans talk and laugh loudly, drink a lot, and dress much more casually, such as with tank tops and flip-flops, instead of skirt and shoes with heels. Language was another common barrier among Chinese Americans to feel a sense of home in the local society. Eleven of the interviewees in this study had only limited skills of Chinese, and they felt frustration about not being able to understand locals. Moreover, they were often accused by locals for not speaking Chinese. One stated, "Some of my mom's friends were surprised. They are like '… do you not know Cantonese?' It was in a way shocking for them that I don't speak Chinese." At the same time, those who are fluent in Chinese still felt the differences because their way of speaking Chinese is often not "up-to-date." The Chinese Americans often could not understand the slang and jokes. Similarly, they could not

fully participate in the conversation about new topics, such as current politics or entertainment in China.

The interviewees recalled their surprise at the authoritarian family structure. Although studies have indicated that Chinese immigrant parents often present more authoritarian parental styles than American parents, and it tends to generate conflict with their American-born children (Louie 2006; Sung 1998), the Chinese Americans in this study reported that they realized their relationship with parents had more freedom and equality compared to that in the local Chinese family. For example, many were surprised about the excessive pressure from parents on the academic success among youth in China. Kevin said that he was shocked to see his cousins studying 13 or more hours a day for a college entrance exam and having less freedom to choose the college major. Similarly, Andrew, who was invited to dinner with his relatives, observed that children were strictly disciplined not to talk at the dinner table. According to him, having dinner with the kids really "held him back" and made him feel uncomfortable even answering questions from his relatives about his life in the United States. He said he was afraid of being too loud.

> I felt a difference when I was at the dinner table with my relatives… . They brought their kids, and their kids were really held back and, you know, I really thought that, man, I really can't say anything because of this cultural difference. And, then people would ask me questions about how America is, and it was just like, I really don't want to say anything because, you know, I don't want to be out loud…. So I just go back to eating.

Wan-Fang similarly described that her attitude toward her mother was often criticized by her grandparents and relatives in Taiwan:

> I have a different attitude to my parents [than local people]. Even though my parents are very traditional…I did not grow up like that. So, I will fight against my parents. My grandparents and cousins will look at me like "oh, my gosh!.... I was riding in the taxi cabs… . We are trying to discuss what we are doing, and I was like "No, no, I don't want to do that!" And my cousins are like, "Wow, why are your parents listening to you?"

The differences in gender roles also made the interviewees feel foreign in their ancestral land. Both male and female interviewees found that the gender roles in China are more traditional than the United States in domestic and public domains. Male interviewees expressed their uncomfortable feeling about being treated differently and also seeing their female family members being mistreated. For example, Andrew recalled that when he visited China with his family, his parents attempted to establish a business connection in China. Even though his mother practically manages the business in the United States, in the meeting in China, the business representatives mainly talked and listened to his father while treating his mother as a secretary. Andrew expressed that "it was pretty offensive to me." Kevin, who visited his mother's friend, described that, when he was taking dishes to wash after dinner, the daughters in the family did not let him do so because it is a women's job in China:

> I went to one of my mom's best friends' house… . Here's her daughter. After dinner, I was taking dishes to wash. Then, she is like "no no no, men don't do that in China." I was like "what!?"….[She said] "It's women's thing." It's a silly thing in China. I was like, "Excuse me! If I didn't do it, my mom is going to kill me!"…It was the way I was brought up. It's like, after dinner you take out your dishes, and I just think that's the way to go. There is no difference between men and women. All I can think of is that in China men and women are not on the same plane, and I am kind of ashamed by that.

Similarly, David expressed that he felt like an "outsider" because of the special

treatment that he was given in China as a first grandson in his family:

> I am the only male grandson in my family. So, obviously, the Asian culture
> comes into really deep. I get the first class treatment, and I feel like an
> outsider sometimes, and I am trying to take care of my cousin when I get the
> best stuff.

Studies have shown that Chinese men have often been privileged over women in

education and business (Ma 2003; Hampden-Turner and Trompernnars 2000). The

father is a powerful superior, and a first son is given the opportunity of higher

education. However, Chinese American men often lose their power as a head of a

household and, instead, begin to share domestic tasks, as they stay longer in the

United States and as more Chinese American women start working in public domain

(Fan 2003). The comments by Kevin and David comments certainly reflect such

changes in gender roles in Chinese American families. Because the gender equality

had been adopted in their families, they were not accustomed to being given a

different role as a man.

Studies have also indicated that transnationalism often puts women in a dilemma

between gender equality available in the Western society and women's subordinated

position in their ancestral societies (Ong 1999). In the case of Chinese American

women, their status in households and communities has been greatly elevated as

they obtained better education and increased economic status (Yung 1999). In

China, on the contrary, based on Confucianism, women remain as subordinates of

men in various aspects of daily lives (Woo 2006; Louie 2004). Pimentel (2006)

reveals that, in contemporary China, through women's integration into social

production, they often experience discrimination at their work, and struggle with

their conservative husbands unwilling to share domestic chores. Judy, one of the

interviewees in this study, recalled her experience of being questioned by a local

male about her plan to find a job after graduating from college:

> I remember having a conversation with one of staff members at the language school… . He was a young Chinese guy, and I love this guy, but he was telling me that 25 years old is the perfect time to get married and have kids. And, I was like "I don't know, I want to get a good job, make some good money." And he was like, "you are woman, what do you need money or a job for?" I was like, "I am not going to get into this with you!"

Similarly, Ann said that she felt being "a big time outsider" in China and

appreciated the life in the United States because of the different gender relations in

China. When she was working out at a gym in Beijing, she encountered many local

men who looked at her with strong curiosity because, according to her, working out

is "a guy thing" in China and few women were at the gym. Some asked her whether

she was a foreigner, and one even commented that she was "like a man":

> I felt like a big time outsider…[because of] the way the gender relations are structured. I am not very girly in the States, but over there [China], it was even worse. I worked out over there, and…first...I was running faster on the track than the other guys, and they gave me some weird looks. And then, the fact that I was among the weight machines in the workout clothes got me super weird looks. Yeah, it's a guy thing. People would just randomly come up to me and start talking if I am a foreigner… . There were gymnastic bars, and I just swung upside down, I hooked my knees over it, and I hung upside down, the kind of stuff you do in elementary school here [in the United States]. And, [One man] said, "Wow, she is just like a guy, she can do anything!" So, gender, it's still much gendered. It made me feel very glad that I live in the States.

A few interviewees, however, described their view about the changing gender roles,

especially among younger generations in China. For example, Katy said that one of

her aunts made more money and thus she was the one in control. Rachel similarly

observed the relationship of her cousins and realized that they did not fit into the

"stereotype" of dominant men and subordinate women:

> As far as kids my age, I don't think there's a huge difference [between men
> and women]. You know the stereotype that think of men as being more
> dominant on women. I think for people my age, I don't really think that's the
> case anymore. Maybe still for my mom's generation, like when I see my
> aunts and uncles interact, I think it's still like that because my uncles work
> [outside] and my aunts doesn't. There are still the domestic ones in the
> family. But my cousins, they were dating when I visited and now they are
> married, I think the relationship are pretty much like they would be if they
> were here.

Yet, those who observed the equality of men and women in China still stated that

Chinese women seemed more feminized than American women in terms of outfits

and behavior in public, and thus different from women in the United States.

Concept of Home

The interviewees acknowledge that the visit was significant and different from mere

conventional travel. They felt fulfilled by finding their family roots, meeting

relatives, and relearning culture. They also acknowledged China as their "cultural

homeland" or "ancestral homeland" from where their family came. Some also

identified China as a place from where their blood came. They stated that visiting

China represented "going home" because China is where their blood was born. One

interviewee stated, "I felt like going home in a way because I see that my blood in

my body, that's where my blood came, from China. I felt that connection, kind of going home."

At the same time, however, they maintained that the cultural or ancestral homeland is different from their own homeland. Their "homeland" is, according to them, the United States, because that is where they were born and raised. Indeed, they confessed that toward the end of their visit to China, they wanted to "go back" to the United States. In this sense, visiting China was not "homecoming," while going back to the United States was. Tommie stated that, although he certainly felt affinity to China based on the kinship, visiting China made him realize that his homeland is the United States where he was born and raised, and thus has loyalty:

> I feel that the United States will always be my homeland. Visiting China made me realize that. Even though it's not like a cultural homeland, United States still feels like my home because you are born here and you are raised here so of course, you are more comfortable here. I feel kinship there [in China], but then if you would ask which your homeland is, then I say United States. If China got into a war, then I would fight for the United States and not China.

Linda also stated that the United States is her "homeland" because that is where she grew up and, therefore, has intensive lived experiences:

> For me, the United States, or more of San Francisco, was my home because of a lot of things. I went to middle school, high school. I went to college here. My first job was here. The connections that I have here with people. I am more familiar.

