

Out, Within, and Beyond

*Family Connection and Self-Discovery
in Chinese LGBTQ Community*



Out, Within, and Beyond: Family Connection and
Self-Discovery in Chinese LGBTQ Community

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at the School of Visual Arts Design for Social Innovation.

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Abstract

This process paper explores the journey of a Chinese gay man as he navigates the complexities of his identity and relationships in a traditional society. Through his work with the Chinese Rainbow Network, the author gains valuable insights and develops design solutions aimed at fostering a more inclusive and compassionate understanding of family dynamics in China. The paper discusses the development and implementation of "Tea Talks" workshops and a graphic novel, along with their impact and future potential. By addressing key challenges and embracing a social designer's mission, the author envisions a never-ending voyage towards inclusivity and support for Chinese LGBTQ men and their families.

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Foreword



Unveiling Experience

In 2018, the release of the Taiwanese film "DEAR EX " marked a significant cultural milestone, sparking crucial conversations surrounding the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals in China. It played a pivotal role in raising awareness of the harm caused by discrimination and prejudice, while inspiring greater empathy and understanding for the LGBTQ+ community.

Set against the backdrop of traditional Chinese culture and values, the film delves into the challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals as they navigate the complexities of coming out and living authentically. The protagonist, Song Zhengyuan, is a man struggling to find his place in society, pressured by his parents' expectations to be a "normal person" and enter into a conventional marriage. As he grapples with the late stages of cancer, he decides to be true to himself, moving out of his family home to spend his final days with his ex-boyfriend. This ultimately leads to heartbreak and pain for both him and those around him.

Following Taiwan's groundbreaking move as the first region in Asia to legalize same-sex marriage, I greatly admire those who strive to explore and address such situations. As a Chinese gay man navigating the intricacies of my identity, I embarked on a transformative odyssey to understand my place in the world and help others like me find acceptance and support within their families and society at large. This journey began

with the realization that in order to create change, we must first understand the complexities of the lives of Chinese gay men and the challenges they face.

This process paper chronicles my explorations, discoveries, and design solutions that have been developed and implemented to bridge the gap between traditional cultural expectations and the personal identities of Chinese gay men. It is a story of personal growth, resilience, and the power of community in fostering a more inclusive and compassionate understanding of family dynamics in China.

Throughout this journey, I have had the privilege of collaborating with organizations, such as the Chinese Rainbow Network, and numerous individuals whose insights and experiences have helped shape the design initiatives presented within this paper. As I continue to forge ahead, the lessons learned from this transformative odyssey serve as a guiding light, illuminating a path towards a more inclusive and supportive world for Chinese LGBTQ men and their families.

Join me as we delve into the tapestry of identity, unraveling the threads that have woven together my experiences and the experiences of countless others. Together, we will explore the challenges, the solutions, and the ongoing pursuit of understanding, acceptance, and love in the ever-evolving landscape of Chinese society.



(April, 2018)

Lexicon of Terms

Filial Piety (Xiao 孝):

This is a key virtue in Chinese culture that emphasizes respect and care for one's parents and ancestors. LGBTQ+ individuals may struggle with this concept if their identity or lifestyle is not accepted by their families.

Confucianism (Rújiā 儒家):

A philosophy that has strongly influenced Chinese society and culture. It emphasizes hierarchy, obedience, and responsibility, which can sometimes come into conflict with individual freedom and self-expression, including sexual orientation and gender identity.

Harmony (Hé 和):

A core value in Chinese society, often interpreted as conformity to societal norms. LGBTQ+ individuals might face pressure to conform to heteronormative expectations in order to maintain "harmony."

Family Lineage (Zōngzú 宗族):

The concept of continuing the family line through procreation is important in traditional Chinese culture. This can create pressure on LGBTQ+ individuals, particularly gay and lesbian individuals, who may not be able or may not wish to have children within their relationships.

Collectivism (Jítǐ zhǔyì 集体主义):

This is a value that emphasizes the group over the individual, common in many East Asian societies. This can sometimes create a challenging environment for LGBTQ+ individuals, who might feel pressured to suppress their individual identities for the sake of group harmony.

One Child Policy (Dānshēng zhèngcè 计划生育政策):

Although it officially ended in 2015, the one-child policy has had lasting effects on Chinese society, especially in terms of the expectations placed on that one child. This might include pressure to marry and have children, which can be particularly challenging for LGBTQ+ individuals.

