

Active retirement

**A dynamic living community for the elderly situated in rural china,
combining living learning and crafting.**

Jiajun Lu/ Bergen School of Architecture June 2019

"I've become old and I don't know how I got here."

—In Paolo Sorrentino's film Youth, an elderly composer played by Michael Caine sums it up

This project discuss the contemporary architectural and urban mutations that have emerged as a consequence of one of the major demographic transformations of our time: aging populations. With the advancement of medical standards, people's physiological needs have been greatly satisfied. The perception of the elderly and themselves are also changing. Each generations have different cultural background and lifestyle which formed diverse elderly living patterns.

In China ,nowadays, the elderly whose children have left the household are commonly referred to as "empty nesters". They stay mostly at home and become very lonely .There are three major factors that contribute to the more serious empty nest issues in Chinese families: population ageing, one-child policy families, and urban migration. At the same time, the existing elderly institutes or communities are poorly designed and the opportunity of activity are limited. Therefore, I propose a dynamic living community for elderly in China for them to retreat , to learn and to teach to spread their knowledge.

The learning progress will focus on the Chinese traditional craft making that the young generation are increasingly interested in and have passion to learn. With an aging population it becomes more and more urgent for the younger generation to have the opportunity to learn from the older generation.

The site I have chosen for this dynamic retirement community is in a small village called YiShenchang in northeastern China, At this village there is a wood workshop that I have stayed for half year to learn the Chinese traditional carpentry from the elderly master. This site is chosen as an example that has elements consisting of beautiful nature for retreat and existing traditional craft culture as a starting point.

The design is focused on the psychological and physical consideration of the elderly, in addition, the connection with the landscape and the village. Accessibility, playfulness, social interaction, landscape, vernacular language are the key words.