Among 29 interviewees who visited mainland China, 12 interviewees in this study visited Hong Kong in the beginning or the end of their visit to mainland China. Only two of them had relatives in Hong Kong, and others did not have a direct family

connection to Hong Kong. Their motivation and style of the visit were, therefore, more resembled a conventional visit than roots visit. They stayed at hotels and enjoy strolling through towns and shopping for souvenirs without visiting any relatives. Yet, they said that they felt more comfortable, and even a sense of "home," in Hong Kong more than in the mainland:

> I liked Hong Kong, because it is so modernized, it felt like more of tourist place, like everyone there was a tourist. Everyone there speak enough English to get by. In Hong Kong I could just travel by myself and walk around by myself and do what I want and speak in English to people there, whereas in China, no one really spoke English. Everyone either spoke Mandarin or Cantonese.

Tim also recalled that, while he felt excluded in China as a foreigner, he did not feel so in Hong Kong:

> When I was in Hong Kong, which is a part of China, I didn't feel left out at all. Hong Kong is a little bit like San Francisco to me. There were a lot of similarities to me. I guess not to a person who is not Chinese, but I can speak Cantonese and my accent is like a Hong Kongnese. So they think I am from Hong Kong, and they don't exclude. But in other parts of China, people were looking at me like I am a foreigner because I am.

The interviewees identified a couple of reasons why they felt more at "home" in Hong Kong than in mainland China. One was urbanization. The interviewees stated that they found service, food, and amenities in Hong Kong were somewhat similar to those in the United States compared to mainland China. The other common reason was the language. As Josh stated, they could use English in Hong Kong to communicate with the locals, instead of being criticized for not speaking Chinese. For those who needed to rely on their parents or relatives for translating, because of a language barrier in China, Hong Kong was the place where they could be

independent and explore on their own. In addition, in Hong Kong they became

surrounded by co-ethnics. That is, in Hong Kong, while being able to enjoy the

amenity and language that they are used to in the United States, they also could

blend into the local community and not stand out by the way they look. Skrbis

(2006: 326) argues that in the town of Medjugorje, which the Croatian diaspora

identify as their "surrogate home," the Croatian roots tourists can "express their

diasporic brand of Croatian identity painlessly and without the scrutiny of the

familiar locals." Similarly, in Hong Kong, the Chinese Americans can act as

Chinese diaspora who are Chinese and yet no longer Chinese (Skrbis 2007), without

confrontation by locals. Ann, who visited Hong Kong after visiting her ancestral

town near Shanghai, stated:

> I felt more comfortable in Hong Kong than in Shanghai, because, being a
> former English colony, they speak English. So, walking in the airport, the
> guard tells me something, like I can't stand there, to me in Chinese. If I
> didn't understand, then he said in English, I said "Oh, okay." So, Hong
> Kong, I felt especially comfortable. If they knew they can't talk to me in
> Chinese, they would switch over to English. So, if I'd pick the second city to
> call, well I'd not necessarily call it home, but I felt comfortable [in Hong
> Kong].

DISCUSSION

This study explored ways in which second-generation Chinese Americans defined

and redefined the concept of homeland through visiting their ancestral land as

tourists. The narratives from 35 interviewees showed that, while they imagined the

ties to the homeland based on influence by their immigrant parents and grandparents

prior to their visit, such ties were, in the most part, challenged by the actual

encounter with the ancestral land. The sense of affinity that they felt to China owing to a family connection was relatively easily overpowered by differences between the two countries. Therefore, after the visitors returned from China, they acknowledged China as their ancestral homeland but also reaffirmed that their "homeland" is the United States.

There are several implications of the findings of this study. First, there are general implications for the study of roots tourism. The findings of this study revealed that roots tourism is more than a conventional tourism. Rather than merely pursuing pleasure, the roots tourists' motivation was generated through family history, ethnicity, and homeland imaginary. They were motivated to visit China to experience the ethnic culture that their parents practiced or talked about, to meet their kin, and to seek the origin of their ethnicity. And, their desire to become immersed in the ancestral community was, to some extent, fulfilled. The interviewees expressed a sense of connection and affinity that they felt during their visit. At the same time, however, they interviews also indicated that such connection was in large part contested and often redefined. The differences in norm, language, economic class, language, upbringing, and family and gender structure often overwhelmed the ancestral ties. The findings indicated the need for more studies to explore motivation and actual experiences of the roots tourism. This might be particularly true for those who were born or primarily raised in the United States and, thus, lack the experience of living in China. While the first generation of

immigrants, who used to live in the ancestral land, may attempt to revive the ancestral connection that they previously had, the ancestral connection that the interviewees in this study endeavored to create was a new tie based on their imagination and short-term, infrequent visit. The process of creating an ancestral tie for second and later generations, therefore, may be much complex and multilayered than that for the first generation.

Second, there are implications for the diaspora–homeland relationship, particularly regarding tourism. Roots tourism has often been described as an expression of a desire to belong to the ancestral land and as a form of "existential tourism." Cohen (1979) argues that existential tourists are those who live in exile in their everyday life but are spiritually committed to an "elective center" or place outside of the society in which they physically live. Visiting such a center, then, represents a journey from a meaningless existence to a meaningful existence. In this study, the Chinese Americans were neither completely external to the United States nor fully committed to China as their elective center. Rather, they were somewhat more oriented to the American culture and therefore did not perceive that the meaningful life was only in China. The findings suggest that their visit to China may be better described as "experiential" or "experimental" modes that Cohen (1979) also suggests, rather than particularly in terms of their attitude toward Chinese society. According to Cohen, the two types of tourists live in exile in their everyday life and travel to compensate for the feeling of alienation. In the site they visit, the

experimental tourists enjoy observing the authentic life, and the experimental

tourists become well absorbed in the authentic life. However, both types of tourists

refuse to be fully committed to it. In terms of their motivation, the interviewees in

this study may be explained as neither experimental nor experiential tourists because

they did not state that they felt excluded or disadvantaged as ethnic minorities in the

United States and traveled to compensate for the feeling. However, when they

visited their ancestral land, they observed the Chinese society, compared the various

aspects of lives in the United States and China, and evaluated which style better

suits them while they remained outsiders of China.

The findings also contribute to expand the concept of "homeland," "center," and

"elective center" for diasporic people. According to Weingrod and Levy (2006),

while "homeland" is considered to be one's historical as well as personal home to

which people are emotionally attached and obligated to return, "center" is the place

toward which one constructs positive memories and personal attachment but is not

obligated to return. Moreover, Cohen states that "elective center" is a place that is

located external to the society in which one physically lives but to which one is

spiritually committed. In the case of the Chinese Americans in this study, China was

named as none of the three. Rather, the interviewees identified China as a "cultural

home" or an "ancestral homeland" to where they were historically connected and

where they are somewhat obligated to visit. At the same time, however, they did not

necessarily express a strong sense of personal attachment to China. Rather, through

the sojourn to China, United States, where they currently live, become signified as their "homeland." In addition, Hong Kong emerged as place where the interviewees' desire for homecoming was fulfilled without surrendering their American orientation. Although they do not have any ancestral connections to Hong Kong, it became a "surrogate home" for some interviewees.

Last, there are implications regarding the relationships between diaspora and their ancestral lands in the context of globalism. In the traditional view, the diasporic people are strongly associated with their ancestral land (Sheffer 1986). The ancestral land is considered as the "true home" to which diasporic people and their forebears desire to return. On the contrary, some scholars argue that the homeland is differently perceived depending on one's current location as well as the cultural, economic, and social conditions of the ancestral country and the country of settlement (Clifford 1994; Mitchell 1997). The findings of this study were consistent with the latter view. Through visiting China, the Chinese Americans in this study acknowledged the historical connection they have with China, while they also realized that their "homeland" was the United States instead of China, because of many differences in social expectation, cultural mannerism, and economic condition between the two countries. Although the concept of globalism suggests individuals' identity, sense of belonging, and sense of home may transcend the geographical boundary of nation states (Papastergiadias 2000), the findings of this study suggest that the concept of homeland is fairly localized among the Chinese American

interviewees. Indeed, even though the Chinese Americans in this study have the mobility to visit and be reconnected to the ancestral land, they still constructed a sense of "home" in the United States. The United States is where they were born and raised, have family and friends, are familiar with culture, have experiences and memory, and thus where they belong.

The findings of this study highlighted the limits of roots tourism as a way to construct a sense of "home" in China among the interviewees who were second-generation Chinese Americans. Instead of China, the United States became crystallized as their "homeland." Revealing the dynamic and complex experience contributes to the development of a deeper understanding of the process to form feelings of belonging and of not belonging among diasporic people. Future studies need to include different generations (e.g., third, fourth, or fifth generations) of Chinese Americans as well as members of different diasporic groups. Such studies will contribute to a better understanding of ways in which roots tourism can be a part of the process to find out where is home and what is home.

CHAPTER V

I AM A "CHINESE AMERICAN": NEGOTIATING ETHNIC IDENTITY

THROUGH ROOTS TOURISM

INTRODUCTION

Ethnic identity is a frequently discussed concept in studies of tourism, often related

to ways in which local ethnic culture is reconstructed, preserved, modified, and

represented to tourists from different communities or countries—thus, "ethnic

others" (Grünewald 2002; Pritchard and Morgan 2001). What happens, then, when

people visit the community of co-ethnics as tourists? How do local people react to

the tourists who share the same ethnicity but live in a different country? And,

whether and in what ways is the tourists' sense of ethnic identity influenced by the

experience?