Cooperative Marriage (Xinghun 形婚):

This term refers to a type of marriage in which a gay man and a lesbian woman marry each other to present a heterosexual front to their families and society, while often continuing to have same-sex relationships in private. This is a strategy some Chinese LGBTQ+ individuals use to manage societal and familial expectations while preserving a part of their identity.

Deceptive Marriage (Pianhun 骗婚)

This term refers to a marriage in which a gay man marries a heterosexual woman, often without disclosing his sexual orientation. This can occur due to societal and familial pressure to marry and have children. Pianhun can lead to complex emotional situations and is often considered an ethical issue within the community.

Continuing the Family Line (Chuanzong Jiedai 传宗接代):

This phrase refers to the traditional expectation that individuals will marry and have children in order to continue the family lineage. This is a significant source of pressure for many Chinese people, including LGBTQ+ individuals. It can be especially challenging for gay and lesbian individuals who may wish to have biological children but also want to live in accordance with their sexual orientation.



Chapter 1

Unraveling the Tapestry of Identity

Societal Constraints

Growing up as an LGBTQ+ individual in China, one is constantly faced with deeply ingrained cultural expectations that shape their experiences. Traditional Chinese values, heavily influenced by Confucianism, emphasize the importance of family lineage, marriage, and having children to carry on the family name. These expectations exert immense pressure on those who may not fit into the conventional mold, causing emotional turmoil and internal conflict as they struggle to reconcile their identities with societal norms.

Confucianism, as a cornerstone of Chinese culture, promotes the concept of filial piety, where individuals are expected to show respect and obedience to their parents and elders. This cultural tenet often forces LGBTQ+ individuals to suppress their true selves in order to meet familial expectations and maintain harmony within the family structure. As a result, many LGBTQ+ individuals in China may choose to remain closeted or enter into heterosexual marriages to avoid the shame and stigma

associated with deviating from traditional norms.

While the legal landscape is slowly evolving, LGBTQ+ individuals in China still face numerous barriers. The lack of recognition for same-sex marriage and the absence of anti-discrimination laws hinder their ability to access equal opportunities in employment, housing, and healthcare, further marginalizing them within society. Additionally, Confucian values and traditional gender roles continue to permeate Chinese society, creating challenges for LGBTQ+ individuals to express their identities openly.

The societal pressure to conform to heteronormative expectations can also lead to the formation of "tongqi" marriages, where gay men marry straight women to maintain the appearance of a traditional family. These arrangements can have detrimental effects on both parties involved, often leading to unhappy and unfulfilling relationships.

“

*It's not our differences
that divide us. It's our
inability to recognize,
accept, and celebrate
those differences.*

Audre Lorde

56%

84%

42%

Chinese LGBTQ population reported being discrimination within their own families.

Compelled by the hegemony of marriage to give in to secular ethics and choose to marry.

Tried to eliminate the pain of gay identity and marriage through suicide.



(March 25, 2019)

A Personal Confession

Growing up as a gay man in a traditional Chinese family, I have personally experienced the emotional turmoil faced by LGBTQ+ individuals in conservative households. Despite the strict cultural expectations that governed my upbringing, I was fortunate to be raised in the bustling metropolis of Shanghai. Here, I witnessed the freedom and happiness that can be achieved by embracing one's true identity, and I became acquainted with a diverse range of people who lived their lives authentically. This stark contrast between my traditional upbringing and the liberating environment of Shanghai has fueled my deep-seated desire to help others within the LGBTQ+ community navigate their own journey toward self-discovery and acceptance.

My parents both come from Jiangxi, a smaller city with strong traditional values. My family is deeply rooted in tradition, and every year during the Spring Festival, we return to Jiangxi to reunite with our extended family. On the eve of the Lunar New Year, around 15 family members gather around a large round table for a festive dinner. Amidst the laughter and celebration, I am inevitably confronted with questions about my personal life. "Yikun, when will you get married? When will you have children? How many children do you plan to have? You are the only

boy in our family; you need to carry on the family line." Consequently, this reunion has become the day I dread most each year.