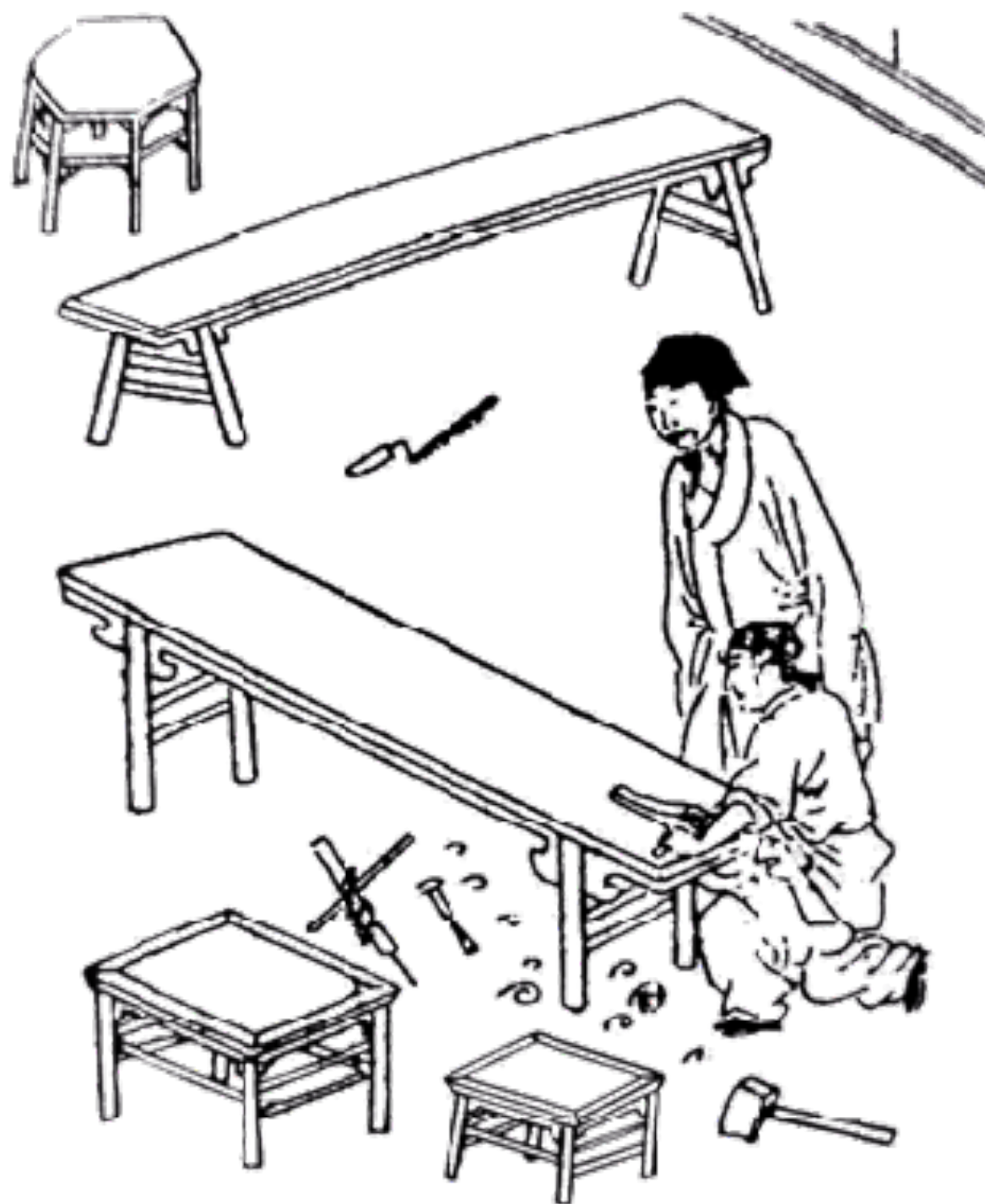


Figure:
Carpenter's workmanship in the prints of Lu Banjing from Ming dynasty

Aging and learning

a new trail of residence for senior citizen



Ancient Chinese drawing depict an elderly people



elderly people in Chinese history

Learn and teach

Confucius was a Chinese teacher, editor, politician, and philosopher of the Spring and Autumn period of Chinese history. Picture shows he was teaching his student under a tree



elderly people nowadays

Loneliness

Nowadays, the elderly whose children have left the household are referred to as "empty nesters". The picture shows an "empty nest" old man sit alone on the bench

content

why

Longevity revolution
Bioethical maintenance of the yong-old
Aging problem in China

what

elderly apartment+U3A
a new type of elderly accommodation

where

Northeast china / village / wood workshop

How

Appropriate architecture for aging
Emotional and Physical

cv

Why

Longevity revolution
Bioethical maintenance of the yong-old
Aging problem in China



Global population aging and retirement

- **Longevity revolution**

the percentage of population aged 60 and above has doubled in the last sixty years from around 8 percent to around 16 percent. Such rates of growth are anticipated to continue in the future.

- **Bioethical maintenance of the yong-old**

The contemporary aging body of the young-old marks a largely uncelebrated transformation of the technological of the limits of the human organism, employing an expanded set of techniques at the intersection of the biological and the technological.

- **the stage of old age**

65--75 young old
75--85 old
85-- old old

Aging situation in China



four generations under one roof

- **A quarter of the population expected to be aged over 60 by 2030.**

- **Changing family structure**

In the past, family members from different generation used to gathered together, especially stay with the elders. Nowadays, the elderly whose children have left the household are referred to as “**empty nesters**”. In China’s urban and rural areas, the percentage of empty nest families is more than 50%. In some medium and large sized cities, this number can rise to 70%.

There are three major factors that contribute to the more serious empty nest issues in Chinese families: **population ageing, one-child policy families, and urban migration.**

- **Changing perspective of the elderly**

stay home-----some other way



empty nesters

In Chinese tradition, the reason to raise children partly lies on they can take care of the elderly in the future. However, due to the “one-child policy”, today **two adults have to take care of four or more old people**. It is not only time consuming but also costly for young adult to take care of their parents. Consequently, more and more elderly would consider to enter a residential care home.

the concept of old-age care is constantly changing, but as a whole, with the improved living standard, people are more inclined to **achieve the self actualization** as mentioned in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs.

- **Composition of the elderly population:**

a research report from 2016 shows that the average age of the elderly in China is currently 70.02 years old

young old

The report shows that the elderly in China are generally characterized by a young age, that is, more than half of the elderly between the ages of 60 and 69; 32.13% of the elderly aged 70 to 79; and 13.84% of the elderly aged 80 and older.

educated

The vast majority of older people have received formal education, and more than 30% of them have junior high school education and above. The proportion of elderly people without spouses is 25.32%, and the widowed elderly are mostly women.

independent

The report pointed out that the elderly in China have a good self-care ability, but the absolute number of elderly people with severe disability cannot be ignored. 87.46% of the elderly in the country are completely self-care in their daily lives, and 2% of the elderly are severely disabled.

- **What elderly people like to do nowadays**

gathered together and have fun

sing / dance / play chess / chinese hand writing / out door / bath

In the city, they especially like to attend U3A

(The University of the Third Age is an international movement whose aims are the education and stimulation of mainly retired members of the community—those in their third ‘age’ of life. It is commonly referred to as U3A)

In China the U3A provides variety of courses, such as singing, drawing, dancing, etc.

Many U3A in the city become high demand and became very hard to participate in.