Ethnic identity may be defined as a person's use of racial, national, or religious

terms to identify oneself and thus relate to others (Calhoun 1994). Barth (1969)

argues that ethnic identity is situational, negotiable, and subjective rather than

primarily determined by ancestors. He further argued that constructing identity has a

purpose, and that is to determine who is and who is not a member of a discrete and

territorially exclusive ethnic group. However, in a global era in which capital,

information, and people flow across boundaries and foster transnational networks,

Barth's concept of ethnic identity may be challenged (Faist 2001; Glick-Schiller and

Fouron 2001; Kivist 2001; Vertovec 1999).

Studying "roots tourism" may allow us to understand better the processes by which people shape and reshape a feeling of ethnic identity, especially in the context of transnationalism (Cole and Timothy 2004; Duval 2004; Kibria 2002; Louie 2004). Roots tourism is broadly defined as a kind of tourism in which immigrants and their descendents visit the communities of their ancestors for such purposes as visiting family and relatives, having leisure, and discovering the culture of the ancestral society, without the intention of permanent settlement or other work-related purposes (Feng and Page 2000; Kibria 2002). This particular type of tourism has become popular among those who hope to rekindle the ties with their ancestral countries. For example, approximately 52% of foreign visitors who arrived at Hong Kong Chek Lap Kok International Airport have a Chinese ethnic background, and of those, 53% had visited their ancestral villages (Lew and Wong 2005). Scholars of roots tourism have investigated motivations and travel patterns (Hall and Duval 2004; King 1994), locals' view about roots tourists (Louie 2000), various structures and ideologies of organized roots tours (Ebron 1999; Lehrer 2006; Louie 2001), and economic and political impacts on local communities (Carter 2004; Lew and Wong 2002; Oxfeld 2001).

Roots tourism is a useful medium to learn about ethnic identity construction in the context of transnationalism for the following two reasons. First, roots tourism is a transnational activity (Duval 2006; Hall and Duval 2004, 2005; Holinshead 2004). The roots tourists who reside in the country of settlement go across the borders of

nation-states to visit the country of ancestry. Second, when they visit their ancestral country, roots tourists have face-to-face interactions with locals who share the same ancestry but spend everyday lives in different countries. The interaction may enable the tourists to compare the differences and similarities in patterns of behavior, culture, and norms. That is, exploring the narratives of tourists may lead us to understand ways in which the ethnic identity is negotiated and reshaped through the interaction of commonality in ancestry and differences in upbringing, language, culture, and citizenship.

The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the ways in which second-generation Chinese Americans negotiate and reshape a feeling of ethnic identity through visiting China. Similar to Chapter III, this chapter also focuses on the narratives of those who did not feel a sense of belonging to China and instead felt like they belonged to the United States, because they represent the majority of the interviewees in this study. Based on face-to-face interviews, this chapter explores whether and how roots tourism may become a part of the ethnic identity formation process, particularly under the context of transnationalism.

TRANSNATIONALISM, ETHNIC IDENTITY, AND ROOTS TOURISM

Ethnic identity can be defined as a person's use of racial, national or religious terms to identify oneself, and thereby relate to others (Calhoun 1994). Many researchers in the social sciences and humanities have studied ethnic identity, in part to explore

ways in which ethnic minorities deal with the discrimination and negative stereotypes imposed by dominant groups (Lee et at. 2007; Phinney et al. 2001) and to investigate processes by which ethnic people establish networks in enclave economies (Baerveldt et al. 2004; Martin, 2006). Scholars of ethnic identity also have shed light on the allocation of rights and resources based on legal criteria of ethnicity and the determination of who belongs as members in certain ethnic groups (Ong 1996).

The biological or "primordial paradigm" of race and ethnicity explains racial differences as part of a natural progression of human beings (Omi and Winant 1994). In this view, intelligence, temperament, sexuality, and other traits are the result of evolution and "inherited" in one's genes (Rushton 1990, 2000; van den Berghe 1987). For example, Rushton (2000) argues that ethnic differences in terms of intellectual level, sexual orientation, life span, and success in social organization are "caused by" one's genes. Cultural anthropologists and other scholars, however, argue that ethnicity is highly situational, relative, interactive, and changeable (Guibernau and Rex 1997; Nagel 1994; Phinney 1993; Verkuyten 2005). Rather than simply given or "inherited," membership in the ethnic group is often a conscious choice for particular social purposes and benefits (Guibernau and Rex 1997; Kibria 2002). In studies of tourism, for example, Stronza (2008) explains how ecotourism in Peru has been associated with shifts in feelings and expressions of ethnic identity among indigenous and Mestizo residents of the same community.

The study also illustrated how the locals "play up" their ethnicity partly to respond to what tourists expect to see. Similarly, Evans-Pritchard (1989a) illustrates that Native American craftsmen and traders deliberately tell tourists what they want to hear or dress as what they want to see. By doing so, they not only satisfy customers' demand but also take a control of the interaction with tourists.

Barth (1969) first focused on the subjective and interactive aspects of ethnicity, arguing that ethnicity was an ongoing negotiation of self-ascription and others' ascription of ethnicity. The purpose of such negotiation, he argues, is to define membership of people as either included or excluded in the ethnic boundaries. Barth further argues that criteria that determine the membership of a group consist of socially relevant and subjective factors rather than overt or objective behaviors. With the metaphor of "boundaries," he emphasizes the interactional aspect of identity. That is, the boundary of ethnic identity does not emerge from social isolation, but rather is articulated through social interaction with other groups against whom differences in patterns of behavior, culture, and norms are marked. The process of comparison and categorization then will lead people to foster a sense of belonging and sharpen the boundary between one group and other groups.

Ethnic Identity in Transnationalism

Along with the development of technology in communication and transportation, researchers have begun to explore whether and in what ways individuals' sense of

ethnic identity and membership can be influenced by "transnationalism" (Jones-Correa 2002; Ong 1999; Portes 2003; Vertovec 2001). Transnsationalism refers to the diverse types of global or cross-border connections, including international flow of media, information, capital, and people. Basch, Schiller, and Szanton (1994:7) maintain that transnationalism allows individuals to develop identities and a sense of belonging simultaneously for multiple nations.

For immigrants and descendents, transnationalism may be a medium through which they can maintain their social, economic, and political ties to their ancestral land over time and across spaces, and the tie may extend beyond the first generation (Faist 2000; Massey 1995). Although maintaining transnational ties with the ancestral land among immigrants and their descendents is nothing new, current advancements in communication and transportation technology have made the contact more frequent and immediate. In theories of transnationalism, having close ties with the ancestral society allows immigrants and their descendents to participate and even "belong" to their ancestral society across geographical boundaries of nation-states. Such feelings of ethnic identity that cut across national boundaries and create a new form of belonging to the ancestral land are termed as *transnational identity* (Basch, et al. 1994) or *diasporic identity* (Brah 1996). Scholars have investigated the ways in which the ethnic ties are used to expand transnational business relations (Hsing 2003; Ma 2003) and to promote political loyalty to the ancestral country from a distance (Anderson 1992; Skrbis 2007). Transnational ties

can also liberate people in diaspora from being merely categorized as part of an ethnic minority (Faist 2000; Verkuyten 2005). By belonging or imagining belonging to their ancestral society, they can dissociate themselves from a country of settlement in which they are symbolically excluded and elevate a sense of self-esteem.

The idea of transnationalism and ethnic identity may contradict Barth's view of ethnic identity in a couple of ways. First, although Barth (1969) argues that ethnic groups necessarily occupy exclusive territories, the concept of transnational identity emphasizes constructing the "imagined community" that does not necessarily occupy physical space (Anderson 1982; Faist 2000; Kearney1995; Nonini and Ong 1997). The formation of solidarity and identity may not rest on an appropriation of discrete space. Second, even though Barth (1996, 1994) emphasizes that ethnic identity helps define who is and who is not a member of a distinct group, Kerney (1995) argues that the binary logic of "either-or" classification might be obsolete in globalized societies; identities can be "both-and-and." That is, identity in such a globally connected world might be bifocal, multifocal, or even unfocal (Ong 1996). Moreover, focusing on transnational connections to the ancestral land and minority members' identity may contradict Barth's constructivist view of ethnic identity. While Barth argues ethnic identity to be negotiable and interactive, and thus not merely based on ancestry and genes, the idea of transnational identity equates ancestry, blood, and ethnic identity.

The transformation of ethnic identity and way of "belonging" have been drawing the attention of scholars because it may influence the traditional notions of traditional "assimilation" (Gorden 1964). While assimilation assumes immigrants would adopt the culture of and political loyalty to a country of settlement with time and cease orientation to their ancestral land, transnationalism focuses on immigrants' continuous involvement in the ancestral society as an important part of their social life. The change in the assimilation process, then, might influence the selection of citizenship (Soysal 2000) and political loyalty (Itzigsohn and Saucedo 2002; Owusu 2000). However, others reject this idea and maintain that transnationalism does not necessarily weaken the allegiance to host societies (Portes et al. 1999; Kibria 2002). Having ties to the ancestral society may complement commitment to the United States, rather than interfere with it (Foner 2001). In particular, the idea that connects the identity and ancestry might be problematic for the second and later generations, who may have relatively fewer emotional or cultural connections to their ancestral land. Indeed, studies of ethnic identity in the transnationalism literature, particularly those focusing on second and later generations, have indicated there is great inconsistency. While some studies indicate the emergence of ethnic identity attached to the ancestral land, others show only a minimum possibility of the development of transnational identity for later generations (Kasinitz et al. 2002; Louie 2006).