Simultaneously, I have witnessed many tragedies unfold in Jiangxi. My only friend from my hometown, for example, was forced into a marriage with a heterosexual woman due to family pressure. In the process of losing his own sense of self, he also inflicted irreversible damage upon an innocent woman. These experiences have further solidified my determination to break the cycle of suffering and advocate for a more accepting and supportive environment for the LGBTQ+ community in China.

As I reflect on my own journey, I recognize the importance of self-acceptance and embracing my identity as a gay man. This has empowered me to challenge societal norms and advocate for change. My story serves as a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the transformative power of self-acceptance. By sharing my journey, I hope to inspire others to find their own path toward understanding, love, and acceptance – both for themselves and for the diverse tapestry of individuals that make up our world.

Individuals



(June 25, 2020)

Family



(September 19, 2020)

Modern Filial Piety

We are now witnessing a shift in societal values and perspectives in China. For centuries, Confucianism and traditional filial piety have emphasized the importance of family over the individual, shaping the expectations and behaviors of countless generations. However, recent changes in relationship culture and the influence of global perspectives have begun to challenge these long-standing beliefs. A growing movement of Modern Filial Piety has emerged, in which individuals strive to balance their own happiness and well-being with the respect and honor they hold for their families.

This contemporary interpretation of filial piety acknowledges the need for individuals to embrace their authentic selves while maintaining a strong connection with their family and cultural roots. It encourages open dialogue, empathy, and understanding between family members, fostering an environment where love and acceptance can flourish.

In light of these developments, my project aims to explore the evolving identities and relationships of Chinese gay men, focusing on how they are revolutionizing self-acceptance and transforming the way families interact and understand each other. By examining the experiences of Chinese gay men navigating the complexities of their identities within the context of Modern Filial Piety, we can gain valuable insights into the ways in which traditional beliefs can coexist with progressive ideals.

Through this exploration, we can uncover strategies for promoting greater acceptance and understanding of LGBTQ+ individuals within Chinese families, while preserving the cultural values that have shaped their experiences. By embracing the principles of Modern Filial Piety, we can work towards a future where all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, are able to live authentically and find happiness, love, and support within their families and society at large.



Chapter 2

Charting the Path

A Transformative Meeting

January 2nd, 2022, is a day I remember vividly. As the new year began, my friend Kehan Zhang introduced me to Woei, the COO of the Chinese Rainbow Network (CRN). Excited and eager, I scheduled our first Zoom meeting, which lasted for nearly two hours. Before the call, I felt a mix of nervousness and anticipation, unsure of how our conversation would unfold. However, as soon as Woei appeared on the screen, I was struck by his warmth and openness, which immediately put me at ease.

We began by discussing our personal experiences and connections to the LGBTQ+ community. I shared my own journey of self-acceptance as a gay man, while Woei recounted stories of friends and family members who had faced similar challenges. As the conversation progressed, our exchange grew more animated and passionate. We delved into the obstacles and social stigmas that hinder the LGBTQ+ community in China and brainstormed ways to address these issues.

During the meeting, I presented my ideas for fostering a more inclusive society through education, advocacy, and support. I spoke about the need for comprehensive resources to help individuals navigate the complexities of coming out and living authentically, as well as the importance of engaging family members in the process. Woei listened intently, nodding in agreement and occasionally chiming in with his own insights and suggestions.

By the end of the call, we were both brimming with enthusiasm and conviction. It was evident that we shared a common vision for the future of the LGBTQ+ community in China, and I felt a strong sense of kinship and camaraderie with Woei. I expressed my unwavering desire to join CRN and contribute to their vital work. Unsurprisingly, I received an offer as an event planner to join the organization the very next day, marking the beginning of an incredible journey that would forever change my life and the lives of countless others.



(Chinese Rainbow Network at the Pride Parade)

Chinese Rain -bow Network

CRN turned out to be a much larger organization than I had anticipated, possibly because I had limited exposure to discussions on sensitive topics like LGBTQ+ issues in China. However, at CRN, I encountered a wide variety of activities and groups that catered to the diverse needs of the LGBTQ+ community. Support groups for parents, online hotlines, and job-seeking assistance groups were just a few examples of the resources available through the organization.

After briefly introducing myself to the community, the leader of the parent support group, Piao, reached out to me. Through our conversation, I learned that she was the mother of a gay son. Three years prior, when her son came out to her, she struggled with feelings of confusion, blame, and misunderstanding. Fortunately, she came to terms with her son's identity and is now dedicated to helping other parents better understand and accept their LGBTQ+ children.

