

remains stable. We humans have an extraordinarily long period of dependency for the children, and in relation to the span of our lives this is about one quarter. The traditional family home in Western Europe and North America would have therefore included the grandparents, parents and children. Today in these cultures the specialism and mobility of the parents is such that this is decreasingly likely.

No more thorough study of the organization of the family home in terms of contemporary intra-family territory can be found than in Chermayeff and Alexander's classic treatise *Community and Privacy* (Chermayeff and Alexander 1963), although it is somewhat blind to the varying cultural traditions to be found outside the USA. In the modern homes of a number of Malaysian friends I have found a common tendency to establish a space known as the 'family room'. Most British houses have only spaces for sleeping and washing on their upper levels, but this family space is indeed on the top floor and it also doubles up as the circulation space for that level – a kind of enlarged landing in which the children can play, where the parents may exercise and where television might be watched. It is not expected that guests would come here; they would be received in the main space downstairs, which is more formally laid out for discussion and conversation. This perhaps reflects the older and now largely unobserved European tradition of the 'reception room'. The receiving of guests and their entertainment represents a highly symbolic invitation into the family home or territory.

In Britain we have a phrase, 'hearth and home', referring to the space around the open fire that represents the inner sanctum, the heartland of the family territory. In other climates and cultures this is replaced by more appropriate devices. The extraordinary wind tower houses of Dubai on the Arabian Gulf certainly need no heating (Fig. 7.2); here there is a year-round need for cooling. Due to the proximity of the Gulf and the adjacency of large land and sea masses there is always a movement of air resulting from the exchange of heat between them, and these wonderful houses use the reverse of the principle of the chimney. A square tower rising up from the middle of the dwelling to a height greater than the surrounding roof has louvred openings on all four sides and whatever the direction of the breeze, whether it be onshore or offshore, this passes through the tower, sucking a column of air up and causing a circulation at the foot. This then is where the inner sanctum and social hub of this house can be found, for here one can sit cross-legged on a carpet and be cooled by the constant motion of a natural airconditioning system entirely free from CFCs. As one enters one of these houses this space is shielded from view. The passing visitor or tradesman will not be able to see from the door to this territorial heartland into which only family and close friends are invited.