U3A elderly people are having the Chinese traditional hand writing class



traditional
drawing /
hand writing



play
chess

sing

.....

bath

outdoor, be with nature
.....

health maintenance



What

elderly apartment+U3A
a new type of elderly accommodation

An Elderly apartment in a village where have the beautiful nature

Have different type of rooms. For example, elderly people can choose to the co-living room to stay with friend or single room

It will be a combination of living and learning. Add U3A to the apartment, this school can be a branch school from the U3A in city.

The common facility and U3A also act as a community center in the village where elderly villager can also use the facility and get health care.

The elderly people here can be student or teacher.

A lecture given by Jared Diamond
Jared Diamond
Civilization scholar

“05:00

First, as regards usefulness, older people continue to perform useful services. One use of older people in traditional societies is that they often are still effective at producing food. Another traditional usefulness of older people is that they are capable of babysitting their grandchildren, thereby freeing up their own adult children, the parents of those grandchildren, to go hunting and gathering food for the grandchildren. Still another traditional value of older people is in making tools, weapons, baskets, pots and textiles. In fact, they're usually the people who are best at it. Older people usually are the leaders of traditional societies, and the people most knowledgeable about politics, medicine, religion, songs and dances.

05:50

Finally, older people in traditional societies have a lot of knowledge that would never occur to us in our modern, literate societies. In societies where most of information are books and the Internet, older people are not particularly useful. In societies without writing, older people are more useful. It's their knowledge that spells the difference. They can teach for their whole society in a time of crisis, which only the oldest people alive have had experienced. The ways in which older people are useful in traditional societies and their usefulness varies and contributes to variation in the society's treatment of the elderly.

Perhaps the biggest change for the worse is that our elderly are objectively less useful than in traditional societies. Widespread literacy means that they are no longer useful as repositories of knowledge. When we want some information, we look it up in a book or we Google it instead of finding some old person to ask. The slow pace of technological change in traditional societies means that what someone learns there as a child is still useful when that person is old, but the rapid pace of technological change today means that what we learn as children is no longer useful 60 years later. And conversely, we older people are not fluent in the technologies essential for surviving in modern society. For example, as a 15-year-old, I was considered outstandingly good at multiplying numbers because I had memorized the multiplication tables and I know how to use logarithms and I'm quick at manipulating a slide rule. Today, though, those skills are utterly useless because any idiot can now multiply eight-digit numbers accurately and instantly with a pocket calculator. Conversely, I at age 75 am incompetent at skills essential for

what they want to learn and
what we can learn from

• What we can learn from

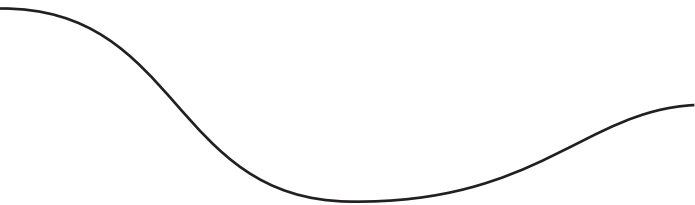
traditional

producing food / babysitting grandchildren / making tools, weapons, baskets, pots and textiles / knowledgeable about politics, medicine, religion, songs and dances.

Today

childcare / unique experience of living conditions / supervising, administering, advising, strategizing, teaching, synthesizing, and devising long-term plans, farming, counsel, medical care / traditional craft work