This experience of joining CRN was transformative, opening my eyes to the incredible work being done to support and empower the LGBTQ+ community in China. My journey with CRN has allowed me to forge invaluable connections and gain first-hand insights into the challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals and their families. These experiences have not only deepened my understanding of the issues at hand but have also reinforced my commitment to advocating for a more inclusive and compassionate society where everyone can live authentically and thrive. As a member of the CRN, I am proud to be part of a collective effort that is changing lives and reshaping the narrative around LGBTQ+ issues in China.

*Before we come out
I hope we can fight
first. We need to understand
needs and expectations
this way, will we be able to
live our lives fully*

*out to our parents,
ure ourselves out
understand our
ations. Only in
have a chance to
.*



Chapter 3

Questions that Illuminate the Path

Voices of the Community

Conversational interviews took place at the beginning of the thesis exploration. Unlike my previous work as a UX researcher, where I would typically set up a camera and use a recording device, I decided to approach these interviews with a more open and genuine attitude. I wanted to create an atmosphere of trust and honesty, where my interviewees felt comfortable sharing their experiences without any barriers. To achieve this, I went to each conversation without any recording equipment and focused on engaging in heartfelt dialogues with each individual.

During these interviews, we discussed a variety of topics, including self-identity, the decision to come out, and the impact of coming out on relationships with family and friends. After each conversation, I recorded the most memorable moments using storyboards to capture the essence of their experiences.

These interviews not only provided invaluable insights into the complexities of their experiences but also contributed to building a more empathetic and supportive community.

"The moment I truly accepted myself was when I realized that my identity wasn't a burden, but a gift that allowed me to see the world through different eyes."

"Coming out to my parents wasn't easy, but it was the first step towards living a life free from fear and shame. I wanted them to know the real me, even if it meant facing rejection."

"Family traditions and expectations weighed heavily on my shoulders, but I knew that I couldn't live a lie any longer. My happiness and authenticity were just as important as fulfilling my duties as a son."

"When I finally embraced my identity, it felt like a weight had been lifted off my chest. I could finally breathe and be who I was meant to be."

"My coming out journey was not only about my own self-acceptance but also about creating a space for my family to learn, grow, and understand the complexities of my experiences."

"Through my conversations with others in the LGBTQ+ community, I've come to realize that we all have our unique paths to self-discovery and acceptance. Our stories may be different, but our struggles and triumphs unite us."

"One of the most profound realizations I've had is that I am not alone in this journey. There is a whole community of people who have faced similar challenges and who are willing to support and uplift each other."

"I am no longer afraid to share my story, because I know that my voice can inspire and empower others to embrace their own truth and live a life filled with love and acceptance."

"I never imagined that my parents would come around and accept me for who I am, but their love and support have made all the difference in my journey towards self-acceptance."

"It was in the quiet moments of solitude that I began to understand the importance of living authentically. The more I embraced my truth, the more I could connect with others in meaningful ways."

A Co-Creation Journey

Co-creation is a form of design research that allows users to help come up with solutions and discover other possibilities that the designer may not have considered. On April 17th, 2022, a co-creation session was held at Design for School Innovation Program's studio. This event, titled "Life Path Mashup," was a two-hour workshop aiming to explore the participants' true expectations of themselves.

During the workshop, the participants were asked to choose five cards from a deck of keywords related to various life goals, such as "money," "freedom," "education," and "family." They were then prompted to use these keywords to construct a description of their ideal life. This exercise not only allowed the participants to reflect on their values and aspirations but also encouraged them to explore their true selves and consider what they truly wanted out of life.

Through this co-creation process, participants were able to engage with the design process and contribute to the development of the project. The activity provided a safe and supportive space for individuals to explore their innermost desires and consider their expectations of themselves.

(April 17, 2022)



Making Ideas Tangible

Prototyping and speculative design play a crucial role in the development of human-centered design solutions. Rather than simply presenting someone with a solution on paper, putting a physical or digital prototype in front of them allows for a more engaging and immersive experience. This approach enables users to better understand the solution and provide feedback, resulting in a more refined and effective final product.