Roots Tourism and Ethnic Identity

Tourism, including roots tourism, is a major force of transnationalization. In fact, the recent boom in roots tourism has prompted debates about how visiting an ancestral land influences the tourists' sense of ethnic identity (Austin 2000; Coles and Timothy 2004; Lew and Wong 2004, 2005; Louie 2004). Ali and Holden (2006) examine the role of roots tourism in identity making among first, second, and third generations of Pakistani living in the United Kingdom. The authors look at the roots tourism as a "primary socialization" device through which immigrants and their successors learn or relearn traditions, beliefs, norms, and values in the ancestral land, and thus influence the formation of personalities and identities. According to the study, the Pakistani immigrants have three reasons why they strongly hope to stay connected with their ancestral land: a sense of isolation that they feel in the United Kingdom because of racial discrimination, concern for relatives left in Pakistan, and inability to form roots outside the ancestral land. Through roots tourism, they look back to the past and feel a sense of belonging, reunite with their relatives, and safeguard tradition and ethnicity. The first-generation immigrants also take their children born in the United Kingdom regularly to Pakistan to cultivate and maintain their Pakistani identity. Roots tourism in this case is not a search for authenticity or exotic others but rather a means toward identity formation. Similarly, Cole and Timothy (2004) also highlight roots tourism as a vehicle through which ethnic minorities can foster their membership in a distant ancestral land and reaffirm their rights to participate in the society of that ancestral land. Duval (2004) similarly

maintains that roots tourism provides immigrants and their descendents with means

through which to solidify social networks with their natal homeland and facilitate a

possible return migration.

By contrast, some scholars discuss the complexity of fostering transnational sense of

ethnic identity through roots tourism (Kibria 2002; Louie 2001). Roots tourists who

expected a nostalgic homecoming may encounter locals who perceive the roots

tourists as mere tourists (Duval 2003; Ebron 1999). Also, differences in language,

culture, and economic classes between the country of origin and the country of

settlement may make the tourists feel alienated or disassociated in the ancestral land

(Louie 2002; Stefansson 2004). As a result, visiting an ancestral land may become a

means through which the tourists reevaluate and redefine who they are. For

example, Stephenson (2002) illustrates that roots tourists of Caribbean descent

living in the United Kingdom need to negotiate two contrasting feelings. In one way,

roots tourists feel like nontourists and "insiders" because they have the ancestral and

family connections to the island. Moreover, because they "look" Caribbean, other

non-Caribbean tourists often treat them as locals. On the other hand, the tourists feel

foreign or estranged in the ancestral communities because locals often label them as

"foreigners" based on their material wealth and different mannerisms. By being

treated as foreigners, tourists may feel ambiguity about who they are and need to

reexamine their identity. Oxfeld (2001) similarly shows that overseas Chinese

visiting their ancestral villages are simultaneously ascribed as family members, as

foreigners, and as potential "benefactors" who can financially assist their relatives who remain in the village. The multiple identifications add tension to the interactions between roots tourists and locals. Kibria (2002) illustrates the experiences of roots tourism among second-generation Chinese and Korean Americans. In her study, interviewees' parents constantly told them that they were always Korean or Chinese, even though they were born and raised in the United States, because they had Chinese or Korean "blood." Such a primordial notion of ethnic identity often helped the interviewees confront ethnic discrimination in schools and neighborhoods. However, when they visited their ancestral countries, they realized more differences than similarities in language, mannerism, and class between the two countries. The primordial notion of belonging that they learned at home was contested, and they realized that they did not belong to the ancestral countries.

To summarize, roots tourism has prompted debate about the development and maintenance of ethnic identity. On the one hand, it can be a medium through which people create, renew, and strengthen their ethnic ties with people in the ancestral land. On the other hand, through contact with the ancestral land, roots tourists may discover differences between locals and themselves and between their self-ascription and ascription by others. However, parallel to the study of transnationalism, the study of roots tourism has not yet necessarily addressed the perspective of the second and later generations. While Ali and Holden (2006) included the three

generations, the authors focus on perspectives of the first generation and what they thought about successive generations visiting Pakistan. That is, the authors do not describe the actual experiences of second generations. Therefore, in this chapter, I explore the narratives of second-generation Chinese Americans who visited China as roots tourists. By analyzing ways in which the Chinese Americans differently ascribe themselves and others depending on the situations and audience, I illustrate the process of defining and redefining the concept of who they are.

STUDY POPULATION: CHINESE AMERICANS AND THEIR IDENTITY

The ethnic identity of Chinese Americans has been conceptualized by two overarching paradigms. One emphasizes Chinese Americans' diasporic identity that encompasses strong ties with a distant homeland; the other conceptualizes identity based on experiences in the United States. The first concept may be rooted in Chinese racial ideology constructed in the late 15th century in response to foreign aggression (Dickotter 1996). A "racial ideology" implies that Chinese identity is defined primarily by Chinese heredity. Individuals who have Chinese "blood" are assumed to stay essentially Chinese no matter where they live. Indeed, since the beginning of emigration to the United States in the 1840s, many Chinese immigrants in the United States made regular visits to their villages of origin in order to strengthen ties with their families, fulfill family duties, and find spouses (Lew and Wong 2004; Yung 1999). For many, the ultimate goal was to increase the economic status of their families and return to their ancestral land after retirement.

Although these kinds of linkages between Chinese Americans and China were terminated in 1949, when the Communist Party of China came to power, the connections were revitalized at the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s (Kwan and Miscevic 2005). The change of immigration policy in the United States in 1965 also encouraged massive immigration from Taiwan and Hong Kong. The change in immigration policy accompanied by the development of communication and transportation technology created relatively easy access to culture and resources in their ancestral lands for Chinese diaspora (Lew and Wong 2002, 2005; Ong 1999). It also encouraged the restoration of Chinese racial ideology. For example, Lyn Pan, in his 1994 book, *Sons of the Yellow Emperor: The Story of the Overseas Chinese*, argues for "some primordial core or essence of Chineseness which one has by virtue of one's Chinese genes," rather than by language, religion, or any other cultural markers. Tu (2005) also maintains the importance of building "cultural China," or a transnational network among Chinese intellectuals who reside overseas. Such a network is meant to support Chinese modernization. Government officials also began characterizing Chinese Americans and other overseas Chinese as those who share nationalistic pride as Chinese and nostalgic attachment to the ancestral village (Lew and Wong 2003; Louie 2000).

An alternative paradigm places less emphasis on transnational, diaporic identity. Rather than pointing to general indicators of Chinese ancestry and blood to define identity, this view highlights diversity in class, gender, language, generations,

history of immigration, and nationalities within the community of Chinese diaspora (Douw 1999). Ang (2001: 50), for example, resists the concept of Chinese diasporic identity as "the convenient reduction of Chineseness." Moreover, by overly valuing the ancestral origin, the concept of global tribe of diaspora may ignore the loyalty to the country of settlement in which the overseas Chinese currently live (Skeldon 2003; Wai-Ming 2003). Therefore, Ang (2001) argues that, although Chinese Americans have racial origin in China, their identity needs to be situated in the Chinese experiences in the United States.

Louie (2003) proposes a new way of conceptualizing Chinese Americans. While careful not to overemphasize transnationalism, she argues that affiliation with the ancestral land may not necessarily be a threat to loyalty to the present country of residence. Instead, such an affiliation can provide Chinese Americans with the flexibility to select identity from a greater repertoire located in multiple places. As I will describe in a later section of the paper, the findings of this study partly supported Louie's point. The interviewees' narratives showed that by visiting the ancestral land, the Chinese Americans certainly discovered the family connection to China and imagined a Chinese identity as a new facet of their identity. At the same time, however, the new identity remained relatively vague because of various differences the visitors identified between Chinese and American societies.

METHODS

Please refer to Chapter I for the procedures of recruiting interviewees, data

collection, and data analysis.

FINDINGS

Being Chinese

With each interviewee, any occasion in which the Chinese American interviewees

felt a sense of membership as Chinese was discussed. The interviewees identified

some cultural aspects that were directly related to their everyday life with their

Chinese parents and grandparents as reference points based on which they

developed a sense of affiliation with local Chinese. These aspects include food,

language, mannerisms, and traditional practices. As Kibria (2002) maintains, the

Chinese Americans might have once thought that the Chinese language and other

cultural practices that their Chinese parents maintained were unusual or strange in

comparison to the American mainstream culture. The visit to China, then, made

them realize that the practices were ordinary in the Chinese culture. Lauren, who

lived in a neighborhood where she had only a few Asians in her neighborhood,

recalled that she grew up watching Chinese martial arts videos that few of her

classmates were watching. But when she visited China, she realized that her cousins

enjoyed the videos:

> I grew up in the Chinese culture. So, it doesn't feel like I am doing
> something different from everybody else in China and I go over there, and
> eating salted fish is okay…. The traditions I am used to, the stuff I like to
> watch, everybody actually enjoys. I remember that I have a bunch of tapes

> that I grew up watching, like martial arts…. But everybody else here [in the United States] grew up watching different stuff from me…. So, they talk about some stuff and I will be like, I have never seen it before. But I go back there, and my cousin and her friends are like "yeah, I have seen them."