passion for traditional craft making / art work / etc



hand made
folk

industrial produce
efficiency

culture
value



PROGRAM

elderly apartment

independent / family / shared / nursing

university of third age

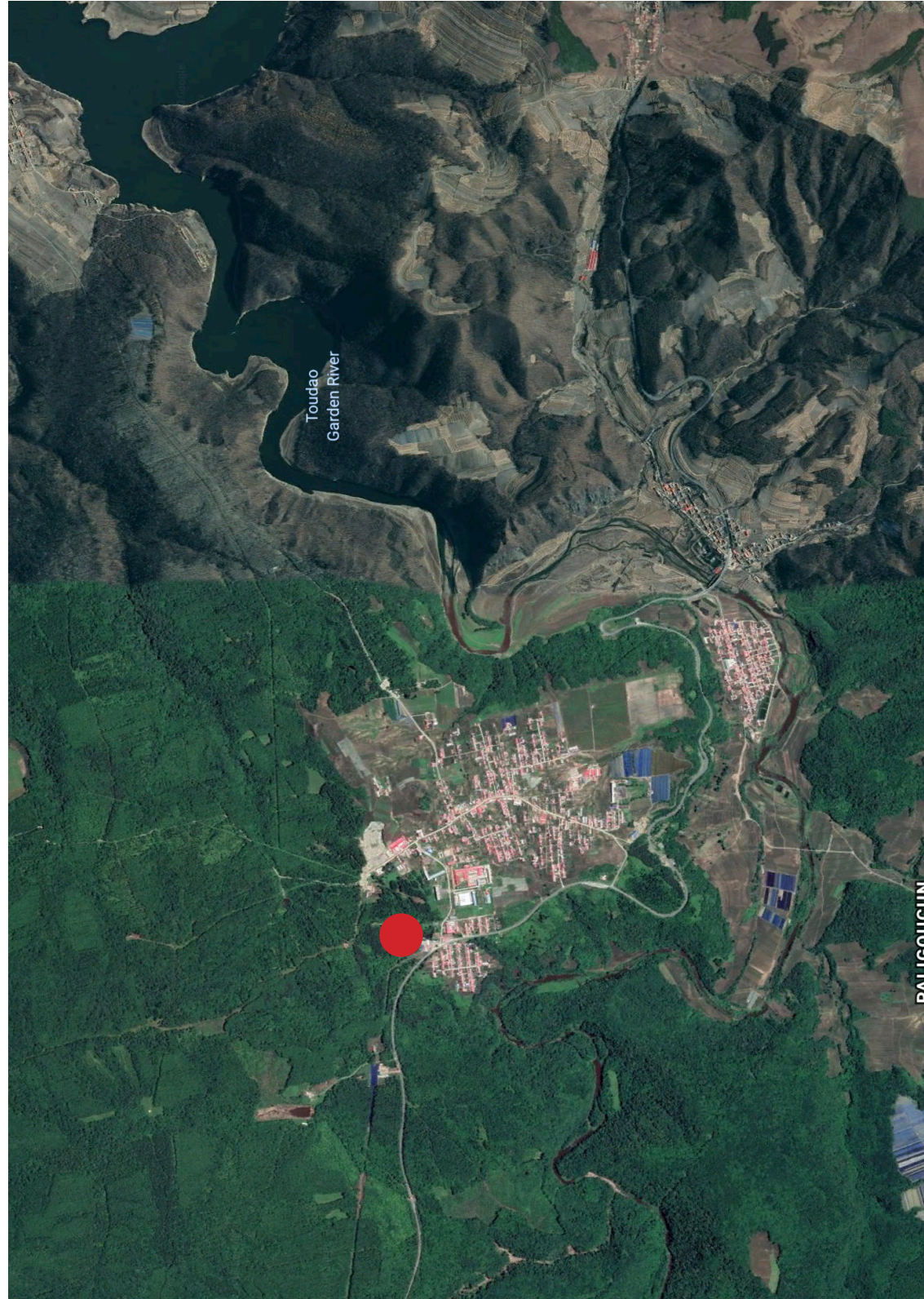
wood workshop / traditional carft making workshop /
chinese hand writing studio / music studio / dance studio
/ / traditional Chinese medical science/ cooking studio /
gardening

public facilities / community center

bath / exercise field / library / museum / second hand
market

Where

Northeast china / village / wood workshop







How

Appropriate architecture for aging
Emotional and Physical

PART1: RESEARCH

2018/02/01 – 2018/02/25 (3 weeks)

PART2: CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

2018/02/26 – 2018/03/11 (2 weeks)

Model: concept models×5, s=1:1000 / site model×1, s=1:1000

PART3: DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

2018/03/12 – 2018/03/18 (1 week) Model: option model×1, s=1:1000 2018/03/19 – 2018/04/18 (4 weeks)

Model: study model×4, s=1:1000 / study model×4, s=1:200

Photo: about light, scale, structure, material

Drawing: plans / sections / facades, s=1:500 / site plan, s=1:1000

PART4: DESIGN FINALIZATION

2018/04/21 – 2018/05/13 (3 weeks)

Model: study model×1, s=1:100

Photo: about material, atmosphere

Drawing: plans / sections / facades, s=1:500 / site plan, s=1:1000 / explain the concept

PART5: POST PRODUCTION

2018/05/16 – 2018/05/30 (2 weeks)

Model: final model×1, s=1:500

Photo: indoor and outdoor perspective Drawing: axonometry / explain the project

education

2010-2015

Department of Architecture

Xi' an University of Architecture & Technology,

Xi' an, P.R.China

B. Arch (Bachelor in Architecture)

2016.8 - now

Bergen School of Architecture, Norway

Master of Architecture

portfolio

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acadameic experience

2017,06 ARKNAT The Scandinavian Architectural Festival

2018,02-07 internship in ALA architecture studio, helsinki