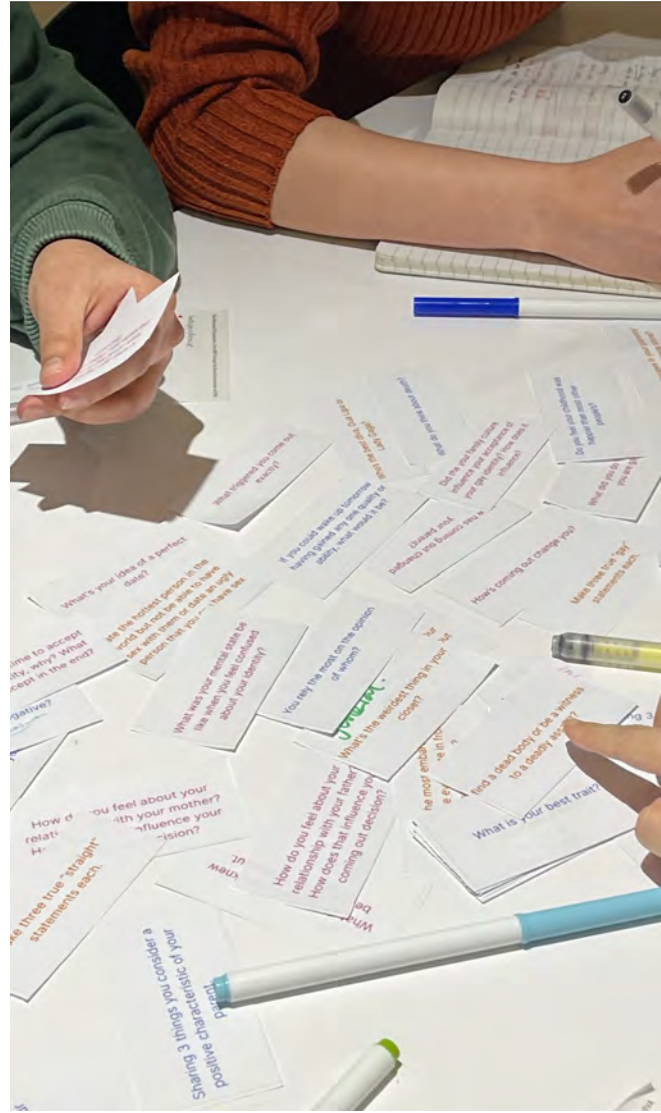
During my time working at CRN and learning in school, I gained valuable insights that drove me to create my first batch of prototypes.

One of these prototypes was Heart to Heart, a conversation card game aimed at facilitating open and honest conversations between Chinese gay men and their families. The cards featured thought-provoking questions designed to encourage reflection and discussion, and were tested in several "Tea Talks" workshops. Through these workshops, I was able to observe firsthand how the game helped participants feel more comfortable sharing their experiences and

thoughts with each other, ultimately leading to more empathetic and understanding conversations.

Another prototype I developed was Emotion Lab, a simulation of a coming out experience designed to provide a safe and supportive environment for Chinese gay men to practice coming out to their families. The simulation involved a role-playing activity in which a participant would act out a coming out scenario with an actor playing the role of their parent. The simulation was designed to help participants build their confidence and prepare for potential reactions from their families.

These prototypes were essential in helping me refine my design solutions and understand their potential impact on the Chinese LGBTQ community. By putting my ideas into physical or digital form, I was able to more effectively communicate my vision and gather feedback from users. This iterative process allowed me to create more effective and impactful solutions that met the needs of the community.



(Emotion Lab)

Community engagement



Narrative communication



Research Findings

Over the past six months of my thesis project, I have conducted extensive interviews, participated in co-creation sessions, and developed numerous prototypes. Through these activities, I have gained valuable insights into the challenges and experiences of the Chinese LGBTQ community. For instance, I discovered that many Chinese LGBTQ individuals struggle with expressing their thoughts and emotions to their families, often due to cultural and societal pressures.

Furthermore, I observed that many Chinese LGBTQ individuals feel isolated and lack a sense of community, making it difficult for them to access support and resources. This lack of community is especially severe for those who reside outside major metropolitan areas and do not have access to LGBTQ-focused organizations or events.

Therefore, I have learned that Community engagement and Narrative communication can be a powerful tool for promoting empathy and understanding.