The interviewees in this study articulated their Chinese membership particularly in comparison with other tourists who do not have Chinese ethnic background. For example, when they talked about their familiarity in China, they often compared themselves with other tourists in efforts to differentiate themselves from "mere tourists." Allison, who traveled with a group of American students, said she compared herself with other students who either do not speak the Chinese language or do not have any Chinese ancestral background, and felt like an "insider" in China. Jennifer similarly stated that she felt more familiar with the Chinese culture than a "complete foreigner" would:

> Compared to a complete foreigner, I am familiar with the subtle customs. Say, some people put off restaurants [in China] because it's noisy. But I grew up with a noisy Chinese restaurant. If you go to a Chinese restaurant, it's chaotic but it's normal for me.... or, if you go to a park, Chinese people write some characters and words on natural places whereas most Americans would say that it ruins the nature. But it is aesthetic for Chinese. Well, I cannot read them; I don't know what they mean. But I know it's art and symbolic in a way.

Tiffany also recalled her experience of acting like a local person, aided by her physical features:

> Sometimes it's great (to look Chinese), because you can do things that foreigners can't do. This one region, where, if you are a foreigner, if you're not Chinese national, you need to get a special permission to enter. And sometimes, I got away without getting permission because I look Chinese, I just pretended I was.

Thus, the Chinese American interviewees identified other tourists as "foreigners" based on their ancestral background, cultural knowledge, and physical markers. Despite the fact that the Chinese Americans themselves do not have citizenship in China, and were visiting China temporarily just like other tourists, they viewed themselves as insiders or natives, distinct from tourists.

Contested Chineseness

Nagel (1994) and Barth (1969) emphasize a situational or relative aspect of identity. Individuals choose, or have imposed on them, a particular ethnic identity from an array of possible identities depending on different audiences. Thus, identity can shift in relation to certain audiences and particular social contexts. This seems to be the case for Chinese Americans in this study. While their "Chineseness" was signified in relation to other tourists, it became more ambiguous in relation to the local Chinese. When the Chinese American interviewees interacted with locals, their American identity and Chinese identity were continuously shifting, both in self-ascription and in ascription by others. The interview accounts also revealed that the Chinese Americans' self-ascriptions were often contested by the locals' ascription of them.

Despite the shared ethnicity and the fact that they were able to act as local Chinese in some occasions, the Chinese Americans in this study were highly aware that they appeared in many ways as "American tourists" in the eyes of local Chinese. The

interviewees recalled their experience of being stared at by locals or directly asked about their ethnicity because, as one stated, "We don't look like normal Chinese." Indeed, the interviewees repeatedly explained that "Natives can tell" that they were not local Chinese but were raised in a foreign country. One noticed, "They could tell just from the way we look or the way we are dressed that we're from another place, or whatever foreigners."

They identified some overt differences that signaled their foreign status. Language was one of the most obvious differences. Karen stated that the locals could tell she is not local "once I open my mouth and say a word." Those who speak the language fluently also stated that they "looked" different because of their clothes, hair style, and skin color. According to the interviewees, the Chinese Americans were dressed more casually than locals, such as tank top and short pants instead of skirt and high heal. The interviewees also stated that the Chinese Americans have tanned skin tanned while locals, particularly females, have pale skin. One interviewee stated, "I definitely feel like I am an outsider because we just look different. the dress, having tanned skin because people over there looked paler." Cathy stated, "Even though I speak the language, still I don't look like them or sound like them. They can tell I am a foreigner by our skin color and clothes." Because of the differences, they stated that they "look funny," "didn't fit in," and "didn't look like China Chinese." At the same time, some recalled that the difference came not from the overt differences but from something subtle or uncertain. Amy stated that even though she

tried to fit in with the locals by wearing what locals wear and speaking Chinese, she

still "looked" different for an uncertain reason:

> When I go to China I try to fit in. I try not to act like I'm from America ….I
> try to dress how they dress over there. … I try to speak Chinese. I don't
> speak English when I'm in China….But, still, I think it doesn't matter how
> you dress….. Maybe it's because since you grew up in Houston. It's just
> different. You have a different type of, I don't know what it is, the features
> are different.

A few interviewees talked about the experiences of being identified as Americans in

positive terms. According to some, once locals found that the interviewees were

from the United States, some locals seemed more willing to interact with the visitors

and ask questions about life in the United States or practice speaking English.

Moreover, some also recalled that their incompetent skills in the Chinese language

or "odd" behaviors were forgiven once locals found out that they grew up in the

United States. Ellen, who lives in China town in San Francisco, stated that, when

she was in Chinatown, where people speak mostly Chinese language, she sometimes

felt out of place. She does not speak the language fluently, and she sensed that

people around her perceived her as missing a critical part of her identity. By

contrast, in China, she felt people were more understanding about her lack of

language skill because she is an American:

> I felt out of place here in Chinatown sometime because the people here were
> pre-dominantly Chinese [Cantonese] speaking. So, a lot of people feel sorry
> for you if you cannot speak Cantonese. Because my grandparents and other
> elderly folks think there is something missing. So, that always makes me feel
> out of it. And, there [in China], I felt I can get away with it, you know, "oh,
> I'm American, sorry." … people are just so welcoming, very interested in
> meeting Americans. I guess in a lot of foreign country, it's like that. [They
> identify us] "oh, that's an American!" You know?

Thus, as Nash (1996) argues, as tourists some Chinese Americans enjoyed the privilege and novelty given to them by virtue of their citizenship and upbringing. On the other hand, being treated as Americans made them realize that they were "outsiders" in China and made them feel foreign. The interviewees recalled feeling uncomfortable because they were often charged more for taxi rides or in shops. Particularly, those who were more competent in the Chinese language tended to express resentment about being treated as Americans in China. In this study, 11 interviewees stated they knew some words and phrases, and the rest of the interviewees could either speak fluently or, at least, carry on a casual conversation. Those who do not speak the language seemed aware of their foreign status and did not express negative feelings about being treated as Americans. Megan recalled her experience of being criticized for not speaking the Chinese language, but she continued, "It was okay. I am pretty used to it. I am pretty aware of the fact that I am an American." On the contrary, those who speak the language had expectations of being accepted by the Chinese prior to their visit. Therefore, it was often painful for them to realize the difficulty of blending in. Yi-Chun, who is fluent in speaking, reading, and writing Chinese, said that, "I felt I should fit in because…you look like you belong…and I speak enough. But because you feel like you should fit in, in the situation you don't, you feel like you are more different." One reason that those fluent in the language could not act as locals as they expected was that numerous dialects were spoken by the locals in China. According to Campbell (2008), while Mandarin has been used as an official language, Chinese dialects are classified into

11 groups, and variation occurs even within a group. Therefore, those who were fluent in Mandarin often could not communicate with their relatives and other locals who mainly use one of the dialects. On the contrary, Ann stated that, even though she went to Chinese school on Saturdays to learn Cantonese, the widely used dialect that her parents use, for 8 years and became fluent, when she went to Beijing, she realized that locals in the city mainly use Mandarin and not Cantonese. Moreover, Ken recalled his experience with his cousin who ignored the fact that he is fluent in Mandarin, an official Chinese language, and, instead, wanted to practice speaking English with him immediately after his arrival in Taiwan:

> When I was in Taiwan and saw my cousin, the first thing he said to me was "Can you speak English?" That's the first thing he said. He didn't say "hi" or anything…. I wasn't really comfortable with that …. because we hadn't seen each other for long time. Four years. He could've said something else. I felt like, he is just like "oh, you speak English. Great, I can practice with you." I know English is such an important subject in Taiwan and my cousin is studying so hard. But, you know, I came here to see my relatives… and I speak Chinese. I am not his English teacher.

Ken's experience represents a case in which one's self-ascription was contested by others' ascription. As indicated in the narrative, Ken's self-ascription as Chinese was challenged by his cousin who ascribed Ken as an American. Stephenson (2002) argues that being ascribed as a foreigner in one's ancestral homeland can call into question one's positive identification with the locals and thus confuse his or her self-identity. Indeed, Ken felt uncertain about his social position in relation to locals.

At the same time, however, the interviewees were also in many ways confused or angry toward being treated as Chinese. More precisely, because they physically

"look" Chinese and certainly have the ancestral connection to China, the Chinese

Americans are often expected to be loyal to the Chinese culture, heritage, and nation

(Dikotter 1992). The Chinese Americans, however, because of their American

upbringing, often lack Chinese cultural knowledge, political loyalty to the Chinese

nation, and life experiences in China. Because of the gap between the locals'

ascription of the Chinese Americans as "essentially Chinese" and the Chinese

Americans' self-ascription as American, roots tourists can be in awkward and

ambivalent positions. For example, although a couple of the interviewees stated their

lack of language skill was forgiven by the locals, it was much more common that

they were criticized by the locals for not speaking the Chinese language. Jennifer

expressed frustration that she felt when she encountered a local Chinese man who

expected Jennifer to speak Chinese language even when she explained her

background as an American:

> I was on a train on a 3-day trip in China, and I met this Chinese guy. He said, "Why don't you speak Chinese because you are Chinese." And, I explained to him that I am from the U.S. But he said, "You are Chinese." So, it's frustrating…. Some people don't understand that language is not an innate ability.