*How might we foster a more
compassionate understanding of
family dynamics in China to bridge
traditional cultural expectations and
personal identities of Chinese youth,
enabling them to maintain connections
with their families while navigating
modern life?*

*more inclusive and
standing of family
bridge the gap between
expectations and the
Chinese gay men,
maintain healthy relationships
and living authentic lives?*



Chapter 4

Weaving Solutions for a New Age

Tea Talks Gathering

After much research and exploration, I developed a design solution called Tea Talks gathering. These gatherings aim to facilitate open and honest dialogue between two groups of participants: Chinese gay men who have already come out to their parents and those who have not yet done so. The purpose of these gatherings is to bring together members of the LGBTQ community in a safe and supportive environment to discuss their experiences and challenges.

During these gatherings, participants have the opportunity to share their stories, listen to others, and learn from each other in a welcoming and supportive atmosphere. Additionally, we invite experts in the fields of psychology and family therapy to provide guidance on navigating these complex relationships.

The name "Tea Talks" was chosen to evoke a sense of warmth, intimacy, and community. The gatherings are designed to be a place where participants can come together over a cup of tea and engage in meaningful conversations that help bridge the gap between traditional cultural expectations and personal identities.



— 茶话会 —

The image shows a Zoom meeting interface. The main window displays a slide with the following content:

- Slide Title: CRN出柜分享茶话工作坊第一期
- Host Name: 主持人 Yikun Vallen
- Image: A hand holding a sign that says "Coming Out & PARTY" in front of a rainbow flag.

On the right side of the Zoom window, there is a grid of five video thumbnails. The bottom-most thumbnail shows a person with glasses and a blue shirt, with the name "You" visible below it. The other four thumbnails are blurred.

(September 17, 2022)

Flow in the Gathering

The gathering begins with a consent form to ensure that everyone feels comfortable and respected throughout the event.

This is followed by an ice-breaking activity to help participants get to know each other.

Next, psychology experts lead a value in action session to provide guidance and support for the participants.

One unique aspect of the Tea Talks gathering is the collaboration between out and closeted individuals. Out persons are invited to share their experiences, while closeted persons are given the opportunity to share their struggles. The collaboration between out and closeted individuals provides a diversity of perspectives and resources, making the solutions more targeted and effective.

The Graphic Novel Series

As I continued to explore ways to support and empower Chinese gay men and their families, my second proposed solution is a graphic novel that tells the stories of four Chinese gay men and their journey to self-acceptance. These stories were inspired by the experiences shared by participants in our "Tea Talks" workshops, making this novel a testament to the power of open and honest conversation.

The novel features two stories of men who choose to come out to their families and two stories of men who choose not to. The purpose of these stories is to illustrate that there is no right or wrong answer when it comes to coming out, but rather, the most important thing is for individuals to be true to themselves and find self-acceptance.

Through these stories, we hope to provide a sense of comfort, hope, and support for those who may be struggling with their identity and their relationship with their families. The final pages of this graphic novel have been left blank for readers to illustrate their own journey of self-acceptance and love.

If readers would like to, they can send me their illustrations and a brief description of their journey. Their story will be added to my growing collection of stories, which are all inspired by the shared experiences and open dialogue in our "Tea Talks" workshops.



(The first series of the Coming Out, Coming Home novel)



Chapter 5

The Resonating Echoes of Change

Celebrating Tea Talks

Since the inception of this project, I have facilitated six Tea Talks workshops, which have given me the invaluable opportunity to listen to inspiring and unique stories from participants. The process of organizing these Tea Talks was meticulously planned.

Recruitment was primarily conducted through our WeChat group, the most popular social media platform in China. We also reached out to local LGBTQ organizations and community centers to invite participants. I, as the first facilitator at CRN, led each workshop.

Every Tea Talk had a specific agenda. We began with an introduction round, where participants were encouraged to share a bit about themselves. This was followed by a series of prompts designed to initiate open discussions about the relationship between participants and their families, their experiences as LGBTQ individuals in a predominantly heteronormative society, and their journey towards understanding and acceptance. Each workshop lasted approximately two hours, providing ample time for meaningful conversations and personal stories to be shared.

Over the course of these six workshops, there were several recurring themes. Many participants shared feeling a stronger connection with their families after attending the workshops and gaining a better understanding of their parents' perspectives. Furthermore, the desire to continue attending these workshops and to connect with other members of the LGBTQ community was a common sentiment.

I am truly grateful that many participants have reached out after each workshop to express their appreciation for the experience. The workshops, which began as a single event I initiated, have now grown into a series that continues to gain popularity.

It is my hope that these workshops will persist in offering a safe and supportive environment for members of the Chinese LGBTQ community to share their experiences and learn from each other. I feel honored to play even a small role in fostering empathy, understanding, and acceptance within families and society.



Embracing Novel Response

The novel has not only resonated with the storytellers themselves but also garnered positive feedback from members of the Chinese Rainbow Network and the broader LGBTQ community in China.

The graphic novel's success can be attributed to the heartfelt and genuine portrayal of the experiences of Chinese gay men navigating their identities and relationships with their families. When the novel was shared with the individuals whose stories inspired the tales, their reactions were a mixture of emotions, including being deeply moved and feeling a sense of relief and validation.

One participant remarked that seeing his story transformed into a visual narrative allowed him to better understand his journey and appreciate the growth he had experienced. Another participant expressed gratitude for the opportunity to have his story shared with a wider audience, providing a sense of belonging and understanding to those who might be struggling with similar challenges.

Moreover, the novel has sparked conversations and dialogues within the LGBTQ community and among allies, fostering a deeper understanding of the unique challenges faced by Chinese gay men and the importance of supporting and accepting one another.

As the graphic novel continues to reach new audiences, its impact will only continue to grow. The stories it tells have the potential to touch hearts and minds, promoting acceptance, understanding, and ultimately, a more inclusive and compassionate society.



Chapter 6

Sowing the Seeds of Change

Broadening Horizons

As I look to the future, it's crucial to consider the potential for our design solutions to evolve and adapt to changing societal attitudes and needs. Both the "Tea Talks" gatherings and the graphic novel hold promising possibilities for growth and expansion, ensuring they remain relevant and impactful in the years to come.

One example of the scalability of the "Tea Talks" gatherings is the future plan to organize parent and family gatherings name "Free Parent's Hug". These sessions will provide an opportunity for parents and family members to discuss their views and experiences with having an LGBTQ child. By including parents and family members in the conversation, we can foster greater understanding, empathy, and support within the family unit, helping to build more inclusive and compassionate family dynamics.

Moreover, expanding the reach of the "Tea Talks" gatherings to different regions in the United States and China can help to share the knowledge and insights gained from these discussions with a broader audience. This expansion will help to raise awareness of the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ individuals and their families, and inspire more people to become advocates for change.

我想聆听你的声音

温情家庭， 自由爱

“

您和您的家人都应该得到支持。无论您是LGBTQ+群体的一员，还是为LGBTQ+群体工作的支持者，我们都希望您加入我们的免费家长拥抱计划，为您和您的亲人提供一个安全和温馨的空间，共同探讨LGBTQ+问题，分享经验，并获得支持和理解。

中国彩虹网络 (Chinese Rainbow Network) 为LGBTQ+群体及其家人提供支持。我们的目标是推动社会公正，鼓励人们真正接受自己和别人。



扫码可查看问卷

(Poster for CRN's upcoming new event)

The Novel's Dream

The graphic novel, too, has the potential to evolve and adapt to changing societal attitudes and advances in technology. In the near future, there are plans to publish a physical book, which will make the novel accessible to an even larger audience. Currently, a book proposal is in progress to reach out to publishers and turn this vision into a reality.

Another aspect of the graphic novel's scalability is the idea of publishing a digital version. By creating a plugin, we can make it easier for people to contribute their own stories and become part of the graphic novel's narrative. This interactive feature will allow for a more dynamic and engaging reading experience, fostering a sense of community and shared understanding among readers.

Furthermore, there is potential to explore the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the creation and sharing of stories within the graphic novel.

By developing a platform that utilizes AI, we can streamline the process of story creation, making it more accessible and inviting for people to share their experiences with others. This innovative approach has the potential to revolutionize how we engage with personal narratives, bringing the stories of the LGBTQ community to the forefront of public consciousness.