Katy also recalled her experience in which her behavior was censured as

inappropriate by locals. She had joined a company outing of her Taiwanese friend

who works in the local office. There, Kate was having a conversation with the

husband of her friend's colleague. Although Kate perceived the conversation as

normal, her friend later told Kate that she had been too friendly to someone's

husband and that she should have been more reserved in the norm in Taiwan. Kate

interpreted that the same behavior could have been forgiven for other tourists who

do not have any Chinese connection. Yet, her behavior appeared particularly

inappropriate in the eyes of locals, she felt, because she was speaking Chinese at

lunch and because she "looked" Chinese:

> I was just asking a question [to him], like what does he do, what your background. It's just making conversation. But my friend made a point that I was a little too outgoing, too friendly, or talking too much to a guy who is someone's husband. But I was not, by any stretch of the idea, especially by American standard, flirting or touching him. But that's how they interpreted it…. they think it is inappropriate…. I think it's probably more Chinese Taiwanese thing to be a little more reserved. And, I think it was also inappropriate because I look Chinese. And, I can speak the language. So, they think I should know better.

Michael also recalled that when he met his relatives in China, they often asked him

if the United States and China began a war, which side he would support. He said

that although he knew the locals expected him to show his support to China based

on the blood connection, physical markers, and cultural skill, he felt it was very

difficult to answer the question:

> I wish I could slap for them [when they ask the question], just like, "Oh, no I would just go to Canada." I always hated those questions…. They would expect me to probably say that I would go for China obviously because I am Chinese blood, I look Chinese, talk Chinese…. I really avoid the question and try to go on another topic. And sometimes when it is really unavoidable, I just say, well I am a US citizen and if I get trapped we will talk about it then. Then, they say something really bad, like "Are you serious?"

The narratives of Jennifer, Katy, and Michael illustrate the Chinese Americans'

ambivalent social position in China. On the one hand, they were not completely

accepted as members of the local society because their norms and patterns of

behavior were different from those of the locals. At the same time, they were not

simply considered, and consider themselves, as "complete foreigners" who have no connection to China. They were, in fact, in many ways expected to know the Chinese culture. The lack of cultural skill, then, ascribes them in a way as people who sever their ties and loyalty to the homeland (Kibria 2004). Hollinshead (1998: 71) describes the concept of "halfway population" who are caught in difficult locations between old and new identities:

> "Halfway populations" are those communities of people who are caught in difficult cultural locations or in strained representative situations, in awkward intervening space between established frames of reference, or who are otherwise sandwiched or lost between established and emerged identities.

The sense of ambivalence and in-between-ness is further enhanced by the economic gap that the interviewees found between the United States and China. In this study, 19 interviewees who visited the rural areas recalled their surprise to see inadequate living conditions, child labor, and beggars on the street. In one way, the interviewees stated that they took the poverty more personally and seriously it compared to other tourists, particularly Westerners, because they could directly relate it to the experiences of their immediate family members. They also picture the life that they might have had if their ancestors had not moved to the United States. Chelsea stated:

> I think I took it [poverty] more to heart because the Caucasians would see it like a vacation, they will think that they don't have to be involved. But for me I felt like I was more connected with them because they look like us, our families are almost the same but it's just a matter of where we are brought up.

At the same time, the interviewees who visited rural areas quickly learned that being Chinese Americans automatically meant "wealthy, spoiled, and lucky enough" to have gotten out the poverty, and thus become a target of jealousy and resentment.

Although the interviewees were aware of the privilege given to them, they also expressed their frustration and anger in response to locals' resentful statements against the Chinese Americans' economic status. Helen stated, "They see me as American and think like, she is so much more privileged than I am …. She is so lucky, she grew up in the US, She doesn't know what is like to live in China."

Chinese as "Others"

In response to the imposed stereotype as rich and spoiled, the interviewees criticized locals for their inability to understand or lack of interest in understanding the struggle that Chinese Americans go through in the United States as ethnic minorities. For example, Holly described her annoyance with locals' remarks about her better economic status because she sensed that locals were not acknowledging the hard work necessary for her to make a living in the United States and, instead, were bitter about her privilege:

> They [locals] think we have it good. I mean, they think that money just drops off from the sky. They always think that coming to America is a good thing. They don't know how hard we have to work for the money. They think like "Oh in America … like in San Francisco they have this Old Golden Mountain." It's not that easy. You are paying for rent. Rent is like $700 in U.S. money. You can spend like $200 in China for house and food and stuff. … They don't consider that. They don't know how expensive it is. You earn that money but they don't know the expenses of living in San Francisco.

In the Holly's account above, Holly was clearly "othering" local Chinese by identifying them as "they" and Chinese Americans as "we." Indeed, the interviewees' narrative accounts indicated that, through the series of negotiation of various self-ascription and ascription by others, the Chinese Americans categorize

themselves as distinct from locals. They ascribed the locals as unsophisticated, unfriendly, and close-minded compared to Americans. By contrast, the interviewees tended to characterize themselves as positively influenced by American society in terms of norms, education, and gender roles.

The interviewees also tended to look at the Chinese culture through critical eyes or an "American lens." Laxon (1991) argues that American tourists see other societies primarily through ethnocentric views and tend to judge other cultures by the norm of American culture. Certainly, the Chinese Americans in this study, consciously and unconsciously, judge Chinese culture based on how similar it is to the American culture, instead of acknowledging the cultural differences. For example, several interviewees compared the quality of customer service and stated that Chinese service was "rude [compared] to the standard in the U.S" and "we don't do that in the United States." The interviewees also complained that local Chinese do not have enough English skills to communicate with them. By the same token, when one interviewee mentioned that she was impressed by the fact that many locals, especially in big cities, began to speak English, she commented, "They are reaching out to us." This statement may imply that she defined Chinese as her outer group ("they") and Americans as her inner group ("us"), and complimented China's transformation toward an English-speaking country as an achievement to be like the United States.

Overall, the interviewees stated that visiting China was a positive experience. The

interviewees stated that, after visiting China, they feel more comfortable with, or

proud of, their own identity as Chinese Americans. They also stated that the visit

allowed them to better understand their parents' values and norm. Josh, for example,

stated:

> I can relate more to my ancestry, and it helped me understand where my
> parents get a lot of their values. Because before [I went to China], I didn't
> really get it. But now it's a lot clearer and lucid to me why there are these
> clashes.

Heightened self-esteem was also commonly reported by the interviewees. By

observing the life in China, and especially realizing the privilege of being American

citizens, they realize the importance of hard work and accomplishments.

> Well, before I went back to China, I was just like "Whatever, I am Chinese,
> that will be it." You know. Then, I went back to China and see how hard to
> raise a family is, to make living, you know? My cousin is studying really
> hard to learn English. My other cousin is in high school, she is already
> learning so much math and try to go to the best school. Then, I feel like I
> need to work hard? And, I also feel so proud because people are working so
> hard in China.

However, the interviewees tended to draw a boundary between themselves and

locals. Although they share the common ancestor and "blood," the Chinese

Americans define themselves as outsiders in China. For example, Andrew stated that

even though locals and he may look similar, their ways of thinking were different.

Nathan also defined local Chinese as "different kind of people" from Chinese

Americans because of their different upbringing:

> Asian Americans here have similar experiences. (Local) Chinese and we are
> similar but not all the way because we are Chinese and we live in the United

States…. Because people born in America are different from the people born in China…. I view them as different kind of people.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to illustrate ways in which Chinese American roots tourists reshape and redefine their ethnic identity through visiting China. The interview narratives revealed that the Chinese Americans realize or reconfirm a Chinese part of their identity in several ways. Such Chinese identity is particularly crystallized in relation to white tourists. At the same time, however, their Chinese membership was often contested during interactions with locals who share ancestry with the interviewees but have a different upbringing, language, norms, and citizenship. Through the experience, the Chinese Americans reconsider and redefine what it means to be Chinese Americans.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest the difficulty of fostering ethnic identity attached to the ancestral land through roots tourism. On the one hand, visiting China certainly allowed Chinese Americans to discover the connection to China owing to the ancestor and, in some situations, to act as local Chinese because of the common ethnic background. Also, the visit enabled them to imagine their Chinese identity as a new facet of identity. Karen stated, "I get the feeling that even if I don't consider [China] home-home, there's definitely a place for me there that I could have, if I wanted it." In this sense, As Louie (2003) argues, through visiting China, the Chinese Americans became aware of a greater repertoire and flexibility of identities

located in multiple places. At the same time, however, the new option of identity as Chinese remained in a vague sense. As illustrated in the interviewees' accounts, the visit to China led the Chinese Americans to find many differences and realize the difficulties of fitting into their ancestral society. Ironically, the differences would have not been identified had they not visited China. In many encounters, the Chinese Americans were identified and identify themselves as different from local Chinese. As a result, the interviewees confirm that their experience, membership, and identity are rooted in the United States rather than in China.