In conclusion, both the "Tea Talks" workshops and the graphic novel embody the potential for scalability and adaptability, ensuring that they remain relevant, impactful, and responsive to the changing needs of society. As I continue to develop these design solutions, I will remain committed to fostering a more inclusive and compassionate understanding of family dynamics and personal identities, ultimately paving the way for a brighter and more inclusive future.





Chapter 7

Navigating Potential Risks

Balancing Innovation

As a social designer, it's essential to consider not only the potential benefits of our design solutions but also the possible risks and challenges associated with their evolution. By anticipating potential pitfalls, we can develop strategies to mitigate these risks and ensure that our solutions remain effective, ethical, and responsible.

When it comes to implementing AI in the digital graphic novel, we must consider whether people will feel comfortable using this technology to create and share their stories. While AI offers the potential to streamline the process and make it easier for people to contribute, it's essential to ensure that the technology is being used in an ethical and responsible manner.

To achieve this, we need to establish clear guidelines and protocols for the use of AI in our platform. This may include outlining how data is collected, stored, and processed, as well as addressing potential bias and discrimination that can arise from AI algorithms.

Safeguarding Personal Stories and Experience

In the digital age, safety and privacy are of paramount importance, particularly when dealing with sensitive personal stories and experiences. As we develop the digital graphic novel, we must ensure that the personal narratives shared through the platform are protected and kept confidential. This can be achieved through a combination of secure data storage, encryption, and stringent access controls.

In addition, we need to provide users with the tools and resources they need to make informed decisions about what information they choose to share and how it can be used.

Moving Forward with Care and Consideration

As we navigate the challenges associated with scaling our design solutions and incorporating new technologies, it's vital that we approach these issues with care and consideration. By keeping the needs and well-being of our community at the forefront of our minds, we can ensure that our innovations are not only effective but also ethical and responsible.

In conclusion, as a social designer, anticipating and addressing potential risks is a crucial aspect of our work. By remaining vigilant and proactive in addressing these concerns, we can create design solutions that not only promote inclusivity and understanding but also protect the safety, privacy, and well-being of the communities we serve.



Chapter 8

United in the Face of Adversity



(June 26, 2022)

A Brighter Future for the Chinese LGBTQ Community

Regarding the future vision of this project, my ultimate goal is to create a more inclusive and compassionate society for Chinese LGBTQ individuals and their families. I aim to empower the community by addressing the multitude of challenges faced by Chinese gay men and their families, fostering understanding, and promoting acceptance and self-love.

The journey I embark upon is a complex and ongoing one, with the following objectives in mind:

1. Raising awareness and promoting understanding of LGBTQ experiences in China.
2. Alleviating family pressures and fostering healthier family dynamics.
3. Addressing mental health challenges faced by LGBTQ individuals.
4. Encouraging the seeking of support and creating safe spaces for dialogue.
5. Facilitating open communication and understanding within families.
6. Promoting education and awareness around LGBTQ issues.
7. Building a strong and supportive community for LGBTQ individuals and their families.
8. Empowering self-acceptance and embracing authentic lives.
9. Cultivating a more inclusive and accepting society.

As a social designer, I am wholeheartedly committed to this journey, and I envision continuously evolving and growing my design solutions to better meet the needs of the Chinese LGBTQ community. Through dedication, collaboration, and empathy, we strive to create a world where LGBTQ individuals can live authentic lives, maintain healthy relationships with their families, and contribute to the creation of a more inclusive and compassionate society.



Epilogue

A Never-Ending Voyage Towards Inclusivity



(July 25, 2019)

Acknowledgements

The conclusion of this project marks not the end, but the beginning of a lifelong journey towards creating a more inclusive and supportive world for Chinese LGBTQ men and their families.

This journey is not solely about me, but rather a heartfelt tribute to all LGBTQIA+ individuals who have bravely shared their stories and relentlessly fought for acceptance and equality. The workshops, graphic novel, and other initiatives symbolize our collective strength, resilience, and courage in overcoming adversity.

I wholeheartedly hope that this project will serve as a source of inspiration, encouraging others to embrace their true selves and extend a compassionate hand to those around them who may be navigating their own journey of self-discovery.

And I love my homeland, China. The traditional culture endows a special significance and value to the concept of family. That's the thing I would never abandon or destroy.

Only





ward

*Family Connection and Self-Discovery
in Chinese LGBTQ Community*

Yikun Wang's Diary