These findings also suggest that, although roots tourism may not foster a sense of transnational or diasporic identity among Chinese Americans, it can certainly be a tool to assist Chinese Americans to develop a positive sense of identity as *Chinese Americans*. The interviewees stated that the visit helped them validate the differences from their European American peers in terms of norms and culture in their homes. Moreover, through visiting China, the Chinese American interviewees became aware of the privilege given by their ancestors' migration, gained a strong sense of pride in their Chinese ethnic background, and thus heightened their sense of self-esteem. In fact, Jeff stated, "[Visiting China] made me think I can accomplish more."

The finding of this study has implications for academic discussions of ethnic identity and globalism. First, although some scholars argue that under globalization,

expanded social networks may allow immigrants and their descendents to form an identity that does not rest on a discrete place (Faist 2000; Nonini and Ong 1997), the interviewees in this study indicated that geographical boundaries are significant in the construction of the Chinese American roots tourists. In fact, Chinese Americans in this study categorized and defined identity of local Chinese and their own based on where they were born and raised. Ken stated, "Because people born in America are different from the people born in China… I view them as different kind of people." That is, their ethnic identity is developed based on a particular locality. Second, although Kerney (1995) argued against either-or identities (i.e., Chinese or American) and instead for "both-and-and" identities, the interviewees in this study clearly constructed the boundary between local Chinese and themselves. The Chinese Americans did not identify themselves as "both Chinese and American" but define themselves as "*Chinese Americans*" who are distinct from local Chinese as well as from white Americans. This is consistent with Barth's (1969) concept of ethnic identity as a process of defining who is and who is not a member of a distinct group. Third, this study supports the constructive aspects of ethnic identity that Barth (1969) proposes. Although transnationalism allows individuals to be reconnected with others who share the same ancestry and blood, the Chinese Americans in this study did not develop their ethnic identity based on such primordial connections. Rather, as Barth suggests, they interact with locals, identify and negotiate the differences between locals and themselves, and categorize the Chinese locals as "others" although they share the same ancestor.

Visiting China is not the only occasion through which the Chinese Americans need to negotiate their identity between ascription as Americans and as Chinese. Indeed, many interviewees recalled their everyday encounters in which they were censured for their lack of Chinese language and other cultural skills by Chinese individuals who recently arrived in the United States. They also talked about the cultural conflict that they experience with their immigrant parents over their academic success, career goals, and dating/marriage partners. This may indicate that Chinese Americans' identity construction is an ongoing process, and roots tourism is only a part of it.

The study indicated that the type of tourism practiced (e.g., with family or with other tourists who have no Chinese background) may influence the intensity and nature of boundary construction. Therefore, future studies need to include the comparison of different types of tourism to advance understanding of the complex process of identity boundary construction through roots tourism. Further studies also need to include members of other ethnic minority groups, particularly the second and later generations, to comprehend the ways in which participation of ethnic minorities as "guests" in tourism influences their ethnic identity.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Roots tourism, a type of tourism in which immigrants and their descendents visit their ancestral communities as tourists, is an easily accessible means through which people can be reconnected with their ancestral society. It allows them to temporarily visit their ancestral land as "tourists," without experiencing the intense transition possible in the process of permanently settling down. Roots tourism is becoming popular, and researchers have focused on its various influence of the particular type of tourism on the local societies as well as tourists (Lew and Wang 2002; Louie 2004; Oxfeld 2004).

Study of roots tourism is a useful channel through which researchers can explore the influences of transnationalism on people's ethnic identity and a sense of belonging. Transnationalism refers to maintained ties between immigrants and their ancestral lands across the borders of nation-states (Basch et al. 1994; Glick-Schiller and Fouron, 2001). Different from earlier immigrants who had only limited access to the ancestral land after migration, current immigrant and their descendents can remain connected with their ancestral country through the use of recently developed communication technology and transportation, including tourism. Scholars have been debating about the impact of such maintained ties on the assimilation process in the country of settlement (Nyiri 2002; Ong 1999). As I discussed in Chapters II,

III, and IV, in the case of Chinese Americans, while some scholars argued that transnational ties weaken the attachment to the country of settlement and, instead, strengthen the loyalty and commitment to China (Pan 1990; Tu 2005), other scholars maintain that it simply provides an option of identity as "Chinese" without interfering with assimilation into the country of settlement (Ang 2001; Louie 2004).

Current studies of roots tourism have indicated that roots tourism can be a tool with which immigrants and their descendents can construct a sense of home and identity attached to the ancestral land (Ali and Holden 2006; Basu 2004). On the other hand, however, studies have also shown that roots tourists may feel "foreign" in their ancestral lands because the visit reveals more differences than similarities between the two countries (Kibria 2002; Louie 2004). Although the studies have provided a better understanding of roots tourism, studies that specifically focus on second and later generations' experiences of roots tourism are lacking.

The purpose of this dissertation was to explore the experiences of visiting ancestral land among second generation Chinese Americans. By examining their motivation to visit their ancestral land, experiences and encounters in the ancestral land, and feelings toward the ancestral land as well as toward the United States after the visit, I attempted to investigate how roots tourism influenced ways in which second-generation Chinese Americans define and redefine the concepts of home and ethnic identity under the transnationalism.

The dissertation employed a qualitative approach characterized by in-depth interviews. The interviewees consisted of 40 second-generation Chinese Americans who visited their ancestral land within 12 month prior to the interview. They were between the ages of 19 and 25 and reside in San Francisco, California, and Houston, Texas. The data were collected through individual, in-depth interviews, which took place from March 2006 to January 2008. All interviews were transcribed verbatim for the analysis. To analyze the data, I used a cross-case analysis.

In this dissertation, after introducing the general issues with transnationalism, identity and assimilation, and roots tourism in Chapter I, in Chapter II, I explored the Chinese Americans' everyday lives as ethnic minorities and the meanings of visit to China in the light of Cohen's (1979) phenomenology of tourism. According to Cohen, the meanings and significance of tourism differ among individuals depending on the levels of alienation that one feels in their everyday lives. Through exploring both their everyday lives and their travel experiences, I examined ways in which the interviewees adhere to the United States and/or their ancestral country and where their "spiritual center" is. The analysis indicated that no interviewees stated that they felt attached to China or Taiwan *because* they felt alienated in the United States, although one interviewee stated that she would seek to belong to China for her future visit because of her perceived disadvantage as an ethnic minority in the United States. Instead, a majority of interviewees (37 of 40 interviewees) realized the difficulties of fitting in at the ancestral country because of many gaps between

the United States and China or Taiwan. Of the 37 interviewees, two felt as if they

did not belong anywhere after the visit, and 35 interviewees confirmed that they

belonged to the United States. The findings suggested that the roots tourism is not

necessarily "existential tourism" for the second-generation Chinese Americans who

have never lived in China or Taiwan. Instead of feeling a sense of ultimate

belonging to their ancestral land, they observed and experienced a part of the

ancestral culture and compared it to American culture while remaining as

"outsiders." The findings also suggested multiple and changing relationships that the

Chinese Americans constructed with China and with the United States. For example,

three interviewees felt like they belonged both to the United States and to their

ancestral land, while two felt they were "homeless." Moreover, many interviewees

felt being both "outsider" and "insider" depending on a situation. These findings

suggested some challenged Cohen's phenomenology of tourism.

In Chapter III, I attempted to examine ways in which the Chinese Americans

reshaped and redefined the concept of "homeland" through visiting the ancestral

land. Because it is indicated in Chapter III that the majority (35 of 40) of

interviewees did not feel like their home was in China and instead identified the

United States as their "home" through visiting China, in this chapter, I particularly

focus on the experiences of the 35 interviewees. The narratives revealed that the

interviewees imagined ties to the homeland influenced by their immigrant parents

and grandparents prior to their visit, and the "homeland imagination" encouraged

them to visit China. However, the imagined ties were challenged and contested by the actual encounter with the ancestral land. The sense of affinity that they felt to China owing to the family connection and shared ethnicity was easily overwhelmed by differences between two countries in terms of norm, language, economic class, language, upbringing, and family and gender structure. As a result, after the visitors returned from China, they acknowledged China as their "ancestral homeland" or "cultural homeland," but also reaffirmed that their "homeland" is the United States.

In Chapter IV, similarly focusing on the 35 interviewees who felt a sense of belonging to the United States instead of to China after the visit, I explored the process of ethnic identity construction through roots tourism. Barth (1969) described ethnic identity as an ongoing negation of self-ascription and others' ascription of them to decide who are and who are not the members of an ethnic group. Based on the theory, I analyzed ways in which Chinese Americans described themselves, described other tourists who do not have a Chinese ethnic background, and described local Chinese people. The analyses suggested that the Chinese American tourists certainly strengthened a sense of Chinese identity, particularly in comparison with other tourists who do not have Chinese ethnic background. At the same time, their Chinese identity was challenged and became ambiguous through interaction with local Chinese. The gap between Chinese Americans' self-ascription and others' ascription of them became a source of tension in the interaction. As a

result, they came to define their identity as not Chinese and not American but rather as "Chinese American."

Overall, the findings of this dissertation illustrated that the interviewees' experiences in China were marked by negotiation, contestation, and redefinition of who they are and where they belong. On one hand, their motivation to visit was certainly generated through family history, kinship, ethnicity, and homeland imaginary, rather than mere interest in seeking pleasure and novelty. Also, in China, as illustrated in Chapter III, the desire for the homecoming experience in their ancestral land is partly fulfilled. They felt a sense of affinity to China based on their ancestral connection. Also, as illustrated in Chapter IV, the interviewees acted as "locals," and the experiences crystallized their identity as "Chinese" particularly in comparison with other tourists who do not have an ethnic background. At the same time, however, the connections to China were often contested and redefined because of the differences in language, norms, economic class, upbringing, citizenship, and family and gender structure, as illustrated in Chapters III and IV. Also, as indicated in Chapter II, most of interviewees visited China only sporadically and on a short-term basis, which did not allow them to be fully immersed in the local culture and life. Indeed, a majority of the interviewees (35 of 40 interviewees) stated that they did not feel a sense of belonging to China and, instead, confirmed that they belong to the United States, where they were born and raised. Also, the Chinese Americans were identified and identified themselves as "different" from local Chinese.

The findings have an implication on ways in which transnationalism influences people's identity. Scholars have suggested that, with the current development of technology in communication and transportation, individuals' identity and sense of belonging may transcend the geographical boundary of nation-states (Ong 1999; Papastergiadias 2000). Some scholars (Grick-Schiller and Fouron 2001; Itzigsohn and Saucedo 2002) are concerned that having the transnational connection with the ancestral land might contrast to the traditional "assimilation model," which assumes immigrants would progressively adopt the culture of and political loyalty to a country of settlement and cease orientation with their ancestral land. On the contrary, other scholars maintain that, while the ties with the ancestral land provides an additional array of identity, it does not interfere the process of assimilation (Kibria 2002; Louie 2004). The findings of this study supported the later view. The majority of interviewees in this study stated that the interviewees were culturally and emotionally oriented to the United States, rather than to their homeland, and visiting their ancestral land became a means through which they realized their American orientation. Although the visit allowed them to imagine the life that they could have had if their ancestors had not immigrated, the experiences did not necessarily generate a sense of orientation to their ancestral land. The findings also indicated that a sense of home and identity were fairly localized even though the Chinese Americans in this study have the mobility to visit their ancestral land. As indicated in Chapters III and IV, they defined their home and identity based on where they were born and raised, and where they physically and currently live.

Although the interviewees did not feel a sense of belonging to the ancestral land, the visit helped the interviewees gained a strong sense of pride in their Chinese ethnic background and heightened sense of self-esteem. Through the visit, the interviewees understood origin of the differences from their European American peers in terms of norms and culture in their homes. As illustrated in Chapter IV, the Chinese American might have once felt that the Chinese language and cultural practices that their immigrant parents maintain in their home were strange in comparison to the American culture. The roots tourism then made them realize that the practices were normal in China or Taiwan. Moreover, through visiting China, the Chinese American interviewees realized the privileges they enjoyed as a result of their ancestors' migration. As indicated in Chapters III and IV, the interviewees stated that they came to better understand their parents' values regarding education and hard work.

The findings suggested the limitation of roots tourism as a means to construct a sense of home and identity in the United States, even though it allowed the tourists to have the transnational mobility to be reunited with their ancestral land. At the same time, it played a role to assist Chinese Americans to develop a positive sense of what it means to be Chinese *Americans.*

In Chapters II, III, and IV, I identified several areas that need further study, including what differentiates the experiences and significance of roots tourism other

than a feeling of groundedness or alienation in everyday lives (Chapter II), locals'

attitudes toward the roots tourists (Chapter II), various generations of Chinese

Americans as well as members of different diasporic groups (Chapters III and IV),

and ways in which different types of roots tourism practices influence the nature of

ethnic boundary construction (Chapter IV). To conclude the dissertation, I propose a

couple of other areas worth for further studies to better understand ways in which

roots tourism plays a role in constructing identity and a sense of home. First, in this

dissertation I purposefully recruited the interviewees aged 19 to 25, because,

according to Smith (2002), the transnational life reaches its peak at ones' college

age. The some interviewees in this study, however, stated that they visited their

ancestral land as children or as high school students. They also expressed their

willingness to take their children to China in the future. Therefore, it will be worth

studying ways in which their motivation, experiences, and a sense of identity after

the travel differ depending on time of the travel during the life course. It is also

important to explore ways in which initial experiences influence the willingness and

frequency of the subsequent visits. Second, comparison of the rots tourism

experiences between Chinese Americans and other groups, especially descendents

of European immigrants, will further clarify the role of the ancestral connection in

the identity construction. Third, although this dissertation focused on a perceived

sense of disadvantage or alienation in the interviewees' everyday life as a push

factor, further studies need to explore ways in which other aspects of everyday life

experiences than a sense of exclusion as Chinese Americans influence their travel

experience. For example, many interviewees in this study mentioned that they felt familiarity or "connection" with the local food when they visited China or Taiwan because they eat Chinese food at their home. A couple of interviewees even stated that one of their motivations to visit their ancestral land was, or will be, to eat certain food at a certain restaurant. In addition, many interviewees from San Francisco and some from Houston stated that they had participated local Chinese festivals, including Chinese New Year Parade, through the student organization or clubs. One interviewee also stated that after she came back from her visit to China, she had more critical eyes regarding the ways in which Chinese culture in represented in the United States. Therefore, it will be worthwhile to explore whether and how these "Chineseness" constructed through everyday life generate a sense of familiarity when they visited their homeland and influence a sense of home and identity after the visit. Lastly, particularly among the interviewees in this study, there is need to investigate the experiences of those who felt "homeless" after their visit to China and of those felt a sense of belonging to both the United States and their ancestral country. Although I mainly focused on analyzing those who felt "home" in the United States for the purpose of this dissertation because a majority of the interviewee stated so, it does not meant that analyzing the experiences of those who felt different from the majority of the interviewees is not worthwhile. Rather, exploring their experiences in depth will allow researchers to learn the complexity and multiplicity of the connection between second-generation Chinese

Americans and their ancestral land and the role of roots tourism in refining who they are and where they belong.

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<APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX A

Interviewees (From San Francisco)

	Anonymous Name	Place of residence	Age	Gender	Ancestral Origin	Frequency of Visit	With Whom
1	Josh	San Francisco	21	M	Mainland China	Every other summer	Family
2	Tommie	San Francisco	21	M	Mainland China	Once (3 weeks)	Family
3	Sarah	San Francisco	22	F	Mainland China	Twice	Family
4	Linda	San Francisco	23	F	Mainland China	Three times	Family/ Alone
5	Tim	San Francisco	25	M	Mainland China	Twice	Family
6	Chelsea	San Francisco	25	F	Mainland China	Twice	Organized tour Family
7	Tommy	San Francisco	25	M	Taiwan	Twice	Family
8	Megan	San Francisco	24	F	Mainland China	Twice	Family
9	Andrew	San Francisco	19	M	Taiwan (Born)	Twice	Family
10	Holly	San Francisco	22	F	Mainland China	Twice	Family
11	Sam	San Francisco	20	M	Mainland China	Once	Family
12	Jonathan	San Francisco	22	M	Mainland China	Once	Family
13	Ann	San Francisco	22	F	Mainland China	Twice	Family Language Program
14	Nathan	San Francisco	21	M	Mainland China	Twice	Family
15	Nick	San Francisco	23	M	Mainland China	Twice	Organized tour With co-workers
16	Clara	San Francisco	25	F	Mainland China	Twice	Language Program Organized tour
17	Alice	San Francisco	25	F	Mainland China	Once	Language Program Organized tour
18	Ellen	San Francisco	21	F	Mainland China	Once	Organized tour
19	Yi-Chun	San Francisco	20	M	Mainland China	Once	Organized tour
20	Jennifer	San Francisco	25	F	Mainland China	Four times	Family Friends Language Program

APPENDIX B

Interviewees (Houston)

	Anony-mous Name	Place of residence	Age	Gen der	Ancestral Origin	Frequency of visit	With Whom
1	Katy	Houston	21	F	China	3 times	Family Language Program
2	Stacy	Houston	21	F	China	Twice	Family
3	David	Houston		M	China	Twice	Family
4	Vivian	Houston	21	F	Taiwan (Born)	Every summer	Family
5	Jenny	Houston	20	F	China	Twice	
6	Shelly	Houston	20	F	China	Once	Family
7	Jeff	Houston	21	M	Taiwan	Twice	
8	Kevin	Houston	20	M	China (Born)	6 times	Family
9	Lauren	Houston	20	F	China	Twice	Family Language Program
10	Michael	Houston	23	M	Taiwan (Born)	Every Summer	Family
11	Rachel	Houston	21	F	China (Born)	Every Summer	Family
12	Erick	Houston	25	M	Taiwan	Twice	Family
13	Tod	Houston	25	M	China	Once	Family
14	Robert	Houston	24	M	Taiwan	Twice	Family
15	Ryan	Houston	25	M	China	Twice	Family
16	Katy	Houston	21	F	Taiwan	Three times	Family
17	Rick	Houston	23	M	China	Once	Family
18	Kyle	Houston	22	M	China	3 times	Family
19	Kathryn	Houston	21	F	Taiwan	Twice	Family
20	Wan Fang	Houston	22	F	China	Twice	Family

VITA

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